

The man, enjoying
the 2nd ROUND
in a different
world.

そのおっさん、 異世界で。 二周目プレイを 満喫中



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The Old Man Who Got a Second Round in Another World

Arc 1

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Prologue

The name of my job is “Adventurer”.

In this world, adventurers dive into dungeons, seeking the treasures within to claim as their own. This was one of the main source of income for people who choose to become adventurers. The other source of income was to defeat magical beasts that are present in those very dungeons. Once these magical beasts are defeated, they will drop items which can be taken back to a town or the guild and sold for money. In terms of income, adventuring is a profitable profession, however it is as dangerous as it is profitable.

I am one of those “Adventurers”. A veteran who has been adventuring for over 20 years.

Once again, I am entering a dungeon. This time, with the goal of hunting magical beasts.

"Last one left." (Man)

As the man turned towards the meadows, he noticed his prey hiding within the shadow of the grass.

It was a Wild Boa.

Wild Boas are demons who look similar to wild boars with brown fur. It is well-known for its high-speed rush along with its sharp tusks on its head. The combination of its rush and its sharp tusks poses a huge danger to adventurers facing this magical beast.

However, in the man’s eyes it is merely food. In fact, he can’t see it as anything but food. The quest that he accepted from the guild was a request to collect meat from Wild Boas in the dungeons.

Without warning, the Wild Boa performed its signature high-speed rush, running directly towards the man. Not feeling the need to dodge its attack, he lifted his two-handed sword and swung down towards the Wild Boa. In the midst of its attack, the Wild Boa crashes into the sword, the collision emitting a dull sound. At the end of the exchange, the Wild Boa had its head crushed, and

its body was laying limp on the ground. Few moments later, the body of the Wild Boa turns into blue particles, leaving behind a lump of meat with skin the colour of tree bark on the ground. This phenomena was something that occurred all around the world, however even after it was studied, the only thing that was discovered is that only magical beasts will transform into blue particles when they die. With some luck, there is also a chance that "Drop Items" would drop from their remains.

"Whether they are boars or pigs, at the end of the day they are still meat."
(Man)

The man picked up the Drop Item, *Meat (Average)*

. In this world, the quality of a Drop Item increases as the level of the magic beast increases.

Meat(Average)

is similar to meat obtained from ordinary livestock. It is also possible to obtain higher quality meat such as *Meat(High)* and *Meat(Special)* by hunting beasts with higher levels in dungeons with higher difficulties. Although

Meat(Special)

is a rare and delicious type of meat which can only be dropped by beasts of extremely high difficulty where even first-class adventurers would be in danger.

"Let's see... The requested amount of meat is ten. With this, the request is completed." (Man)

The man placed the lump of meat in a *Magic bag (Capacity: Large)*.

It is a magic bag that was found when he was adventuring in the past. It is a highly valued magical item capable of storing up to 200 kilograms of items. He thought of selling it many times in the past as it costs as much as buying a house in the village, however it is so rare that the probability of it appearing in the marketplace is close to zero. It was near impossible to obtain the bag again once sold. Convinced by the convenience provided by the bag, the man kept the bag and his adventures became much easier as it removed the need to carry heavy items around .

As a precaution, the man took out the request form from his bag to review its content once more. Afterwards he started counting the lumps of meat obtained from his hunt to check if it matched the requested amount before leaving the dungeon. As he walked towards the magical gate in the dungeon, he thought about how rewarding himself with a good night of drinks for his work.

When the man returned to the village, he went towards the butchery in the village to deliver the meat before heading over to the guild for his quest rewards.

"Welcome back, Youya-san." (Old Lady)

A familiar face, the old lady who ran the receptionist desk smiled as she waved at him. If this were a guild from a big city, surely a beautiful girl would have been assigned at the desk as the receptionist, however for a small village like this, being able to choose who ran the desk was a luxury in itself, making it near-impossible. The other adventurers often complained about this at the bar, although personally the man did not mind as it is merely for work. As long as the receptionist does not obstruct his work, their age or gender do not matter.

"I am back. The meat collection request has already been completed, here is the certificate of completion." (Youya)

Youya handed over his status card and the certificate of the request over to the old lady who quickly removed the seal from the certificate and the quest reward was shown on his status card. As she returned the status card, Youya checked to ensure the quest reward matched the amount as stated in the request form. As expected, the reward matched.

"Youya-san, you should know that your speed in clearing requests is respected and extremely helpful to the guild? I wouldn't do anything to jeopardize your trust in the guild, regardless of your job." (Old Lady)

"Well I am just checking because its work after all. By the way, are there still any more requests approaching their deadlines?" (Youya)

"Ah that request was the last one. Oh right, Youya-san. Nikita asked me to pass you this." (Old Lady)

As she said that, she passed to Youya a homemade apple pie. Nikita is the

showgirl of a bar that he goes to quite often. She is going to be 16 this year, and is quite well-liked among the men in the village. Although he eats at the bar quite often, he couldn't seem to recall asking her for an apple pie. As if she was reading his thoughts, the old lady looked at Youya with a gentle smile.

"Do you remember about the incident where the Maltese disease spread throughout the village? Back then, you were the one who took up the request to collect Karnatta stone which was the main ingredient in brewing the potion used to cure the disease. Thanks to that, you saved her mother who was infected with the disease. By the way, aren't you still single? At your age, shouldn't you be looking to settle down and start a family yourself? Why not consider Nikita? She has pretty good looks for someone her age you know."
(Old Lady)

"Sorry but I will have to pass on this one. I am just an old man who is about to retire. I am sure a girl like Nikita will have many younger and better-looking guys to choose from. I will accept the apple pie. I will also be dropping by tomorrow, please reserve a delicious quest for me okay. It is the last time after all."
(Youya)

Although Yuya just received a generous reward from completing the request earlier, he was also offered a homemade apple pie. He felt like he would be disrespecting Nikita if he rejected the offer, thus he accepted the apple pie.

"Youya-san. Are you really not going to renew your contract with the guild? The other guild staff and I would like for you to continue being an exclusive adventurer for the next year as well you know."
(Old Lady)

"Sorry. But I am already 36 years old this year. It is difficult for me to continue adventuring at my age. As you can probably tell, I already have plenty of savings built up. I plan to return to the countryside and spend my retirement slowly cultivating fields. As for adventuring, you can rest assured since my successor, Beck is an excellent adventurer. After all, I was the one who raised him."
(Youya)

Exclusive adventurers are adventurers who are bound to a guild with a contract. They are obliged to perform smaller quests that nobody would complete as their rewards were not worth the effort required. Instead, they are

paid additional salaries as they continue to work as an exclusive adventurer. For quests like these, which are mainly quests put up by villagers for their needs, veterans like Yuya were chosen to complete them. These requests are troublesome in many ways, however he did not mind completing them. Being an exclusive adventurer also gives the option of declining quests with higher difficulties, allowing adventurers to have a stable income with relatively low risks as compared to the adventurous, high risk high reward lifestyle of an adventurer. This is also a way to show appreciation to the people in the village.

However, adventurers are humans too. As they grow older, their bodies grow weaker. Even as an exclusive adventurer, the idea of an being an adventurer is more or less impossible due to their old age. In his peak, Yuya was able to call himself a first-class adventurer, however he was still unable to become one of the top-class adventurers. Similar to first-class adventurers, many top-class adventurers who were forced to give up their ambitions do not aim to conquer high difficulty dungeons but rather spend their time completing odd-jobs while nurturing the next generation. For Youya, he spent his days steadily completing jobs that were safe, slowly building up savings for retirement to live a quiet life that was not chasing the thrill of adventure.

Youya had always felt that the idea of cooking his own food and eating alone was extremely depressing, so after completing his equipment maintenance, he decided to head towards the bar.

He entered the bar, sitting at his usual seat in the corner of the room. Being a regular of the bar, without taking his order, he was served ale by the waiter.

"Nikita, the apple pie you made for me was delicious." (Youya)

The one who delivered the ale to his table was Nikita, the showgirl for the bar. She was quickly approaching the age of 16 this year. She is an energetic girl who oozes out energy, often catching the attention of other men. Even now, there are men eyeing her as she is working

"Thank you for the compliment, I am very glad that Youya-san enjoyed my apple pie. Since my father just taught me how to bake that apple pie the other day, I tried my best to make it as delicious as possible." (Nikita)

Hearing this, Youya felt that Nikita had feelings for him. Although at his age, it

would be more appropriate for her to show him respect as her elder.

"So it's your first time baking an apple pie? Looks like you have a talent for cooking." (Youya)

"It wasn't anything that praiseworthy." (Nikita)

"I envy the man that will become your future husband." (Youya)

After hearing that, Nikita's expression became cloudy. From her perspective, that sentence was akin to saying that Youya would not become her husband. Personally, Youya felt that it would be better for him to throw away any feelings of attachment as soon as possible.

"Nikkita, do you have any recommendations for today?" (Youya)

"Uhh..yeah. Pork dishes are recommended today since a large batch of pork was brought in today." (Nikita)

Youya's mind went back to the request he completed earlier this afternoon. It seems that the butcher has already sold the meat despite just having it delivered a moment ago.

"In that case, please give me a pork stew and a skewer, as well as a refill please" (Youya)

"Sure! No problem." (Nikita)

Recently, whenever Youya realised he was alone, he would find himself coming to the bar.

There were many adventurers who gather here and since this is a village which has a dungeon, it posed quite an impressive sight. Although adventuring is a job that is difficult to sustain past the mid thirties with a high mortality rate, there are still many young adventurers aspiring to become a full-fledged adventurer. Even now, there are younger people passionately talking about their dreams, raising their spirits even higher.

"We are definitely going to conquer the Tower of Trials someday! And we will eventually be hailed as equals to the hero Leonard!" (Tryhard)

"You say that yet you are still struggling with Giant Toads." (Realist)

"Hey please don't say that out loud!! Nobody needs to know that."

(Embarrassed Tryhard)

Everyone in the bar laughed out loud upon hearing this conversation. Witnessing this spectacle, Youya felt like his cold heart was starting to become slightly warmed. Meanwhile, his food was delivered to the table and he started his meal.

"Delicious. The chef who works here definitely has good cooking skills."

(Youya)

Before he came to this city, he had worked in a big city but he felt that the city did not have many stores that sold food which tasted better than this. As he was lost in thought, a man equipped in magical metal armour and a silver class adventurer's card hanging from his neck sat in the seat in front of Youya. His equipment were clearly not from the village, however his face was a familiar face. A face full of vigor and confidence

"I've been looking for you, Youya-san." (Man)

"I heard that you have joined "Blow", Ain." (Youya)

This adventurer is called Ain. Seven years ago his parents begged Youya to teach him the ways of an adventurer. Youya ended up teaching him for only three years. However, after those three years, he became a full-fledged adventurer, competent enough to leave the village to challenge more difficult dungeons.

"Well I have been training for four years with the Blows, because of that I managed to become one of them. Also, i have decided to take on the Tower of Trials." (Ain)

The sound of Youya's spoon hitting the ground could be heard.

"Youya-san, Would you like to come with us to the Tower of Trials? Together we can show everyone how great of an adventurer you really are! I am sure someone of your caliber would be able to clear the trial easily!. Doesn't it sound like a good idea Teacher?" (Ain)

Youya took a deep breath and started recollecting about the past, about how

other teams told him similar things in the past. However, his answer was already decided long ago.

"Ain. I am grateful for how highly you think of me, however i have to decline. I am not a chosen one." (Youya)

The Tower of Trials. It's the goal that every adventurer in pursuit of strength seeks to overcome. It is the place when an adventurer goes if he wishes to become stronger, to be stronger than everyone else.

Yet, more than a decade ago, it was the place that I ran from without even attempting it.

"Teacher! Please do not say such things about yourself. I have two dependable companions who are coming with us. We have the manpower to conquer the trials. If only we had the experience, skill and strength of my teacher there, conquering the trails would be a breeze-" (Ain)

As Ain was about to finish his sentence, i activated my status card. In this world, a status card reveals the status of it's owner, containing information about their levels and stats. It also serves as an identification card and a wallet for carrying money. Ain stopped talking and looked at the window that popped out, with a look of disbelief.

"It can't be.. Teacher you are lying to me.. Right?" (Ain)

"I've told you this many times. I was unlucky. It wasn't as if I didn't have the passion and the goal of becoming stronger, aiming to conquer the trials. However, back then, as me and my friends became stronger, as our levels went higher and higher, my heart became colder and colder. Eventually, I fell into despair. It was impossible for me. Conquering the trials. When my friends told me that they were challenging the trials, I left my party. I was given the opportunity to become stronger, to challenge the Tower of Trials, but I ran away without even attempting it. I threw away my chance at becoming strong. That is how I started doing an unreasonable job such as being an exclusive adventurer." (Youya)

In this world, something known as a "Status" existed.

The upper limit for leveling in this world was level 50.

Whenever a person leveled up, they had their stats parameters increased by a value of one to three. Normally, an average person would have their stat parameters increased by two points when they leveled up, but there are always variations and Yuya was one of those variations.

Everytime he leveled up, his stat parameters would only increase by one point. No matter how many times he leveled up, the increments never changed. Unwilling to let go of his dream, he pushed forward and continued to raise his level believing that once he hit level 50, the missing points would return. However, even when he achieved level 50, his stats remained unaffected, leaving him to despair.

In the midst of his despair, he wondered if there was a different strength in this world, a strength beyond one's status. He tried to believe that there was a strength that could overcome even a person's low stat parameters and began to polish his swordsmanship. After decades of training, my swordsmanship was at its peak, and he found it. Through blood, sweat and tears, he attained the strength that goes beyond the limitation known as "Status".

Despite this, everything still had a limit.

As another person's level grew higher, the disparity between their status would become larger as well. Yuya knew painfully well how large the gap has an effect in a person's effective battle stats. Polishing his swordsmanship gave him the confidence to call himself a first-class adventurer, however he could never be considered a top-tier adventurer. He knew it was impossible to catch up to the people who were chosen, the people who were given the opportunity, the stats required to be the strongest. Thus, he gave up on the dream of becoming the strongest and instead, chose a stable job by completing quests with lower difficulties to earn a living.

"Ain. If its you, I am sure that it is possible to clear the tower. You are different from me. You are lucky enough to be able to do so unlike me. I wish you good luck in your trials." (Youya)

Ain was someone who had the minimum requirement to enter the realm of the warriors. He had the increase in stat parameters required to enter it, thus he was someone that was surely going to his teacher, achieving something that

was impossible for Youya.

"Sorry Yuoya-san. I didn't know about this." (Ain)

"Don't worry Ain, i know that you are someone who cherishes his teacher very much. I am sorry that I had to tell you a depressing story about your teacher. Since I am done with my meal, I will be making a move." (Youya)

Truth was Ain had wanted to stay late that night to drink, but the atmosphere that night, made it difficult to for him to drink.

"Seriously.. Why did he have to remind me about the past. It is impossible for me who lacked the status." (Youya)

Recollecting the memories and the passion he once had, the embers of the flames that once existed in his heart, began to reignite.

Chapter 1: The old man remembered

As the night ended, the sun could be seen in the horizon, rising into the sky.

It was sunrise, and Youya was preparing for his daily training. Grasping his overused sword which he treasured dearly, he left his home.

Youya's sword wasn't a flashy sword by any means. It was merely an easy to use, thick and heavy longsword. However, it is a magical sword which possesses a highly advanced magical enchantment, "Restoration". It possessed the ability to recover any damage sustained to the blade. It was Youya's trusted sword which kept him alive for his whole life. He hoped that it wouldn't ever break and fight with him until the very end. It was the sword that he loved, and will continue to until the very end.

Youya began his daily training. It had become a daily routine for him to perform training every morning. He closed his eyes, picturing an imaginary enemy to battle in his mind. Then, he slowly traced the techniques and skills that was ingrained in his body during his adventuring days, slowly allowing his body to remember the sensations he had risking his life fighting powerful enemies.

In this world, things such as "Levels" and "Status" existed. It determined a person's Attack power, Defensive power, Agility and Magic power. However, a person's strength did not come just from his stat parameters or his level. It also came in the form of a person's spirit and their training. At the very least, in the most desperate of situations, only a heart of steel honed from vigorous training will a person be able to survive.

If an attack is unable to land, it does not matter how high your attack parameters are. If a person's defense is inadequate, it does not matter how high your defensive parameters are. If an attack misses or a defense is sloppy, it is pointless. Hence a person's status does not measure his full combat capabilities. However, with training and techniques, a person's combat effectiveness could surpass the limit of their status. Techniques allows one to utilise their whole body to add weight to their attacks as well as target vital

points and defend against attacks beyond their defensive parameters.

Youya had believed this. No, he had to believe it.

If a person's combat effectiveness was determined by their status, Youya would have been the laughing stock of all warriors. An average person would have their stat parameters increase by 2 whenever they leveled up, but Youya's stats were inferior to that. His stats had only increased by one. This went on as Youya approached the level cap of 50.

Even so, he desired to get stronger and realise his dream. He refined his sword techniques and trained his body everyday, refusing to give up his dream. He believed that "Status" was a strength that existed to compensate the lack of training required to become stronger and training would be much more beneficial to becoming stronger and obtaining a heart as strong as steel.

"Phew. Feels like my body is not that old yet huh. I can still move pretty well."
(Youya)

Every-time Youya swung his sword, he could feel his body's senses sharpen. It was as if his nerves were connected to the tip of his sword, and his whole body moved as one, following the image in his head.

However, techniques weren't enough to fill the gap in his status. At level 50, the difference in Youya's stats and an average person was large, and no amount of training and swordsmanship would be capable of filling that gap. In order to overcome that gap, Youya had obtained a secret power. A power that no one was aware of, and only he possessed it.

Initially, Youya was curious in the phenomenon known as "Status". He wanted to know why and how a person became stronger as his level increases. One day, piqued by his curiosity, Youya had found himself in a dangerous situation. Thinking his life was over, he closed his eyes assuming it was the end. Suddenly, he saw a door appear in front of him. It was the door that signified the limit of his status. When he tried to push it open, he understood the mysterious power that is the "Status" in the world. He obtained a secret strength which no one has seen.

A power which allowed him to obtain a status on par with others, a power given to him by the world.

A world, that was only for him.

After completing his morning training, Youya headed over to the guild.

He approached the reception lady to look for requests to complete. Fortunately, there wasn't any request that required his attention. However as it was his last day, he was not going to say it out loud. As the guild staff approached Youya to give him gifts and their words of thanks, Youya felt loneliness creep up in his heart, knowing he would miss everyone when he leaves the village.

After visiting the guild, Youya returned home to prepare his luggage. As he was preparing his luggage he came across a set of photographs that were placed faced down by Youya when he arrived here.

Those photos depicted Youya's party before they decided to challenge the Tower of Trials.

One of the photos showed Youya's party in one of the big cities starting their adventure, with another photo showing everyone in the party.

In the photos, there was a young Youya, another young man, an Elf girl and a large Dragonoid man laughing together. It was a fairly young party who were aiming for the top and were challenging a super high difficulty dungeon at the moment. The young man and Elf were also Youya's disciples. They were people who were brimming with talent and blessed with high statuses, surpassing Youya quickly and becoming even stronger.

"Seriously. After living in this village all these years, I never expected someone to invite me to the Tower of Trials once more. Thanks you Ain, you helped me remember things that should not be forgotten." (Youya)

Feeling nostalgic, he smiled towards the young man in the photograph, remembering the young man's words as he hit level 50.

"Master let's challenge the Tower of Trials together! If it is us, our party, we can definitely do it! And once we do, we will finally be real heroes!" (Young man)

At the time, Youya felt a wave of despair rush over his body. The tower was something that could only be cleared by forming a party composed of the best

adventurers in the world. It was as difficult as it was rewarding. Clearing the tower would allow a person to go past level 50 as well as treasures that one could only wish for. However, that wasn't all there was to it. Entering the tower would cause the party to be cursed, preventing any of them from leaving the tower. The only way to escape the tower was to clear the trials that appeared in the tower. The tower itself had a survival rate of 2%.

Youya had decided to refuse the young man's invitation and left the party. He knew that with his incompetence, he would only be dragging the party down. He was too weak to utilise his secret strength and that would ultimately lead to the party's demise. Thus he found a substitute for himself and left the city.

After that, he threw away his dream of becoming the strongest. Time passed and he became an exclusive adventurer in a village, challenging intermediate dungeons for his retirement savings while looking after the novice adventurers.

However, as he was about to enter retirement, one of his former disciples, Ain, asked him to challenge the Tower of Trials together with him, reminding Youya of his party mate, Leonard. The flames that were extinguished when Youya ran from the Tower, started burning once more. The passion that was distinguished, the urge to become stronger and the drive to move forward. The waves of emotions became stronger and stronger.

"What this? You left your talented disciples behind. The disciples who respected and believed in you because you were afraid of challenging the Tower. Why would you behave like this now? After all these years? No, you knew the answer from the start. You knew it all along." (Youya)

As Youya reprimanded himself, he knew the answer in his heart was always there. He always wanted to become stronger. He always wanted to be the strongest, even with the setback of having a bad status, he wished to become stronger. It was the reason why he had continued training everyday. It was impossible to maintain a person's techniques and experience without practicing everyday. It was also the reason why he did not sell his powerful magic items despite being worth a fortune. It was a necessity for him to challenge a dungeon with these items. Realizing his own weakness, he thought he gave up his dreams, but he never did.

When he heard rumors about his first disciple, Leonard attempting to challenge the Tower of Trials with a new party, his feelings was not the pride of having a disciple to cleared the tower, nor was it the relief of knowing his disciple survived the tower, but regret that he could not be there to challenge the trial with him.

Youya felt frustrated at his status, thinking that if he did not have such a weak status, at the very least he wished to go back to level 1. He thought that if it meant getting a better status, he would not mind restarting over. In fact he would welcome it. However it was impossible. The only other way he could compensate for his weak status was with extremely powerful magic items.

"Well I know better than everyone that I do not have overpowered magic items for that." (Youya)

At that moment, Yuya felt waves of emotions take over his body. His hands were hot and his head felt heavy. Unable to control the emotions he felt, he struck the wall with his palm.

"Why am I acting so weird today. Did I drink sake earlier? It is not even noon!!?" (Youya)

Suddenly, several sentences appeared into Yuya's mind

A person who has reached level 50 can have their level reset in a hidden room of a dungeon

When their level is reset, their stat parameters will rise and they will obtain skill points.

Although the way to reset a person's level is limited, there are ways to raise a person's status to its maximum potential

Based on research, the best way to increase a person's stats would be a Magic Knight

Magic customs can create cheats and other magical numbers

Using magical equipments allows a person to exploit a bug in the status system

Do not challenge the Tower of Trials. The Tower is adjusted based on the

assumption that the challengers are made of parties with the highest status.

"HAHAHHA. That sounds ridiculous."(Youya)

"That is basically all I ever wanted isn't it? Despite finishing with this shitty status. I can just reset my level to increase my status!? And add the skill points I gain to become even stronger??? That sounds so ridiculous." (Youya)

Youya felt bitter. After considering the possibility that his stat increments could be fixed instead of random, he felt like giving up. It was impossible to become the strongest. If someone blessed with the best status in the world, obtained the strength that Yuya took decades to obtain. The strength to compensate for his lack of status. That person would truly become the strongest.

Suddenly, the image of a hidden room in a dungeon appeared in his mind. It was like a dream come true, like a delusion. A passion that could not be thrown away, after many years, was showing Yuya visions. Yuya wondered if it was possible to have something this convenient.

However, even so.

"There is no reason for me not to go. I should go even if theres only a 1% chance." (Youya)

Youya thought that he was definitely crazy. His brain told him that it was impossible for such a thing to exist, but his heart and body told him otherwise. He was bad at giving up. If he had truly gave up adventuring in the past, he would had training daily to maintain his body. He was not going to attempt to improve his status, but he was unable to accept his bad luck as his fate.

Still remembering the actions, Youya prepared himself for traveling and left the city, heading towards the dungeon containing the hidden room, convinced that he would be able to start over.

Chapter 2: The Old man who reset his level

In a forest far from the village, a man could be seen riding a horse-like creature at a speed impossible for horses. The creature's species was known as Raptors. Raptors were faster and stronger than average horses as well as more useful in combat than trained horses. They were useful creatures that can be found in dungeons and were often tamed by adventurers due to the massive advantages that they provided.

In their current situation, if a person were to determine their destination, that person would merely assume the adventurer to be travelling into the wilderness blindly seeking adventure. That person would never guess that the travelling adventurer destination was a room which could perform the impossible.

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It appeared in my mind again... The hidden room.

Why can't I stop thinking about the room? Why do I continue to believe in a fairy tale?

A room capable of resetting a person's level.

I just can't imagine such a convenient room existing in this world.

If it did exist, why wasn't it discovered long ago? Such a room would had been famous worldwide in the blink of an eye.

If it was impossible for such a room to exist, why am i still trying to aim for the dungeon that appeared in my head?

Sigh I must look like an idiot. I know that it is impossible and yet, I still want to go to that dungeon to confirm it for myself. I never realised it but i really am bad at giving up huh. Probably the worst in the whole world.

I probably realised it a long time ago.. That if I had given up my dream of

becoming the strongest, I would have fallen into depression a long time ago due to my weak status.

Subconsciously, I knew that even if I did obtain a power beyond my status, even with all the training I have done.. No. Even if I did have a normal status, I would not have been able to clear the Tower of Trials, and continued running from it without giving up.

It feels like I have been waiting all this time, waiting for something.

At this moment, something appeared in the distance. The heat in my chest started to radiate even further.

For the sake of resetting my level, I continued to ride towards the entrance of the dungeon that will definitely contain the level reset room.

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In this world, dungeons are not considered a national threat, but rather a resource. If the monsters within were defeated, they would drop items which could be collected to be used or sold for money. There are also monsters that could be tamed as well as treasure chests containing treasures. These monsters and chests would re-spawn once every week, thus dungeons were a resource that provided endless amounts of materials and treasures. Seeking this valuable resource, towns and villages were often built near dungeons. Time to time, monsters would escape from the dungeons and wreck havoc inside the towns and villages, however people were still willing to take the risk as the dungeons had provided more benefits than the risk it provided.

Dungeons that are not located near human civilisations are called wild dungeons.

These dungeons are often considered more dangerous than normal dungeons as the number of monsters are typically higher. In normal dungeons, many adventurers enter in hopes of hunting delicious drop items or treasure chests. This causes the number of monsters in the dungeon to be regulated every week as adventurers continue to hunt for their income. However this is not the case

for wild dungeons. Wild dungeons are dungeons that are not controlled by humans. As there are rarely adventurers entering these dungeons, the dungeon is filled with monsters and it is impossible to ask for help in a dire situation. If the secret room existed, this is likely the reason why it was never noticed.

The dungeon Youya arrived in appears to be a wild dungeon.

"It seems that this dungeon is a cave-type." (Youya)

Cave dungeons are one of the most disliked dungeons among adventurers due to their low visibility and low efficiency. They are one of the dungeons that require utmost diligence from any adventurers who aim to conquer them as adventurers are required to carry a light source with them, thus hindering their combat prowess. In addition, many monsters that dwell in cave dungeons typically hide in the shadows to attack unsuspecting adventurers from their blind spots or incapacitate them. With such a high difficulty rate, many adventurers often neglect cave-type dungeons as their rewards was not worth the effort that was required to conquer the dungeon.

"If only I had a magic flare with me." (Youya)

Unknowingly, Youya complained as he took out his magic torch from his bag and held it in his hand. Magic torches were torches that could be used to light the area surrounding the torch up to 5 meters whereas magic flares functioned both as a light source and a repellent for monsters.

Magic flares were especially effective for cave explorations as it was a light source that did not attract monsters, but rather dissuade them from approaching as monsters disliked the light it emitted. As Youya began his exploration of the dungeon, he held a short sword in his free hand rather than his trusted two-handed sword. This was another factor that caused Youya to feel uneasy as one of his hands was occupied by the torch, so he had to settle for a short sword to defend himself. His grip tightened on the short sword as he started to feel comfortable with it while walking through the cave.

The moment Youya started to feel comfortable, he felt a chill rushing down his spine. Following his instincts, he jumped to the right. As he regained his footing, his eye caught something flying into the spot where he was standing before. It was a monster called "Tyrant Snake". It was a snake with a girth as big

an adult's neck that possessed a poison capable of paralyzing its victims. It had moved without a sound right into Youya's blind spot and rushed at him. If its rush was successful, Youya would have been paralyzed and slowly suffocated as the snake wrapped itself around him. However, Youya was a trained swordsman. In this world, experienced swordsmen were able to unconsciously detect presences within their sword's range. It was a skill that belonged only to the best of swordsmen.

Taking advantage of the recoil thanks to its rush, Youya immediately dropped the torch and grabbed the snake with an eagle's grip, forcing its head to the ground. Then he immediately placed his iron boot onto its head, immobilizing it and swung his short sword down onto its neck, severing its head from its body. As proof of its defeat, the snake's remains turned into blue particles.

Judging from the experience gained from the battle, Youya estimated that the level of the dungeon was probably level 20 to 30. Wasting no time, Youya immediately picked up his torch and continued forward into the dungeon.

It has been four hours since I started exploring the dungeon.

I can feel my fatigue accumulating as I venture deeper into the cave. My body starts to feel sluggish and my mind starts to shut down as I look at the unchanging scenery around me.

Originally, when a person's field of vision is limited, battling becomes much more difficult as they have to raise their attentiveness to the surroundings. Not just the field of vision, with my battle capabilities hindered due to the torch, I am in an uncomfortable situation where I have to suffer multiple handicaps whereas the monsters which dwell in this area have the advantage as their battle capabilities weren't hindered. Not to mention that the monsters would not require light to maneuver in combat and skills such as paralysis. Entering such a dungeon alone would be suicide.

This torch also served as a moving beacon, luring every monster in the vicinity to my location. It was as if I was serving myself to them on a silver platter. I knew this the moment I entered the cave, and my instincts were screaming at me not to lower my guard. This pressure pushed my mind into hyper drive and consumed my stamina much faster than usual. However, thanks to this

pressure, I have survived thus far and I have finally arrived at the third floor of the dungeon.

"This place looks exactly the same as the image back then" (Yuya)

If my memory is correct, the hidden room that contains the level reset function should be somewhere in this area.

As I investigated the area, I found a pure white stone monument standing in a corner. According to the image, this monument should be the entrance to the hidden room.

I walked to the side of the monument and leaned my body weight onto the monument to push it, revealing a secret door hidden in the wall. For some reason, I knew that it was a door that was sealed using magic, and that it required specific conditions before a person could open the door.

I placed my hand on the door.

RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE

The sealed door started to rumble and opened itself, revealing a secret room.

Just how did I know, that I needed to be level 50 to open this door?

In the first place, it was impossible for anyone to discover this place, much less figure out how to open this door.

For an adventurer to coincidentally discover this dungeon, decide to enter the dungeon despite its difficulty and inefficiency compared to normal dungeons. After spending their energy and stamina travelling in the dungeon for over four hours, push aside a white monument that could possibly be a trap, revealing a door that can only be opened by a person who was level 50. There was too many variables and even if the person was blessed with the best luck, it was still unreasonable to expect a level 50 adventurer to enter a dungeon filled with monsters leveled 30 at best.

The person would need to know about the hidden room to actually find it.

Thinking about it calmly, it was even more unreasonable.

In the first place, resetting their levels was every adventurers' dream. If they had obtained unsatisfactory statuses like I did, they would had chosen to reset

and start all over. If anyone knew about the level reset function, news about it would have spread all around the world. Which means that if it was still unknown, then the conditions were impossible to be discovered by mere coincidence.

"Could this really happen...??" (Youya)

As I wondered to myself, I entered the hidden room. My heartbeat became harder and louder, and my expectation was growing more and more.

"What the hell is this room?" (Youya)

I turned off my torch as the room was illuminated by a magic stone called Photonic Crystal.

At the back of the room, there was a statue of a goddess made by chalk. It was the very same statue that appeared in my mind. The vision I saw turned out to be reality, I did find the room that contained the level reset function. However, I did not know what to do.

"How do I activate the level reset function." (Youya)

I was clueless and afraid. I knew that this place existed and what it could do, but I did not know how to activate its function. When I thought that I might not be able to reset my level despite discovering this place, I couldn't stop shivering in fear.

"Wait a minute, what the hell is that?" (Youya)

As I looked around the room, I noticed a large transparent crystal at the side of the room.

"A girl with animal ears... and a tail?" (Youya)

The crystal contained a girl around the age of 14. Her eyes were closed and she had beautiful reddish golden hair with animal ears and a tail. If they were dog ears, she would be a dog-kin, however it was obvious that her ears and tail were much larger than a dog-kin.

For some reason, I felt myself being drawn to the crystal. I extended my hand and placed it on the surface of the crystal. As if I knew what would happen, I quickly extended both my hands. The crystal shatters as my hand touched the

surface. In a hurry, I grabbed the girl in a princess carry. Any normal adventurer would never do this. It was a risk to expect the girl not to be a monster, especially when the person was alone. However, I knew that she wasn't.

"Are you alright?" (Youya)

As I carried the girl, she started to open her eyes. She sloppily turned her eyes and looked at me.

"I...Was.....Waiting...Forever..." (Girl)

"What do you mean by that?" (Youya)

"It's time to remember. The memory of your distant past." (Girl)

The girl extended her hands, placing them on the back of my neck. She pulled my face towards hers, and I felt my lips connect with hers. After kissing me, the girl went back to sleep, and I laid her on the ground.

Information started flowing into my brain like an open dam. Information that felt like memories. A huge influx of memories starting swirling into my brain. Memories about a man, born into a country called Japan. He grew up and became a typical salaryman. It was a normal life where the man worked everyday without any trouble, but he would not be successful in life. No matter how much he tried, his achievements would never be his. Other people would present the results he produced and gain the achievement. Even so he continued trying his best. That man felt strangely familiar, as if he was close to him. As if it was him himself.

"What the hell is this?? What is going on?? This isn't me. That CANT be me."
(Youya)

No.. It definitely is me, but yet it isnt. That isn't me.

"It's my previous life..." (Youya)

As I came to that conclusion, the memory about the man, spending all his leisure time into playing a game flowed into my brain. A game that looked exactly the same as this world.. My world.

"If that was truly my previous life, then according to the memory, I know how to activate the level reset function" (Yuya)

I took one of the light crystals that was set onto the walls of the room, and placed it into the necklace of the goddess's chest. The light crystal fit perfectly into the necklace and starts to emit a soft light.

"Welcome, adventurer with power. Congratulations on your journey thus far. I am an artifact created with the goal of making adventurers stronger by sacrificing their levels. Are you willing to give up the levels you have built up thus far, in exchange for becoming stronger?" (Goddess statue)

The dialogue is identical to the one in my memory. This statue allows a person to reset their level, in turn sacrificing all the experience gained. My journey has been a painful one. I had no choice but to stick with my weak status, fighting battles with a handicap. I wish to restart and be reborn, and be rewarded for all my hardwork.

"I do." (Youya)

"The ritual has been accepted. Adventurer Youya. From now on, your level will be reset back to level one, and you will be reborn." (Goddess Statue)

The soft light starts to illuminate even further, becoming harsher and hotter. The light starts to overflow from the necklace and envelop my body. My body started heating up, as if i was being disintegrated. After a brief moment, the light starts to dissipate.

I was reborn.

"You have been reborn. You are now level one and every skill you have attained up to this point has been lost." (Goddess Statue)

A status card was displayed from the statue.

My status had reset back to how it was at level 1, and i was no longer a "Warrior" class. I was released from the miserable status that gave me the worst stats ever possible.

"Exactly the same as my memory..." (Youya)

In addition, i received a 10 point bonus for each stat and 20 skill points. Normally an average person's stats increased by 2 points and gained one skill point per level. This meant that i had a five level and 20 level bonus

respectively.

"With this, I will be able to aim for the top. To be the strongest again."
(Youya)

I walked to the fountain in the middle of the room, and looked my reflection.

I saw the same 36 years old middle-aged face.

However, this time it looked full of vitality, as if it was a young adult who had the face of an old man.

"I am convinced now. That the reincarnation was real." (Youya)

Apparently I was reincarnated into a world similar to the game that I had played, and lived without any memories of my past life. It was a blessing in disguise. If I had my memories right from the beginning, I wouldn't had been able to adapt to this world. It would had been impossible to fight monsters and endure the rice in this world.

"Looks like I have finished my first round in this world."

Normally it would be a disaster to have your level reset back to one as an adventurer. It would be impossible to accomplish anything and death would come before you even hit level 50 again. Normally.

With my accumulated experience as an adventurer from round one, and my knowledge accumulated from my previous life. If they are used together, nothing is impossible. I will be able to become much stronger.

It is about time I was rewarded for my efforts.

There are many things I want to do, but for some reason, I know that I absolutely must not abandon this girl.

"I wasn't planning to anyway" (Yuya)

I placed a mantle over the girl's body.

This was the start of my second round in another world.

Chapter 3: The old man who picked up a girl

Level reset.

The Phenomenon that allows a person to reset their level back to one, with additional benefits. Their status will be reset to the values it had when the person was level one, with a boost of 10 points to all stats. An average person gains about 2 points to all stats per level, equating to a total of 98 points when they hit the level cap at 50. In comparison to the values lost to gained these 10 points, it may be insignificant. However, what makes these points amazing is the fact that they are bonuses, and when a person who reset their level manages to hit level 50, they will have an additional 10 points above everyone else.

In addition, the person will be granted an additional 20 skill points. One skill point is granted every level, leading to an additional 20 levels in terms of skill points above everyone else. Both these factors give an overwhelming advantage for someone who is aiming for the top.

"Although, it isn't a laughing matter for a 36 years old man to be level 1. Normally, an adventurer who is level 1 enters a dungeon for the first time at an age of 11. If that is the case, they would achieve level 50 by the age of 27. Following this rate, I would already be 52 years old by the time I achieve level 50.." (Youya)

Although I know that won't happen. When I started adventuring, I was just a mere adventurer who was trying to earn a living. I was desperate to stay alive back then. I couldn't just throw my life away seeking adventures, there were many things I had to do besides becoming stronger. However, more than anything, i was completely clueless back then and had to learn everything from scratch.

The adventuring life is not a kind one. Adventurers are competing for resources, hunting the same monsters in the same dungeons for the same drops. Even completing quests that are the same just to earn a living. So newcomers are often left in the dark as veterans will not teach the art of

adventuring to beginners in order to secure as much resources for themselves as possible.

Back when I was an exclusive adventurer, I was one of the rarer adventurers who were willing to show the ropes to beginners. I wasn't too concerned about sharing the limited resources and took on the responsibility of mentoring new adventurers. Another reason why veterans avoided teaching beginners was the fact that it was just outright annoying. Newcomers had to be helped with everything and because even simple mistakes could had dire consequences, strict supervision and multiple checks were required.

However, that is not the case for me right now.

I am not new to the adventuring lifestyle nor will I make simple mistakes. I have a huge bank reserve as well as the equipment necessary to keep myself safe. In other words, I have the experience accumulated in this world from my first round, as well as the memories of my past life. With these, it wouldn't even take me three years to achieve level 50. After that, I will conquer the Tower of Trials.

However.. Before any of that..

"What am I supposed to do with this girl..?" (Youya)

Whether it was my experience living in this world or my past life's memories, I have never seen nor experienced having a girl who was trapped in a giant crystal before. She looks just like an event character, but i don't recall an event where a girl was trapped in a gigantic crystal back in the game. Such an event didn't exist in the game. Now that I have the memories of my past life, I can tell that the girl has the tail and ears of a fox. Foxes didn't exist in this world.

There are many demihumans that existed in this world. Dog-kin , Cat-kin, Elves, Dwarves and dragonoids. However, fox-kins were not one of them.

Well irregardless, I should take her away from this room. If I were to leave a defenseless girl in the middle of a dungeon like this, I would feel guilty for the rest of my life. She probably didn't need to eat any meals when she was trapped in the crystal, but now that she isn't, what's there to say that she didn't need nutrition to survive? If she were to leave the room in search for food, and got attacked by a demon, there would be no one to help her.

I took the mantle that was used to cover her body and wrapped her instead, and started carrying her.

Heavy.

It is clear that the weight wasn't due to the girl, evidently by her small stature. The level reset has reduced my strength significantly. It has become much more difficult to perform intensive activities just due to my decrease in stats.

I smiled to myself.

I am glad to have this heavy body.

It is proof that I will be able to become stronger from now on.

Behind the statue, there was a blue vortex.

The magical vortex only appears in the deepest area of the dungeon and anything that enters it will be teleported back to the entrance of the dungeon.

This is particularly convenient as adventurers who enter dungeons for hunting items can escape the cave with lesser baggage than they had when entering the dungeon. It is especially dangerous to retrace one's steps after travelling this deep into a dungeon considering the fact that all consumables would likely be depleted at this point.

In my case.

The situation was worse, as my level was reset to one.

If I came back the way I entered, I would die one hundred percent of the time.

I jumped into the vortex while carrying the girl, and felt the sensation of being teleported to another location.

Leaving the dungeon is easy, but the hard part has yet to come. The path to the village is filled with demons about level 20. I have to remember to avoid them at all cost.

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Well I made it home safely.

I placed the Raptor in a stable and pampered him for awhile. I pet him and fed him a lot of water as thanks for his hard work. Thanks to his hard work, we barely managed to make it back to the village.

We encountered multiple demons on the way back as expected. Normally Raptor would be able to outrun the demons easily. However, I forgot to account for the girl. With two people riding Raptor, his movements became much slower and we were nearly caught multiple times. I had even considered throwing the girl as bait for us to escape, but luckily it never came to that.

"Well now what do i do with this sleeping beauty." (Youya) (Note:Yuya changed to Youya)

It would be simple for me if i could just pushed her into an orphanage in the village, but judging by her looks, she seems to be about 13 or 14 years old. It would be impossible as the orphanage only takes children up to the age of 12. I myself was raised in the orphanage and kicked out when I was 12. As long as her age is unknown, it is impossible to give her to the orphanage.

Sigh, if only the girl was capable of surviving on her own. It is likely that she wouldn't survive on her own since she had been encased in the crystal until i found her.

Well no point thinking too hard about it, I'll just ask her about it afterwards. While waiting for her to wake up, I left the house in search of dinner.

You know what they say. Days where you don't have time to drink, are days you enjoy a special meat pie.

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Night came.

The girl is still sleeping soundly.

I was planning on waiting until the girl woke up, but my hunger started to take over.

I lit a fire in the furnace and placed the meat pie in the oven.

A delicious smell resonated throughout the house as the meat pie started to heat up.

grrgrrgrr

Suddenly I heard the sound of a stomach rumble. However it wasn't mine, but the girl's stomach.

"You finally woke up?" (Youya)

The girl finally woke up. She had one hand grabbing the towel I used to cover her body and her ears twitched back and forth. It was a gesture just like a pet, and it was extremely cute.

"Uncle.. Who?" (Girl)

"Uncle is an adventurer. My name is Youya. I picked you up in a dungeon that I visited. What about you? What's your name?" (Youya)

"Me..? I'm....uhhh...who?" (Girl)

The girl started to scratch her head and wobbled back and forth. It looked as if she was a bubblehead. It wasn't like I didn't consider it, but it appears she has amnesia due to being trapped in the crystal. It was the worst case possible for her as she would not be able to survive alone in this harsh world.

"Well this uncle doesn't know either. For the time being, let's have dinner. You are hungry aren't you?" (Youya)

I took out the hot meat pie from the oven and cut it. Afterwards I took out two wooden mugs and prepared cheap ale for myself to drink while preparing milk for the girl.

I placed the mugs and the meat pie on the table.

The girl noticed the food and walked over to the table sloppily, although she seems to be wary of me. Her eyes seem to be inspecting me as well as the food on the table

"Uncle, can this be eaten?" (Girl)

"Yes it is. It was too big for me to finish by myself so i cut it for us to share."
(Youya)

The girl inspects the meat pie carefully before sniffing it. After confirming it was safe to eat, the girl picked up the meat pie and bit into its contents. Her eyes started to quiver and shone brightly. Her whole body was shaking and her tail moved back and forth furiously.

It was extremely cute.

"Is it delicious?" (Youya)

"Yes! It is extremely delicious!!" (Girl)

"Hahaha that's good. Eat up then. There is plenty more for us to eat in the kitchen" (Youya)

Watching the girl eat the meat pie so heartedly made me hungry as i picked up a slice.

This scene made me realise, how soft-hearted I have become.

Back in the days, I was only trying to survive. I was so desperate that i had never looked out for others. Most likely, i would had abandoned even this cute little girl for my own life.

However, I became an exclusive adventurer and learnt to nurture the new generation. When I realise that I could use my own power to save the lives of others, I felt a new sense of joy that I had never felt before.

Ah wait a minute

At this rate she's going to finish the meat pie

Hey the meat pie is for me too.

Don't finish everything by yourself!!

Sigh do all girls her age eat like this??

In the end, she ate about 70% of the meat pie and is drinking her milk deliciously.

"So did you remember anything about yourself?" (Youya)

The girl shakes her head.

"Sorry, none at all." (Girl)

"Sigh I figured as much." (Youya)

It's not like I did not expect this to happen. If it was this easy to remember lost memories, amnesia would not be a serious condition.

That's why I am going to give the girl three options.

"From now on, you have three options. First, you can leave this house and survive on your own" (Youya)

The girl started to cry as I gave her the first option. She was a cute girl who had no memories and nobody to rely on. If she were to be left alone in the world, she will be in danger. The world is not so gentle that a little girl like her would be able to survive by herself. In addition, there will be many men who will be looking to chase after her, especially slave traders who would earn quite a price showcasing a new species of demihumans.

"Could you please tell me the other 2 options?" (Girl)

The girl is surprising perceptive, instead of crying about the first option she was able to positively ask about the other two options.

"Second, with my recommendation, I can get you a job at a local bar." (Youya)

The owner of the bar was always complaining about the lack of personnel. If I introduced her to him, I am sure he would be pleased so long as she was a competent worker. This could also increase the sales of the bar by having two showgirls instead of one.

"Bar..?" (Girl)

"Do you know what's a bar?" (Youya)

"Yes. It is a place where people go to drink and eat." (Girl)

It appears that even though she lost her memory, she still retains the basic knowledge and common sense of this world.

Come to think of it, the reason why I managed to remember my memories

was because she kissed me back in that room. It is pretty unfortunate that the person who helped me remembered ended up forgetting.

"Don't worry. The father who owns the bar is a good person. He has a daughter about your age called Nikita. They will definitely welcome you with open arms so long as you try your best and don't cause any trouble there."
(Youya)

Although I was introducing her to the bar, the introduction would be useless if she wasn't a competent worker and caused more harm than good.

"I see.. It is definitely much better than the first option. May i know the last option?" (Girl)

"The last option is to be an adventurer together with me. Earn a living by getting drop items from dungeons or searching for treasure chests. Well since we are both level one, it would be as if we were a novice party starting from scratch." (Youya)

It sounded less ridiculous in my head. Normally I would never invite a person to my party without accessing their abilities first. I also know firsthand how dangerous it is to allow incompetent members into my party. However, I felt that I needed to be in a party with this girl for some reason. In addition, there is a chance that she is an event character outside of my previous life's knowledge. If that was the case I would definitely like to keep her close to me. However.

"Obviously this option is much more dangerous than the second. It is also a fact that it would be difficult for a young girl like you to be in the same starting party as an old man. So i do not plan to force you onto any decision. You have to make the choice yourself. Choose any of the options you deem best." (Youya)

The girl started to consider her options. With the lack of knowledge about the outside world, this decision could be considered harsh to force onto her. Irregardless, 9 out of 10 people would choose the bar. It is the safest route without any risks to the person's life.

"I choose to be an adventurer. I will try my best to be a good adventurer!"
(Girl)

"May I ask the reason why?" (Youya)

"Uhh.. I am afraid of being alone.. I don't know anything about the man at the bar but I know that you are a good person!" (Girl)

Because I am a good person... huh. Her trust in me is feels overwhelming to be honest.

"It also looks like the most fun option!" (Girl)

"Hahaha so that's it." (Youya)

Her response was so unexpected that I couldn't help but laugh. An adventurer actively seeking adventure for the sake of enjoyment. That is the number one quality that all adventurers should have. Or rather, it is the best quality an adventurer can have. An adventurer who seeks enjoyment in adventuring the unknown is an adventurer who can truly call themselves as one.

"Then it is decided. We will leave the village at dawn tomorrow and travel to a dungeon that is better suited for our levels." (Youya)

The dungeon in this village is too difficult for a level one party to attempt. Even though my level was reset, it does not make me the strongest yet. I still require time to train and increase my levels before i can truly become the strongest.

"Our destination will be Rumberg. It is a town for adventurers who are just starting out and there is also a facility that allows us to choose our class." (Youya)

Rumberg is a town considered sacred by all adventurers as that is everyone's starting point. The town contains a facility that allows a person to choose a class such as Warrior and Magician. Such a facility would never be present in a small village like this. In addition, there is a secret room in one of the dungeons there that fixes a person's stat increments to three points every levels. It is a room that I definitely want to go before I grind out my levels.

" Okay I understand. Sounds fun." (Girl)

"Let's rest until our departure tomorrow. I am tired now. You sleep on the bed and i sleep on the sofa" (Youya)

"Hmm? Not together on the bed?" (girl)

"Only lovers sleep together on the same bed, we should not sleep on the same bed." (Youya)

"Really? I don't mind if it is you though!" (Girl)

"I am an old man you know. I will not and never plan to lay a hand on a girl as young as you. Do I look like a paedophile to you?" (Youya)

"Nope! I just thought that all men were like that" (Girl)

"You... are you sure you don't remember anything?" (Youya)

For a cute girl to say such outrageous things, I am starting to doubt she hasn't recalled anything at this point. Sigh. Whatever, I am tired. I couldn't even think of laying a hand on a child.

I lie on the sofa and turn my back towards her.

"Hey Youya~" (Girl)

"What. I am tired" (Youya)

"I want a name. I don't want you to call me You You You everyday from now on. It would be more convenient to give me a name." (Girl)

"A name huh. I didn't think of that... What about Luna?" (Youya)

I could not think of any names to give her. The only thing of was the meat pie that she ate earlier. It was a specialty of a bar and it had the same name as the shop.

"It's a cute name! I like it! From now on, my name is Luna!" (Luna)

Well looks like shes satisfied with the name. I am glad she likes it

"Well then, now that you got your name, its time to sleep" (Youya)

We have to wake up early tomorrow, and as adventurers we should rest up as much as we can.

Chapter 4: The old man heads to the city of beginnings

Yesterday, I traveled into a wild cave dungeon in search of a hidden room that was capable of resetting a person's level. In that same room, there was a girl around the age of 13 encased in a giant crystal. After releasing her from the crystal, I brought her home where we discovered that she suffered from amnesia. Unable to recall her name, she requested for me to name her. Now, that girl is called Luna.

She was satisfied with her name, saying that it was a cute name. I should probably avoid letting her know that I got the name from a meat pie.

Fast forward to the next morning, I am sleeping soundly in my own bed. Originally, the plan was to have Luna sleep on the bed while I slept on the sofa. However, Luna was so adamant about sleeping together that she even crawled onto the sofa while I was sleeping. In the end, I carried her to the bed and got into the bed together with her. After I got into the bed, I turned my back towards her and fell asleep. This girl is either really shameless or just outright bold, wanting to sleep with a man that she had just met the very same day.

Could it be that all girls her age are this bold?

Well, irregardless of her behaviour, she is not an ordinary girl. She was a girl who I found encased in a crystal that suffered from amnesia. If anything, she is far from ordinary. Not to mention the crystal she was trapped in was located in a hidden room within a random wild dungeon. Even if coincidentally the entrance to the room was discovered by an adventurer, the person would have to satisfy the requirement to unlock the room. Any adventurer who was level 50, would not have discovered the room as the dungeon level was estimated to be around level 30. Thus, for someone to locate the hidden room, they would require information about the room beforehand. Anyone who had access to such information is definitely not normal. If the person who located the room wasn't normal, there is no doubt that the person trapped inside is not normal too.

At this point, I am fairly certain that Luna is an event character. The very fact that she is a Fox Beastman is proof enough. Foxes didn't exist in this world, and that confused me when I first discovered her. However, once I remembered the memories of my past life, I could determine that her ears and tail resembled a fox. Well that is still a superficial reason though. Truth was I wanted to be in the same party as Luna. My instincts were telling me that this girl must not left alone. As a veteran adventurer, the more experience you have, the harder it is to ignore your intuition.

For breakfast, we ate some preserved food that was stored at home for emergencies. After breakfast, we waited outside the front door, expecting a carriage to arrive. After waiting for several minutes, a carriage could be seen turning the corner before arriving at my doorstep.

Initially, I planned to leave this village and return to the countryside. However, I only intended to bring the essentials as well as my valuable magic items such as my

Magic bag (Capacity:Large) and my Magic Sword

. It was a routine for adventurers who were changing their base of operations or retiring to sell off their furniture and other items to merchants in the area. In my case, it was the latter. This was a well-accepted practice as it allowed the adventurer to earn a large sum of money while the merchant obtained excellent second-hand goods It was more likely for the goods to be beneficial to the merchant either for resale purposes or for quality of life purposes as items that are picked up from dungeons are generally classified as

Magic items.

When I was an adventurer, I had obtained many valuable items from venturing into the dungeons. Although there weren't any intentions to use most of the items, it was the norm to hoard as much items as possible as there was a chance for the items to be useful in the future. This does not mean that I did not sell any Magic items as there were still items that were useless for adventurers. I sold many items on the marketplace in my time, however the item stockpile that I possessed had never diminished as they were always replenished whenever I entered into a dungeon.

I kept valuable items such as my Magic Sword and Magic Bag as they were rare items that almost never appear on the marketplace. These types of items are worth a fortune, however they were not items that could easily be obtained by having money.

Normally, I would deliver the goods to the merchant using my

Magic Bag

as it was capable of storing up to 100 kilograms of items, however as I was also selling heavier items such as furniture, my

Magic Bag

wasn't able to store all the items, thus I had to ask the merchant to collect the items personally using a carriage.

"Good morning, Mr Youya. As we agreed, I am here to pick up the goods."
(Merchant)

"Oyassan, I leave the collection to you, the items are all in the living room."
(Youya)

The merchant proceeded to collect all the items that I had prepared in the living room and loaded them onto his carriage.

"Yosh, that's the last of them. As far as I can tell, all the items that we agreed on are present. Here's the payment." (Merchant)

The merchant handed over a small pouch as well as the parchment detailing the transaction. As I was about to sign the parchment, I spotted an item in the corner of my eye.

"Oyassan, sorry but could I keep that dagger?" (Youya)

"Well it's just one dagger. The goods that you sold me were mostly first-class items. That one dagger doesn't matter that much. Go ahead. I'll let it slide as a sign of our friendship." (Merchant)

"Thank you." (Youya)

The merchant returned the dagger that I asked for and I took the dagger graciously. After being an adventurer for decades, this was the second best

dagger I have ever come across.

Its name is *Bazerato*.

It's a lightweight dagger that was crafted from the Fang of a monster. It inherited its offensive properties and durability from the monster it belonged to, possessing offensive capabilities and a durability that was on par to a normal long sword despite being a dagger.

For your information, I kept the best dagger in a compartment on my breastplate for emergencies such as my

Magic Sword

breaking in the middle of combat. I kept it there instead of my

Magic Bag

as the few seconds required to find the dagger in my bag is a matter of life or death in the midst of combat. It is also useful for other situations outside of combat.

"Here Luna, take this dagger." (Youya)

I passed *Bazerato* to Luna.

"This dagger looks expensive.. Youya I can't take this dagger, I don't have any money on me." (Luna)

Sigh this girl. She couldn't just receive the dagger without any worries can she.

"The money doesn't matter. If you want to be an adventurer, you will pay me with your body." (Youya)

So long as you work hard as my party member, that much is fine.

"Huh? Okay.. If that is fine with you. I don't remember anything so it's my first time. I don't have any experience so I'll try my best!" (Luna)

Luna's face started to turn red as she started fidgeting around. The tip of her tail was sweeping the ground as it moved back and forth.

"Eh? You? To such a small child?" (Merchant)

"Sigh. Please don't cause any misunderstandings. And you of all people should know that I will never lay a hand on a child. Luna, I meant that you will be working as an adventurer to pay back the money." (Youya)

"Phew. Then I will do my best! Together with Bazerato!" (Luna)

Luna seems to be excited about using Bazerato. It's a good thing that she has taken a liking to it. Based on her body structure, it would have been difficult for her to handle a normal sword. So it was best for her to utilise a short dagger which is easier to use.

Bazerato

is a powerful dagger because it does not have any level requirement, meaning that even a level 1 adventurer could equip it. Although the dagger itself is powerful, I need to remember to teach her how to properly handle the dagger as well as sword techniques.

"Anyway, it appears that you have picked up another brat again. You never change even as time passes by huh." (Merchant)

"Well that is how I am, I can't help it." (Youya)

My relationship with the merchant goes back to my adventuring days. Back in those days, I was a relatively well-known adventurer. Once, I had participated in a quest to rescue an Elven village from pillagers. We were both in the same group and in the end, the quest was successful with us managing to save a bunch of elven girls from being kidnapped. Among those elven girls, was Phil.

The clothes that Luna is wearing now were the exact same clothes I gave to Phil that day. Phil grew up as an adventurer, in the same party as me, alongside Leonard who is revered as hero in the current era. The same party that I had abandoned.

"Well then I wish you guys good luck in your future endeavors. Oh before I leave, remember to sign the parchment." (Merchant)

After quickly revising the contents of the parchment and the pouch, I signed the parchment and returned the parchment to the merchant.

"Now then, I hope to see you again, Youya." (Merchant)

TLN: Informal tone unlike his formal tone during the introduction.

"You too. Oyassan. I wish your business runs smoothly. Isn't it time for you to leave the business to your son?" (Youya)

"Don't be crazy. I am still up and active you know. Different from a certain someone." (Merchant)

I smiled bitterly at the merchant's retort. I forgot that I told him I was retiring today. However, my retirement plans ended yesterday. Now I will be restarting my adventures.

Before heading over to Rumberg, Luna and I will be traveling on Raptor to a neighbouring town where we paid for a caravan that was heading towards our destination. The distance to Rumberg was too far for us to rely on Raptor for any battles that might occur, so I decided to travel there with a caravan instead. For caravans, although we were required to pay a fee, we had escorts that served as our bodyguards during the trip. So our safety during the trip was guaranteed. However the downside is that the caravan travels at a slow pace. Most likely, it would take us two days to arrive at Rumberg.

As I looked back from the carriage, the village could no longer be seen in the distance. When I left the village, one of the people who came to see me off was Nikita. She cried as I was preparing to leave, telling me that she wanted to follow me. She was willing to leave behind her family and the bar to accompany me on my journey. However, I could not allow such a child to abandon her family and their business just to follow me. After trying to convince her for half an hour, she finally gave in and accepted my departure.

After arriving at the town, Luna and I joined the caravan where I was offered a high price for Raptor. Although the amount was tempting, the bond I had with Raptor was priceless and rejected the offer.

I feel that I am starting to become sentimental. Is this because of my age?

"Youyaaa. I'mm boredddd." (Luna)

While i was lost in thought, Luna was fed up with the journey.

"The trip will only last two days. It won't be long." (Youya)

"But the trip is boring!!!" (Luna)

Well this caravan is unusually large, and there is a large number of escorts. So its expected that the journey will take quite a while. For a child like Luna, it would be quite a dull trip.

"Well then let me explain to you about what we will be doing when we arrive at Rumberg. We will have to do a bunch of administrative matters, attending classes and meeting other people as well as select our class." (Youya)

"Tell me about the classes!" (Luna)

Luna whose tail looked like it was about to fall asleep became lively as it stood up in anticipation.

"Adventurers are capable of raising their levels by defeating monsters to earn experience points. However, they will be unable to gain experience points unless they have a class. Thus a class has to be chosen before an adventurer can start increasing their levels. Normally the class chosen will be set for life, meaning that the class will be the person's specialisation for the rest of their life. It cannot be changed so it should be chosen carefully." (Youya)

"The status for each classes differ accordingly to their battle styles. There will be a class correction value added to a person's status depending on their class, adding additional values into various stat parameters. These class correction values added on top of the person's basic status determines their final status." (Youya)

"Each classes serve a specific role in a party. Generally speaking, there is the *vanguard*, and the *rear guard*

. Vanguard classes serve as the front line for the party, directly confronting monsters and serving as a wall for the back line whereas the rear guard classes directly attack the monsters as well as cover the front line." (Youya)

"Easy to understand. Luna wants to be a vanguard! Youya gave me a dagger, I want to use it!" (Luna)

Truth be told, Luna is suited to be in the front lines.

Back when I was playing the game, Beastmen were characters that were only NPCs and unusable for players. It was possible to become friends with NPCs, and the characteristics for NPCs was discovered. Beastmen had increased physical capabilities whereas their magical abilities were decreased. These were stat corrections that are well suited for the vanguard.

"Since you want to be a part of the vanguard, I will explain the different classes for the vanguard. Generally, the vanguard have weak magical capabilities but high physical capabilities. The common classes are

Warrior, Fighter and Thieves. Warriors

specialize in attacking and defending, with high values in their *Attack* and *Defensive* parameters. However, as a result their *Speed* parameters are decreased. *Fighters*

specialize in hand-to-hand combat, having higher *Attack* parameters and *Speed*

but only to a limited extent. Thus, even if they equip powerful weapons or strong armor, their overall capabilities does not change that much. On the other hand, *Thieves* have high

Speed parameters but their *Defense* and *Attack*

parameters are decreased. In exchange, they are given special class skills called Exploration Skills." (Youya)

"eehhhh." (Luna)

Luna looked as if her brain was overloaded and unable to take in the information. She tilted her head as she tried to understand the information and failed.

"Youya~, are there any other classes?" (Luna)

" There is another class called *Magic Knight*. It is a class that has a high *Attack* parameter and is the only class capable of using magic." (Youya)

"That's the class! It looks like the strongest class to take!" (Luna)

"I am going to stop you right here. That class is out of the question for you.

Although it is a class with high

Attack

parameters and capable of casting magic, that class has a lower

Defense

parameter as well as physical strength capabilities as compared to the other classes. It can't use

Wall

either. And although magic can be used, the spells it can use are limited to *Intermediate* tier. *Intermediate* magic is far weaker than *Advanced* magic used by *Magic Casters* in the backlines. *Magicknights*

are capable of using offensive magic as well as supportive magic, but they can't cast recovery magic, making their supportive magic far inferior to a normal healer. It is a class capable of doing everything, yet it is weaker than every other class. It is merely a half-baked profession that can't be used in any role." (Youya)

The job of the vanguard is to protect the rear guard, while the rear guard covers the vanguard. The

Magic knights

is unable to act as a shield for the rear guard due to its low defensive capabilities as well as the inability to use *Wall*. However even if the magic knights was delegated to the rear guard, it is merely an inferior magician. In that case it would be better to choose a full-fledged

Magician

. Thus magic knights are looked down upon as a weak class and no parties will be willing to accept them into their party.

"I understand. Only choose from *Thief*, *Warrior* and *Fighter*. Hey Youya.."
(Luna)

Luna dropped on all fours, and crawled towards me while looking me dead in the eyes.

"What class do you want Luna to pick? I want to serve Youya. I want to be useful to you." (Luna)

What is this girl doing? Telling me that she wants to serve me with such a cute face.

Well if it's a class I would like...

"If it's a class I want in my party, it would be a

Thief

. Venturing into the dungeons become more convenient if our party has a person with exploration skills." (Youya)

"I understand, then when we arrive at Rumberg, I will choose the *Thief* class. Then I can be useful to you!" (Luna)

"Yeah, I would be happy if you did so. I very much would like you to be the *Thief* in my party." (Youya)

BunBun Luna's ears fluttered up and down.

"Pleasing Youya is my number one joy!" (Luna)

She's a good kid isn't she.

Although what is with her choice of words? Is she sure that she doesn't remember anything?

Anyway, I am glad that I gave this girl a dagger back in the village.

Thieves typically utilise daggers as their main weapons, thus their attacking capabilities are naturally lower as compared to a normal sword. Especially with her compatibility with daggers, i feel that Luna is well-suited to being a

Thief.

My thoughts were interrupted by the sight of a town appearing in the distance.

"Hey Luna, look outside the window." (Youya)

"Hmm? What's outside?" (Luna)

Luna opened the windows and tried to squeezed her head out of the window. Her fox ears fluttered in the wind as she stuck her head outside.

"Ah. I can see a large city. It is soooo much bigger than the village Youya was in! And the wall surrounding it is so large too!" (Luna)

"That's our destination. It's the beginning town of Rumberg." (Youya)

Rumberg is not just the beginning town for adventurers. It is essentially the essence of the country. The country itself revolves around the nurturing of adventurers, and most adventurers start out here to get their classes before becoming actual adventurers.

Although there are other beginning towns for adventurers, there is an important reason why I chose this popular town. Based on my memories of the previous life, there is a hidden room in one of the dungeons here which fixes the level bonus for all stats to the maximum, 3 points per level. Finally, i can free myself from my cursed status.

As I was staring at Luna's fox tail shaking back and forth rapidly, Luna pulled her head back into the carriage.

"Youya, what class are you choosing?" (Luna)

"*Magic Knights.*" (Youya)

"Eh? But didn't you tell me that Magic Knights had the weakest class?" (Luna)

"Yes I did, and it's the truth. Magic knights have the weakest class regardless of their role. They are too fragile for the front line, and too weak for the rear guard. It is the class that can do everything but can't do anything. It is the weakest class. If the person wasn't me." (Youya)

Even when I was playing the game, the main player base had deemed

Magic Knight

to be the weakest class without a doubt. Although they were given recognition for the fact that they were able to cast supportive magic, it wasn't anything too spectacular.

That is, until the Level Reset function was discovered. When it was discovered that a person's level could be reset, another hidden feature was discovered.

That feature, was given the name "*Magic Customization*".

As a result of that feature, the *Magic Knight*

's popularity rose tremendously. It was the class that had the potential to become the strongest in the hands of a skilled player.

However, because of this, more people avoided inviting magic knights into their party. The class popularity grew as more people wanted to try out the class. As a result, there were many Magic knights who were still weaker than an average player using a common class. It was basically a gamble, and Magic knights was an all-in.

"Well even if the class is weak, Youya is still strong!" (Luna)

I am glad that Luna was just being Luna. If it was anyone else, I would had been abandoned on the spot.

I am lucky for the presence called Luna.

We were about to arrive at the city.

Now, is truly the start of my second round.

Chapter 5: The old man who becomes a magic knight

After arriving at Rumberg, we searched for an inn to stay. After leaving Raptor at the stables and our stuff at the inn, we went to the guild to register for the mandatory lectures for novice adventurers. The lectures were held once a week and was taking place tomorrow for this week. Although it was possible to get a class at Rumberg, everybody was required to attend these lectures to inform everyone about the different classes available. These lectures were made mandatory by the government as the country itself supports the grooming of potential adventurers.

As dungeons spawned naturally in this world, adventurers were needed to venture into the dungeons to cull the monsters living inside them, reducing their numbers. This prevents the chances of monsters overflowing from dungeons and making their nests outside, causing unusually high monster counts and disrupting human society. However, it is not impossible for this scenario to occur even with adventurers. Whenever this does happen, extermination quests will be sent out for adventurers to uptake.

Whenever adventurers defeat monsters or venture into the dungeons, they bring back materials that are either sold to merchants in the town or used to craft their own equipment. The latter allows the adventurers to prepare for their next trip into a dungeon and the cycle repeats. Both outcomes result in an improvement of the people's standard of living as the people either get their hands on materials for constructions or paid for their services.

"Luna, you look tired. You alright?" (Youya)

Luna's tail seemed unusually droopy today. It seems like she didn't have enough sleep today.

"The book Youya passed to me yesterday was interesting. I ended up spending the whole night reading it." (Luna)

Luna replied while rubbing her eyes.

She is currently suffering from amnesia.

It is dangerous for a person who doesn't have any memories to seek adventures blindly without any knowledge, so I passed her a book meant for novice adventurers to teach her what was dangerous in the wilderness. She was unexpectedly eager, and read the book attentively, asking many difficult questions that would be difficult to answer if you weren't a veteran adventurer.

"Today's lesson will just be a review of what you read in the book. So try to listen carefully during the lecture when we arrive." (Youya)

"uhn. It's a review chance! I will try to make good use of it!" (Luna)

Luna nodded her head. She appears more energetic than before.

"We are finally here." (Youya)

"So this is the guild.. It looks really amazing." (Luna)

"Yeah it does. The standard of the guild corresponds with the city or village it is in. The guild here looks amazing because it's in the sacred city. It was made much bigger and more impressive than a normal guild." (Youya)

"Uhh." (Luna)

Luna stares at the guild and lets out a weird voice.

I grabbed the awestruck Luna's hand and walked into the guild.

Today was the day when various workshops including the newcomer's lecture was conducted. Thus there were a lot of people present in the guild. Many of them were sitting in the bar killing time while waiting for the workshops to begin.

"Oi oi. Ossan. Are you thinking of becoming an adventurer at your age? Look at your armour. Its tattered and old, just like you. Give it up. You should follow my example. Look at it. My armour was custom-made with magical materials." (Young Man)

"Kevin. Stop it. You're making the old man look even more pathetic." (Young Man no.2)

"No no no. You got it all wrong. He would be even more pathetic if he died

trying to become an adventurer." (Kevin)

"Ah. Well that sounds about right." (Young man no. 2)

Laughter erupted from the bar.

When I glanced over to the bar, I saw a bunch of young men in their mid-teens looking over here while drinking sake. I was unable to see their levels, which proves that their levels were higher than mine. In this world, you are unable to see other peoples' status, but it was possible to see the level of people lower than you. Well this is to be expected, since my level was resetted to level one.

It is better to leave those people alone. I don't want to cause any unnecessary trouble in the guild.

I bowed to two young men and walked past them.

"Ossan. Did you not hear what I said earlier?" (Kevin)

The two young men stepped in front of me, blocking my path.

It appears that the one with expensive equipment was called Kevin. He must have been born into a rich family. Since there are many advantages to raising a person's level, there are many parents who spend a large sum of money obtaining expensive equipment for their children to enter dungeons and raise their levels.

Annoying.

"I'm sorry, but I'm unable listen to your advice. I came here with my own goals in mind, however I do not have the right to stop you young men from chasing your dreams. I hope you guys feel the same for me." (Youya)

"Huh.? I even went out of my way to show concern for you. What is with your attitude? Hmm? That girl behind you is cute. Is she your daughter? How about this, i will accept her into my party, where she will be safe unlike yours. You should thank me old man. Oh and don't even think of joining my party. I will never let you into my party." (Kevin)

The young man was looking at Luna's body with disgusting eyes with ill intent.

Luna is definitely a cute girl. It's difficult to say otherwise. Although I could

argue against going for such a young girl. Luna hid behind my back, turning her face away from the young man.

"I appreciate your concern, however. I am becoming an adventurer, and I am not giving this girl to you. She clearly does not want to join your party." (Youya)

"I am not saying this because I am looking down on you. But no matter how you look at it, you don't have a choice old man. You look like a man who failed in raising a daughter, and was forced into becoming an adventurer to survive. I'll repeat it again. You don't have a choice in this." (Kevin)

The young man walked over with a menacing glint in his eyes. He raised his right fist and swung it directly at my face.

I grabbed the boy's wrist, twisted my body and threw him. The boy let out a grunt as his back hit the ground. It was a movement that I could perform easily with my eyes closed.

"Kevin was knocked down!?" (Young man no.2)

"Oi. Ossan. What do you think you are doing?" (Man no.3)

Two of the unconscious young man's friends came over.

I could see their levels. They were both level 1 as well. Looking at their movements, it's obvious that they aren't even a threat. I can beat both of them within 10 seconds.

Even though I was thinking of knocking both of them out cold, I do not want to cause any more trouble than I already did.

Now then.. What should I do?

"Everybody please settle down. We are currently within the guild premises. Violence will not be tolerated. You over there. We are not afraid to hold back on your punishment even if you currently are not an adventurer." (Guild staff)

A guild personnel arrived just as the two young men's demise was imminent, warning me to stand down. When the female personnel arrived, the entire hall turned silent, looking in her direction. Luna looked at the staff member in amazement. It was obvious that the staff was strong. Strong enough to make

the rowdy bunch of adventurers here dead silent.

However, the only thing I could notice... was her face.

Long ears and green eyes.. The characteristic of an Elf. It's an elven girl.

There's no doubt about it.

Why are you here?

I pulled down my hat in an attempt to conceal my face.

"I am sorry. I did not mean to resort to violence. However, before I noticed it the young man was trying to attack me so I countered on reflex. I will reflect on my actions." (Youya)

"I see. So you're defending yourself on the basis of self-defense. Am I right?" (Guild Staff)

I nod my head. Luckily, it seems that she did not recognize me.

She should had noticed that my level was one. It could had occurred to her that I was her former teacher, but since I was level 50 back then, she probably thinks I'm just someone who resembles a person she knew. How could someone like her be doing administrative work in a guild such as this?

"No this ossan attacked us first! He threw Kevin onto the ground!" (Young man No.2)

"Yeah! You can see that he is uninjured! Only Kevin was attacked, thats why he's unconscious on the ground!" (Young man no.3)

The boys were panicking, trying to shift the blame onto me. However, the surrounding adventurers testified for my innocence.

Unluckily for the boys, the one thing that all adventurers dislike, is the rookie who thinks he's a hot-shot. People like the boy Kevin on the ground, would never be defended by other adventurers as people like them cited more trouble than their worth. Thus, it is a given that I would be defended against them.

Thanks to this incident, these young men will definitely have difficulties finding work and connections in this guild.

"Well. I fully understand the situation right now. Uhm, then since you are the

victim, I will let you off with a warning. Those children will write a written apology to the guild and suffer a punishment. They will receive a penalty for causing trouble in the guild. If they receive another penalty from us, they will be banned from working with the guild permanently." (Elf Staff)

Upon listening to the staff's declaration, the boys face started to cramp. They looked like they were ready to start another fight with her, but they weren't dumb enough to cause another fuss with the staff just because they didn't agree with the punishment. They understood that if they did, they would suffer the consequences, and quietly followed the girl as she took them away from the hall.

"Ahh. You look as elegant as ever today. Phil-chan." (Guy no.1)

"As expected of my woman!" (Guy no. 2)

"Hey you two. What are you talking about? Are the two of you dreaming? Phil is MY wife. I decided that the moment I saw her beautiful eyes." (Guy no.3)

"Everyone please be silent. I do not belong to anyone nor am I anybody's wife. If you guys are not going to be silent, I will forcefully shut everyone up."
(Phil)

"WE ARE SORRY." (Everyone in unison)

After resolving the incident, the elven girl left the hall.

After she left, the hall became noisy once again, with talks about the elven girl spreading rapidly among the adventurers. Apparently, the girl was quite popular among the adventurers for being a beauty, as well as being a skilled adventurer.

Well her beauty aside, her skill is a given. Since she was trained by me.

"That girl was amazing. Although she looks slightly older than me, she behaves just like an adult and is also working properly." (Luna)

"You're wrong, Luna. You can't judge an Elf's age based on their looks. Elves have different lifespans as compared to humans. Their bodies grow at a rate similar to humans. However, at the age of 12, their bodies start to age much slower. She should be about 25 years old this year." (Youya)

Although Phil's appearance is similar to a 16-year-old girl, her age is actually 25 years old. She grew into a fine adult, much different from the elven girl who I picked up. Phil was an *Elf* who I picked up after she was forced out of her village when I accepted the request to capture a bunch of pillagers back in the day. She was a talented individual that was equal to my number one disciple, Leonard, in the same party.

I assumed that she had continued to be in the same party after I had left. I wonder just how did she end up working as a receptionist in the guild for a town like this. I know that if she knew that I was here, we would likely erupt into an argument.

As I thought that, I pulled my hat further down. I have to be extra careful to make sure she doesn't notice me.

The lecture has started. There were about 20 students attend the lecture, including me and Luna. Among the other students, there were a bunch of young boys who were staring at me and another bunch at Luna. As expected, there were no other middle-aged men attending the lesson. In this lecture, the basics for becoming an adventurer as well as the different classes available will be taught and explained in half a day. Although this is considered an informative session, there are actually very few people who are listening to the speaker. As information about the classes are considered common sense, the people who attend the lecture are doing so because it's a standard procedure. It is rare for people to actually pay attention in the lesson.

Midway through the lecture, the lecturer made an announcement.

"After the lecture is over, I recommend everyone present to recruit party members for your party. This is a rare occasion where adventurers of the same caliber and level without parties are gathered together. It is important to fill up your party with four members as well as having a well-balanced composition. Alright, the class will now have a 5 minute break before the lesson continues"
(Instructor)

As the instructor mentioned, this session is one of the most important moments for adventurers who do not have any relations or connections,

making it a good opportunity for new adventurers to form a party and make friends with other new adventurers. As an adventurer, it is crucial to have a party of four members. If you dive into a dungeon alone, any paralysis or poisoning effects could spell your doom. However, with a party, they will be able to protect you from the monsters while you recover.

"Youya, are we going to search for friends too?" (Luna)

"Well it would be nice to have a full party with us, but it is likely impossible."
(Youya)

I smiled bitterly to Luna's question. It seems she still doesn't understand the situation, about how notorious the unwanted class,

Magic Knight is.

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Although it takes nearly a full day to obtain a class, the actual procedure to obtaining a class is easy. When you stand before the statue that contains the power of the gods, the classes that are available to you will appear inside your head. As expected, I have all the common classes available to me.

Warrior, Fighter, Magic Knight, Magician, Monk, Thief
and *Ranger*

were all available. These weren't the only classes that actually existed in this world. There have been instances where an exclusive class had appeared, but so far I have only seen one instance of an exclusive class. Well, my class was decided from the start. Now it's merely a matter of what skill I should choose

"I want to be a Magic Knight." (Youya)

A soft glow starts to cover my body. With this, I have officially become a mystic knight.

"Ossan, are you an idiot? Do you not know anything?"

"*Magic Knight*.... Has he lost his mind?"

"Woah its my first time seeing a mystic knight."

"Sigh even though I said during the lecture to never choose that class..."

I could hear comments coming from the back of the room as I was given my class. This is the expected reaction though, since it is unlikely any of them would know the hidden strength of a

Magic Knight

. It is a class that can do everything but unable to do anything. However, with the bonus skill points, as well as the hidden elements behind the level reset, the weakest class can become the strongest.

After my class selection was completed, it was Luna's turn.

As she stood before the statue containing the power of god, she turned and looked at me.

"The classes Youya mentioned appeared in my head. There wasn't any class that are different." (Luna)

"I see. I had a feeling that Luna would receive an exclusive class but it seems I was wrong. Then you can choose

Thief as planned." (Youya)

"I understand! Luna wants to be a *Thief*!" (Luna)

A soft glow started to surround Luna's body. Luna is now officially a Thief.

With this, everyone in the room has completed their class selection. This is where the scouting battle begins.

As predicted, the most popular classes were thieves and rangers. Although they were classes that had a low fighting power, they were capable to learning exploration skills. Exploration skills are important in a party as it is essential for exploring dungeons where it is easy to lose your sense of direction. They were also one of the rarer classes as their low fighting power often translated to higher mortality rates. This is why they are popular.

Next were warriors, magicians and monks

These classes were the most common classes that are often chosen by people

because they were the strongest in their roles.

Warriors serve as the vanguard, having high defensive powers higher than fighters or thieves.

Magicians have the ability to defeat monsters who have high physical defense with magic spells, and are capable of attacking from range. They were perfect for being in the back line.

Monks are capable of casting supportive spells such as reinforcement spells as well as recovery spells, allowing dungeon runs to become safer as recovery was possible.

In this world, every party had a party limit. The maximum number of members were four. However, this limit could be increased to five if special items were used on the party. If a party had more members than the party limit allowed, there would be no experience gained by the party members from battles.

Due to this, a party often consisted of a vanguard, magic attacker, healer and a specialised class.

There was no place for an unwanted class like the *Magic Knight*.

Nobody will invite me to their party, nor will anyone accept my invitations if I asked.

At this rate, it would only be me and Luna in my party, I started to wonder if this was a good idea, to let Luna remain in the party with me. As Luna was a thief, she was popular among the other students and received multiple invitations. However as soon as everyone realised I was in the same party as Luna, everyone refused to accept her. Witnessing this scene multiple times made me feel guilty.

If there was a time for Luna to become independent, this would be the time. Until now I have been taking care of Luna, looking out for her well-being ever since we left the hidden room. This was most likely the only chance for Luna to enter another party where she had the safety of a balanced party. I couldn't bear to keep her in my party for my own convenience when she had the possibility of a much better future away from me.

"Sorry. Luna couldn't get anyone to be our friend." (Luna)

"Don't be. It's because of my class that nobody wants to join us. At this rate, it will only be the two of us in the party. Luna. I am not forcing you to stay in my party. Rather, I hope that you will join another party. You are more likely to find a well-balanced party where it's safer. If you are worried about me, I can survive on my own since i am a veteran after all." (Youya)

It is difficult for me to let go of a exploration-class member when she is my only party member, however it is even more difficult for me to bind her into my party. If possible, as her guardian, I wish to guide her onto the right path as much as possible.

"Youya wants me to join a party I like?" (Luna)

"Yes. As a thief, there are many parties who will be willing to invite you to their party." (Youya)

"Okay. Then Luna will join the party that she wants." (Luna)

At that moment, I felt a tinge of sadness as it appears that Luna had a party she wanted to join, but at the same time, i couldn't help but feel that it was obvious.

But she wasn't moving from her position.

"Then Luna wants to join Youya's party! Luna and Youya will be together!" (Luna)

I flinched at her quick response.

"Ar..Are you sure? It'll just be the two of us you know" (Youya)

"Uhn. Luna wants to be with Youya so its ok." (Luna)

Luna looked at me with a cute smile.

I decided that I will not make her regret being in my party.

"I understand. Then I'll say it once more. I am counting on you in the future" (Youya)

"Thank you for having me. Youya. Our first goal is to kill all the dragons in the world and obtain their treasures!" (Luna)

"Do you plan on dying right from the start?" (Youya)

Dragons were beings that can't be defeated by people below level 30. Any attempts to do so would result in death.

I started to stroke Luna's head who gave off a pleasant feeling and started shaking her fox tail.

Yosh, I've decided. Tonight we will have a feast to celebrate our party.

Then we will dive into the dungeon first thing in the morning. It's time to accomplish my main goal in this town. To visit the hidden room that can prevent my cursed status from happening.

Chapter 6: The old man dives into the dungeon

After the class selection has ended, Me and Luna became a *Magic Knight* and a *Thief*.

When a class is chosen, you will receive 5 skill points, with an addition point per level. That is the case for other adventurers including Luna. This low number of points meant that adventurers didn't have many options in choosing skills and had to focus their points into skills that required priorities. However, in my case I have 20 bonus skill points thanks to my level reset, giving me many more options for what skills I wish to add.

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"Delicious! The meat today is so tender. Today's meat is better than usual."
(Luna)

"We are celebrating our official party formation so you can eat without restraint. There won't be many occasions like this in the future so you should indulge yourself tonight." (Youya)

"Uhn!" (Luna)

The glint in Luna's eyes suddenly changes as she bites into a chunk of meat.

Watching a fox's cheek inflate just like a squirrel is pretty amusing.

Tonight, we are eating dinner in the bar as always. However this time we are ordering the expensive set meals unlike the usual cheap meals. Although I mentioned that this is a celebration for the party, it is also my way of showing Luna my gratitude for staying in my party. I was really happy that she chose to remain in my party when she had the option to join a better party.

"Youya, you have been staring at Luna's face for a while." (Luna)

Luna's face which was stained with gravy and sauce started to turn red.

"Sorry, that was rude of me. I should start eating as well. Before that, a cheer for our party and our adventures to come." (Youya)

I held up my mug of ale while Luna held her glass of juice in the air.

Clank.

"Cheers!" (Luna and Youya)

By the way, if you are wondering why Luna is drinking juice instead of ale, yesterday she claimed that she wanted to drink the same drink as me despite seemingly being underage. Eventually she got a chance to try it, but it was too bitter for her and she couldn't drink it. Now she's obediently drinking juice instead.

Having a celebration with a party. It's been awhile. I've forgotten how this warmth felt like.

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The next day, we headed towards the guild.

Today I am also using a hat to cover my face. It would be troublesome if I had ran into Phil while my face was exposed.

"As Youya told me, all my points were put into

Presence Detection" (Luna)

"Good girl. Now diving into dungeons will be much more convenient thanks to your skill." (Youya)

Thieves were one of the classes with access to exploration skills.

Among the exploration skills available, the most important skill was

Presence Detection

as monsters were cunning monsters. Adventurers are weak to surprise attacks and ambush tactics whereas some monsters developed special abilities, such as mimicry and stealth that allows them to hide within the environment

and attack from our blind spots. Just as adventurers learn to deal with monsters, monsters have also adapted for battles against adventurers. There are also monsters that are capable of approaching adventurers without making a sound or a smell, allowing them to rush at us from our blind spots, preventing any possible defense.

Similarly, even if I were to open the door, it would be useless if I was caught in a trap or if I was surrounded by too many enemies.

However, the latter could be avoided if your party has someone with *Presence Detection*

. This skill only required one point to be learnt, however it's capabilities is raised when more points were placed into the skill. For each point added,

Presence Detection

's effective range is increased by 20 meters. At level three, it shows the user the number of monster in the radius and at level 50, the user will be able to tell the relative distance to each monster in the area.

Since Luna had placed all five skill points into *Presence Detection*, she is currently capable of finding monsters up to a distance of 100 metres and determine their positions.

"Youya, why shouldn't I add an attack skill first? *Assassinate* seems much more useful and cooler." (Luna)

"Luna you may not realise it because it's your first time entering a dungeon, but when a party enters a dungeon without

Presence Detection

, monster hunting becomes extremely inefficient as time is wasted searching for monsters. There is even a chance for us to cross path with monsters without noticing them. However, with your skill, this situation can be avoided while making it easier to locate monsters." (Youya)

Any experienced adventurer would know how important the skill is.

Luna tilted her head as if she didn't understand that I meant, but as expected,

she has a good sense when it came to adventuring and understood it right after.

"Youya, what skills did you spend your points on?" (Luna)

"I was originally a class meant for attacking, so i placed my points into my combat skills. You can look forward to seeing my skills in our next battle. Right now you just focus on searching for the enemies while I handle the battles."

(Youya)

The third-rate class called *Magic Knight*.

I look forward to abusing the hidden skill only available for that class.

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We entered the guild and walked through the magic door located at the back of the guild.

It was the entrance to a special dungeon only available to low leveled adventurers.

This dungeon is a special dungeon meant for nurturing low levelled adventurers up to level 10. This level restriction prevents other adventurers from denying any resources from new adventurers. Although monsters respawn on a weekly basis, the number of monsters available in dungeons was still limited in numbers. Adventurers are often greedy people who would do anything to increase their profit. This leaves the inept adventurers such as the lower levelled adventurers unable to raise their levels efficiently. Thus this dungeon provided a relatively safe environment for low levelled adventurers access to resources.

Currently, we are one of those low levelled adventurers.

From my game knowledge, there is a hidden room in this dungeon with a function that fixes the status rise to three points. Personally, the developers who installed the room in this dungeon has bad taste. If this function wasn't activated before hitting level 11, it would had been impossible to gain access to this room once again without resetting your level.

Once we walked through the magical door, we were teleported to the dungeon.

The dungeon we were in was the *Iwayama* dungeon. It was a mountain-type dungeon where the difficulty level changes depending on the terrain of the mountain. Right now, it was a gentle mountain with a wide road that can be easily trekked.

Note: I am unsure if “

岩山ダンジョン” is referring to the name of the dungeon, or the type of the dungeon.

I am assuming it to be a name in this sentence.

It is an ideal dungeon for beginners

"Youya, it's amazing. Although we were just in a building, suddenly we're on a mountain." (Luna)

Luna was surprised at the sudden change in scenery as she looked around the surrounding terrain.

Although this girl was trapped inside a dungeon up until recently, this was her first legitimate entry into a dungeon.

Suddenly, I felt a presence appear behind us.

It seems that a bunch of adventurers are entering the dungeon after us.

It was a trio of young adventurers dressed with expensive magic armour, the same group that caused the incident.

"Tsk. Looks like you're here too Ossan." (Kevin)

When the trio saw that we were in the dungeon before them, their faces were filled with disgust.

"That's right. We're here to raise our level." (Youya)

"Do as you like. Just don't get in our way. Entering a dungeon with such shabby armour... as expected of an idiot. Don't expect us to help you even if you get into any trouble." (Kevin)

"Adventurers take responsibility for their own well-being. I do not plan to ask you for help. Let's work hard so that it will never come to that." (Youya)

"Even if we were to lose our lives, we would rather die than ask you for help. Hey guys, let's go." (Kevin)

Surprisingly, the trio merely left without raising a ruckus and started climbing up the mountain. I thought that they would try to attack us in the dungeon, but it seems that their talk with the guild had helped them grow a little.

"Youya, Luna hates those people." (Luna)

"I know. As an adventurer, we must have the power to push through an obstacle, no matter how difficult. I know it is difficult to receive disgusting looks from other people, but you will have to bear with it. In the future, you will have to be even more careful around those kind of people." (Youya)

Note: I am unsure on what this paragraph means, could anyone clarify what does this paragraph mean in the raw?

「そう言ってやるな。ああやって突っ張るのは駆け出しの冒険者の多くが通る道だ。舐められないように必死なんだよ。.....まあ、どこかで痛い目を見ることにはなるかな」

Although perverts are difficult to deal with. Smart alecs are more annoying to deal with.

"Youya is gentle. However what they are saying seems true. Their armour looks much better than your armour." (Luna)

"Equipping magical armours is only done by beginners. Exploring a dungeon can last for anytime between few hours to days. Equipping heavy armour will cause sweat to build up inside the armour, making it warmer and humid, making the entire process tiring and uncomfortable. That's why using leather armour which is easier to equip and move around is better." (Youya)

Experienced adventurers prefer lightweight armour as compared to bulky and heavy metal armours since lightweight armours protect the user's vital areas and doesn't restrict their movements as much as heavy metal armours.

In the first place, since my main form of defense is mainly deflecting attacks with a sword, I do not require heavy armour. However, that doesn't mean I do not bother with armour.

There are many different types of leather armour.

The armour that I am wearing currently was made from the skin of an elder dragon. It may look shabby, but it's effectiveness is a few notches higher than that baby chick's metal armour. It is not only superior in defense power, but it has flame resistance, ice resistance and magic resistance. It is also more comfortable and practical for battle.

If you judge a book by its cover, you might not appreciate it's content. In this case, they couldn't notice the armour's capabilities because they were preoccupied with how shabby it looked.

"Adventurers are complicated." (Luna)

"Time for idle talk is over. Time to begin exploring the dungeon. Im counting on you Luna." (Luna)

"Uhn. Leave it to me, Luna will find all the monsters." (Luna)

I nodded at Luna as we began exploring the dungeon.

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While we were climbing up the rocky mountain, Luna's fox ears started twitching.

"Monsters few metres away from that corner. Two of them." (Luna)

"Then we turn back to the fork we passed earlier, and take the left route instead." (Youya)

"Youya, we have only been running away from monsters since we entered the dungeon. If all we do is run, we will not become stronger!" (Luna)

"Sorry, but I can't afford to raise my level just yet. There are other things that I need to do first." (Youya)

As Luna had mentioned, we have been avoiding monsters as we approached the summit of the mountain. This was only possible because of her

Presence Detection

. I wanted to avoid leveling up before locating the hidden room to maximise my status increase each level. If I were to level up accidentally and obtain an

inadequate gain, I would have wasted free stats that I would have otherwise gotten. I can only level to a maximum of 49 times. Each level must not be wasted.

Finally, we arrived at a cliff on the mountain without fighting a single battle.

However, this place wasn't the summit of the mountain.

"Sigh it's a dead-end. Let's turn back, Youya" (Luna)

"No. This place is good." (Youya)

As Luna was preparing to turn back, I took out a huge pile from my magic back and pushed it into the ground as hard as I could. I wrapped two ropes around the pile and secured them on the pile, throwing the other ends of the rope down the cliff. The ropes were magic items that can extend its length depending on the owner's will.

"At the bottom of this 200m c

liff, there is a hidden room. That is our destination." (Youya)

"This is such a dangerous place, installing a room here, no one would ever find it." (Luna)

"I feel the same way. The guy who discovered this place must have a screw loose." (Youya)

The guy who found this place is really amazing.

"I will be climbing down. It is dangerous to climb down a cliff with a rope, so you stay here where it's safe." (Youya)

"Luna wants to be together with Youya. Luna will try her best." (Luna)

Although I said that, Luna shakes her head.

"I understand. Then I will climb down first. That way, if anything happens, I will be there to catch you." (Youya)

"Uhn. I am counting on Youya to catch me if I fall!" (Luna)

"Uhm I will definitely catch you, but please do your best not to let that happen." (Youya)

Even if I was able to catch her, her falling would be bad for my heart.

I started climbing down the cliff.

Luna started climbing down after me. As she is a fox beastman, her movements are light and she isn't showing any signs of dangerous movement.

Although it is a problem for me to constantly monitor her movements. I bought the armour recommended to us by the clerk, but I should remember to get her trousers next time instead of skirts.

Eventually, we arrived at the destination.

Our destination was a hole in the wall. If you entered the hole and walked straight, a sealed door can be seen.

The condition for unlocking this door, is to perform a level reset.

When I touched the door, the seal was unlocked and the door opened.

"Luna, let's hurry ahead." (Youya)

"Uhn. It's getting exciting." (Luna)

We both entered the hidden room.

This time, it won't be to reset my level, but I can ensure that my cursed status will never haunt me ever again.

Chapter 7: The old man is freed from his curse

The sealed door was opened and we entered the hidden room. The condition for releasing the sealed door was to perform a level reset. Achieving the hidden condition while discovering this room simultaneously is even more difficult than dying. It was near impossible to discover this room in the first place considering how difficult it is to even find the level reset room. And even if this room was discovered, it wouldn't be possible to enter the room. Hypothetically, a person who reset his level could enter this room, but there was another problem. Rumberg is one of the towns for novice adventurers. However, Rumberg isn't the only starting town that exists in the world. Looking at pure leveling efficiency alone, there are many other towns with better dungeons than Rumberg, making it less likely for anyone to discover this room and its condition.

This is a dungeon that can only be entered by low level adventurers

And it is necessary to have the level reset to open the door

Even if the room was found, it would be impossible to enter the room

High level adventurers couldn't enter the dungeon in the first place

It is obvious that the person who found this room wasn't normal. Just how did he discover all this different rooms. For your information, the guy who discovered this room was the same as the level reset room

After entering the room, I realised the room looks exactly the same as the level reset room

It was a stone room illuminated by light crystals.

There was a fountain in the center of the room and a statue of a goddess at the back.

No way, there won't be another one here, will it?

"Youya, why are you trembling?" (Luna)

"Don't worry about it, I'm fine. I am just looking for something like a monster around." (Youya)

"It's okay! Luna's doesn't sense any monster near us!" (Luna)

Luna bangs her chest proudly as she announced that.

I made a bitter smile as I looked at luna

She doesn't realise that I was wary of another Luna trapped in a crystal.

Although Luna is easy to take care of, if there were two of her I would be in serious trouble.

Now then, time to begin the ritual.

Looking at the layout, it seems that the lore behind the hidden rooms is that the same goddess made the hidden rooms.

The activation for the ritual is the same.

I removed one light crystal from the wall and placed it in the necklace of the goddess statue.

The goddess statue started to illuminate with a soft glow, and a voice started

appearing in my head.

It was the same voice back in the level reset room.

"Those who have fought countless battles and encountered obstacles one after another. Congratulations on finding me. I praise your relentless determination adventurer. I will grant you a special power as a means to push the darkness back with this power." (Goddess)

Similar to back then, the glow from the necklace enveloped my body.

My body felt warm and light, it was like I was reeling in power.

I can feel that I have definitely gotten the blessings of the goddess.

Shortly after, the light disappeared.

Finally, it is over.

My cursed status will never come back. My status increase every level will be three points from this point forward.

I've been struggling so much thanks to my bad luck, only gaining one point per level. That meant that I had to put in so much more effort just to keep up with everyone else's growth.

Eventually, I encountered an unbreakable limit.

However, with effort I still managed to overcome it and continued to follow everyone's path of becoming stronger, eventually obtaining the power to open the door. But this wasn't the end. I still encountered another obstacle that I couldn't overcome. I couldn't swallow the fact that I would never be rewarded for my hard work. I couldn't accept that and chose to run away.

However, it's different now.

As long as you put in the hard work, you will be rewarded.

"Youya, why are you crying?" (Luna)

"Sorry, I showed you an unsightly side. I couldn't help it, I have finally been freed from my curse." (Youya)

My status was cursed. I couldn't count how much bitterness I had to swallow thanks to it.

"Youya, sit down." (Luna)

Luna started walking towards me. I didn't understand so I just listened to her and sat down.

Then Luna hugged me.

"Good boy Good boy~." (Luna)

"Uhh.. Luna-san, what are you doing?" (Youya)

"Somehow, I felt like whenever I was sad, I would like someone to do this to me." (Luna)

"Although you lost your memories, you do say weird things you know." (Youya)

"Youya, why were you sad?" (Luna)

"I'm not sad anymore thanks to Luna. Thank you." (Youya)

"I'm relieved. If you are ever sad again, Luna will be there to comfort you! Good boy~ Good boy~." (Luna)

This child.. I am glad to be in the same party as her.

"Luna, why don't you try the same thing I did?" (Youya)

Although I feel like it wouldn't succeed since she didn't reset her level, we could still try it. In the slight chance that it does succeed, Luna's combat strength will increase drastically.

"Uhn.I will try it. Luna just has to put the stones there into the necklace?" (Luna)

"Yeah." (Youya)

Luna took a light crystal from the wall and fit it into the necklace.

But nothing happened.

"The statue isn't shining like when Youya did it." (Luna)

"Well it's okay, don't worry about it. It's time to enjoy ourselves. Let's go back to the hunting grounds and begin raising our levels." (Youya)

"Let's do it! I will defeat many monsters and become stronger!" (Luna)

Now. There isn't anything to stop us from leveling anymore.

Lets defeat all the monsters in the dungeon

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After exiting the room, we climbed up the cliff back to the hunting area.

It was difficult for was to do a round trip on a cliff with just a single rope, however it was worth the effort.

Oh right, I nearly forgot something.

"Luna, make sure to memorise the location of the hidden room. Next time when you return here, I won't be able to follow you so make sure that you remember the location of this cliff." (Youya)

"I understand. I may have forgotten alot of things but I have a good memory."
(Luna)

When Luna hits level 50 and performs a level reset, she will have to come back here to perform the ritual once more. This dungeon has a level cap, making it difficult to reset my level once more to match hers. Thats why she has

to remember this place.

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In the Iwayama dungeon, the higher you climb the mountain, the rougher the terrain becomes, leading to stronger monsters. And stronger monsters yield better experience.

That is why we must climb higher.

"Youya, the path ahead of feels dangerous. We were told to never enter the top of the mountain." (Luna)

"Well you're not wrong. The *Rock Golem*

will start spawning once we enter this area. A low-level adventurer wouldn't be able to land even a scratch on the golem. The guild is worried that there would be naive adventurers who will challenge the monster. Look behind you, there are signs placed to prevent anyone from entering." (Youya)

Rock golems

have high defensive stats, nullifying effectively all physical attacks. Although it's

Magic Defense

isn't as high, it is high enough for low-level adventurers to not leave a dent.

It isn't a monster that a new adventurer can challenge and win. Fortunately, the monster can be easily avoided as it only spawns at the summit of the mountain. That's why this dungeon is suitable for training novices.

"Then let's turn back." (Luna)

"On the contrary, let's continue forward. If it's me, the golem shouldn't be a

problem. It is a slow monster who is weaker to magic attacks than physical attacks. It is the perfect prey for magic knights. Plus, it's a slow monster. To me, slow monsters are merely sitting ducks." (Youya)

Rock golem

s are good fodder for raising our levels. It is a strong monster that gives a lot of experience as well as drop unique items that are highly valuable. The unique items it drops are rare to find as it can only be obtained from this dungeon, but because the

Rock golem

is near impossible to defeat, the item is considered extremely rare.

"Maa. If Youya says that it's fine, then I guess we are fine." (Luna)

"Although I can beat them, right now I can only beat a

golem on a one on one battle. If there is more than one, we will have to flee. For that, I'm relying on your

Presence Detection Luna." (Youya)

"Leave it to me!" (Luna)

Shes a reliable child.

The two of us were lucky on our path to the summit, we arrived at our destination without encountering a single monster.

Then, I ate my words.

"It's the idiot trio." (Youya)

The three chicks who didn't want anything to do with me were up here as well. This is likely the reason why we didn't encounter a single monster. We took the exact same route as these three idiots did. They probably defeated all the monsters easily, and became overconfident of their abilities. Being overconfident of their abilities, they decided to come to the summit thinking they could defeat the golem. Hold and behold, they were currently fighting a

Rock Golem.

That is a common mistake made by novice adventurers. Unfortunately, one mistake as an adventurer, and that would likely cost your life. Most adventurers who mess up don't even have the opportunity to learn from them. Those who do survive are considered quite lucky.

"HELP. SOMEBODY HELP USS."

The three of them has a well-balanced party for a novice party.

A Warrior, Magician and a Ranger.

The warrior acts as the vanguard while the magician and hunter attacks the monsters from the back. But the warrior was unable to withstand the attacks from the golem and got blown away. He is breathing but the his bones are most likely broken and won't be able to continue battling.

After the vanguard was defeated, the golem started rushing towards the magician and the hunter. The magician and hunter desperately attacked the golem but the golem is unaffected by the attacks. At this rate, they will be annihilated.

"Luna, wait here. I will go and save those three. I won't be able to protect you so I want you to stay out of the battle." (Youya)

"Why would you bother saving them? They are disgusting people who talked bad about you. You should just leave them." (Luna)

"Luna. I have the power to help people. I wouldn't be able to sleep at night if I knew I left those three to die. And also, it's an adult's job to guide chicks like them on the right path." (Youya)

From my point of view in the guild, those three were merely puppies. They may bark a lot but it wasn't menacing in the slightest. Not to mention, it's a waste that most adventurers lose their lives with just one mistake in the dungeons. Adventurers are humans too, and mistakes are inevitable. Without mistakes, people won't be able to become a real adventurer. If I can help someone learn from my mistake, then I will give them that chance.

I ran towards the golem.

Now then, its time to take action. Time to give my juniors a second chance.

Chapter 8: The old man uses his special move

Rock Golem

For low-level adventurers, it is a monster equivalent to a grim reaper.

Unless you are an idiot, it is a monster which you run away from on sight.

It is common for novice adventurers to go against that rule and challenge the golem. Likewise it is common to get their asses handed to them.

I found it unusual that the path to the summit was clear of monsters

It seems that the trio had defeated all the monsters on their way here.

Perhaps the expensive equipment their parents bought them were too effective, they ended up overestimating their actual abilities and attempted to challenge the summit of the mountain.

For adventurers who try to jump ahead of the pack, a single mistake could cause them their life.

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Unless an amazing person appears to save them.

"SOMEBODY. SOMEBODY PLEASE HELPPP." (One of the trio)

The rock golem was chasing a man who was crawling on all fours in an

attempt to run away

Although the rock golem's movements was slow and dull, it had a large stride, resulting in a surprisingly high speed.

It caught up in an instant and raised its arm

If that attack lands on that boy, that boy will not survive.

I placed more strength into my legs.

At this rate, even with the bonus points in my status, i will not make it in time.

Looks like I'll have to use my trump card.

I increased my concentration, and opened the door.

For an instant, i increased my leg power to increase my speed for two steps. In the moment before the attack connected, i arrived next to the chick.

The moment i arrived, i immediately closed the door. Opening it for too long places a strain on my body.

"If you're afraid, just close your eyes!" (Youya)

I raised my sword, interrupting the golem's fist as it was descending.

It is easy for me to avoid the attack, but if i were to avoid it the boy would be crushed under its weight.

On the other hand, if i were to receive the brunt of the blow, i wouldn't survive either thanks to my weak defense

So i'll choose the third option.

I swung up my sword following the rock golem's attack, avoiding intercepting it directly as I would be crushed 100%.

I swung my sword at the edge of his fist, shifting the angle of the attack.

Ugh. It's too heavy. The shift wasn't enough to save the boy.

I slid the sword diagonally upwards and placed my palm on the sword to support the weight of the fist.

The fist follows along the slanted blade, landing on the ground next to me.

The earth was blown away along with me and the boy, surrounding the area in dust.

I landed on the ground properly and kept my sword in it's sheath

The angle and position of the sword as well as the act of supporting the weight of the fist. The ability to guide and slide the fist away from it's intended target. If there was any mistake, I would had been crushed without a doubt. But I didn't hesitate in the slightest. If i couldn't perform this kind of trick i would had been dead long ago.

Before i reset my level, i was a warrior.

My role was to be a wall for the party. With my low status, i had a weak defense and low speed, so i made up for it with techniques to receive all kind of

attacks to complete my role.

Recalling the past reminded me of the strength and speed of the high-levelled monsters. Compared to them, the golem might as well not be moving.

"You can still crawl. You're in my way, get out of here." (Youya)

"Ah. It's you.. Why would you-?"

"I came to help. If you understand now then get away quickly. We won't be able to escape if you don't get moving." (Youya)

The golem threw another fist at us. I guided the fist with a similar technique once more.

Two attacks. Followed by a third. Multiple attacks rained onto us as I deflected them one after another.

"Why would you help us. Ossan it's impossible for us to escape. The golem is too strong we can't win."

"Don't worry. I will definitely save you guys. I am experienced at this. I am capable of beating monsters even twenty times my strength." (Youya)

To prove my point, I countered the golem's attacks whenever it failed to land a blow. The counters honed by years of training was capable of cutting into the hard golem.

Just because the monster had better stats than my own, does not mean that

the battle was impossible. If that was the case, every adventurer would have died a thousand times over.

Well in the first place, I have beaten monsters and even other adventurers with statuses several times stronger than my own. The handicap of a cursed status became a blessing, sharpening my techniques and senses to the limit, allowing me to overcome many foes stronger than myself. It was only because I was weak, that I obtained strength through honing my techniques. The only thing that was holding me back was my cursed status.

"I'm sorry Ossa, I'm very sorry."

The boy started crying on all fours as he crawled away.

Finally, the boy escaped.

With the boy gone, I can finally go on the offensive.

The reason why I chose to become a magic knight was to obtain the special skill. But that skill was too risky to release with a young man on my back.

Watching the golem's movements, it looked as if it was going to swing its fist down, however I know that the fist is just a feint, and the real attack will be its kick. Its kick is powerful but its movements are far too telegraphed. Its kick is probably too powerful for me to defend against.

However, I don't have to defend anymore. I can afford to dodge with the baggage gone.

Its kick is a powerful attack, but in exchange it leaves his body exposed.

It is the perfect time.

I began casting my magic.

The privilege that only magic knights had was the ability to cast magic in close combat.

I approached the rock golem as i began my chants.

The benefits of casting magic was the ability to attack from a distance.

The basic movement would be to increase the distance from the target when casting magic.

It was irrelevant, so I threw that concept away

My spell is different as it's range was incredibly short. This meant that it was only usable in close combat. It was a spell suitable for magic knights who fought in the

frontlines

The golem's leg swept past my body and i felt the wind on my cheeks.

My chant was almost completed, and I felt my magic power rise.

The hidden factor, that causes the power of the magic knight to rise exponentially, becoming the strongest class from being the weakest.

That factor, was the special magic given to magic knights.

Magic Customization.

When a person performs a level reset as well as the status gain ritual. A special ability is given to a person who chose the weakest job. That ability was the ability to create your own magic. This discovery led to a huge influx of magic

knights as the player base was excited about a potential buff to the weakest class. Thanks to customising your own magic, the feature given to a magic knight could be properly evaluated.

In this world, every spell consists of four fundamental concepts.

Range: how far can the spell reach.

Area and Duration: how large of an area can the spell affect or how long does the magic last if it was a spell buff.

Power: how effective will the spell be.

Cast time: how long the casting time will be.

With *Magic Customization*, these concepts can be adjusted.

For this situation, I used the intermediate fire magic

Fire Storm.

Originally, *Fire Storm*

had an effective range of about 20metres, with an average area, casting time and power.

Using *Magic Customization*, i altered that magic to my liking.

I dropped it's range down to nearly zero, and it's duration was also minimized. It's casting time was also lengthened. Every possible concept was effectively weakened to strengthen its power.

The result was..

A powerful magic spell that could only be used in extremely close range.

As the casting was completed, my left hand started to glow orange like a flame, and started to shiver.

Intermediate fire magic *Fire Storm*. Customized.

"*Napalm Strike*" (Youya)

While moving forward, I performed a motion that closely resembles Chinese martial arts, focusing my body's kinetic energy onto my left hand, thrusting my left palm onto the belly of the golem. As a result of my customisation, *Flame Storm* became a left strike wrapped in flames.

The heat from the explosive strike penetrates into the body of the rock golem that boasted extreme hardness, burning it's body from the inside.

"Gwaooo" (Golem)

The golem collapsed. Although I had the bonus points from my level reset, it is still unusual to be able to defeat a rock golem with a single blow.

It was possible because of *Napalm Strike*

- . A technique which sacrifices everything for raw power.

The Rock golem started to turn into blue particles and dropped an item.

Lucky. It's a *Karakuri Heart*

- . It is a useful item that can be used for various reasons.

I felt my body swell up with power and looked at my status card. My levels increased by two and i achieved level three. The golem yielded a lot more experience than expected because of the level difference. When there is a level difference, the experience yielded increases.

"That magic earlier was amazing.. I have never seen any magic like that. How could *Magic Knight* be weak with that kind of magic?"

"That Ossan.. He stopped the golem's attack with a sword, and even managed to cut it."

"You're wrong.. He didn't stop the golem's attack. He deflected it. I heard that it was only possible by a master in swordsmanship... and he really did it."

It appears that the young man who ran away helped his companions recover using potions.

Well they appear energetic at least.

I started walking towards the trio.

"You three. You may have had good luck this time because I was in the area, but do not come back here again. The next time you attempt to fight these monsters, you may as well be dead." (Youya)

This was the trio's chance to reflect on their actions. This was a test to see if they can learn from their mistakes and reflect on their actions. It is without a doubt, one of the most important aspect for an adventurer.

"We understand"

It seems that the trio's attitude towards me has changed after I have become their benefactor.

They started listening to me obediently now that i have saved their life.

"Ossan... I mean Youya-san. Would you like to have a drink with us sometime?"

"I don't mind." (Youya)

"Thank you for saving our lives."

The boys left while giving me their thanks. I pray for their safety in the future.

In the distance, I see Luna running towards me while her tail shakes back and forth.

"Youya, that was amazing! Magic Knight is strong!" (Luna)

Her eyes were shining brightly as she looked at me.

"Well.. That is a magic that only I can use." (Youya)

A magic knight is extremely useless if there isn't

Magic Customization

to augment his magic spells. In the situation earlier,

Fire Storm

would have had no effect as its range and power are both second-tier. When a person with half baked magic capabilities cast a second-tier spell, its effect would be laughable at best.

However, by focusing all its concepts into power, it becomes usable as an attack by combining it with a physical strike.

I talked a little bit with the trio. They were capable of returning to the entrance by themselves, so I didn't bother with sending them.

"Well now that the problem has been removed, let's begin hunting monsters

this time Luna." (Youya)

"Uhn! The goal is level 50 by tonight!" (Luna)

"Uhh.. Luna-san. That's impossible you know." (Youya)

"Aww thats too bad." (Luna)

We'll continue hunting for *Rock Golems*

untill my mana runs out. Since the magic knight's mana correction isn't very impressive, I only have about three more shots untill my mana is depleted. Let's do our best to kill about three more golems.

I do have other magic spells that were customized but only *Napalm Strike* is effective on the *Rock Golem*. I look forward to the day where i can show Luna more spells.

Chapter 9: The old man teaches the way of the sword.

With the discovery of the level reset function as well as the fixed status increase, the magic knight class was said to be industrialized. Along with these two discoveries, a third discovery was made for Magic knights. That was *Magic Customization*.

Initially, the magic knight was rated as a weak class due to its inability to cast magic above the intermediate tier. The only benefit to choosing the class was the ability to cast magic despite being part of the frontline, however this benefit was considered a weakness rather than a privilege. Magic knights were unable to cast *Wall* and thus unable to be the tank in the frontlines.

In this world, there are three tiers of magic. *Basic*, *Intermediate* and *Advanced*. *Basic* tier magic was considered a useful magic to have due to its quick cast time and high power for its cost. *Advanced* magic was magic with a large area of effect with a long cast time. However, despite this it was still easy and effective to use as it also has extremely high firepower.

However, unlike the other two tiers which were highly regarded, *Intermediate* magic was looked down upon as an irrelevant tier to master.

Basic and *Advanced* tier magic were extremely efficient in terms of their consumption as well as effects, producing good results for relatively low cost. Whereas *Intermediate* tier magic was inefficient in results.

Intermediate tier magic has a reasonable area of effect with range and its cast time wasn't very long but not short either. Its power wasn't spectacular for its cost, making it a tier that had many niche uses.

High-levelled magicians often taught others that *Basic* magic was effective in dealing with weaker monsters while *Advanced* magic should be used when the number of monsters are too many or too powerful. Thanks to this, there weren't many uses for *Intermediate* magic and was considered a waste of skill points to invest in.

They weren't wrong. *Intermediate* tier magic was indeed useless when compared to the other tiers available. However, *Intermediate* magic was superior in one aspect. Customization.

If it was possible to place the level of each spell's fundamental concepts in numeric values, the values of *Intermediate* tier magic were more efficient compared to other tiers.

When *Magic Customization* was discovered, magic knights were given an ability that magicians did not have.

That was the flexibility to customize their spells to provide powerful attack spells as well as supportive magic. Magicians didn't have the ability to sacrifice their range and cast time to increase the power of their attack spells. However, that wasn't the true benefit of *Magic Customization*. Its true potential lies in its supportive magic.

When magic knights' power level was reevaluated, it wasn't the flexibility nor the attacking magic that caused them to be rated highly. It was the ability to freely alter the blessings that they provided to the party. This characteristic alone was enough for the class to be deemed as the strongest.

"This makes three!" (Luna)

After the trio had left, Luna and I continued to look for rock golems in order to raise our levels.

The subsequent battles were much easier once the baggage was gone. After defeating our third golem, I became Level 6. It was an incredible leveling pace as there was a huge level difference between the monsters and us, giving us a bonus gain in experience as a reward.

Since Luna was in my party, the experience was evenly distributed between the two of us, so Luna's was currently Level 6 as well.

"Alright its time to head back, I've pretty much drained all my mana." (Youya)

"Youya, Luna wants to fight. There's no point if Luna doesn't fight." (Luna)

"It's because Luna is here that I can focus on my battles. If Luna wasn't here, I would worry about multiple golems appear once the battle was over." (Youya)

"I understand. But still..." (Luna)

It seems that Luna was dissatisfied that she did not have a chance to enter the battle.

However, even if Luna did join in the battle, she would not be able to land a scratch on the golem. It's defensive stats were far too high for adventurers with our levels. That being said, she was still crucial in our battles as she was constantly on the lookout for monsters that would join in on the battle. That alone saved me a lot of energy and was an important role, but it seems that she is still dissatisfied.

"Don't worry, tomorrow you'll get a chance to fight monsters. Now that we're Level 6, you should have at least 5 skill points. Let's use this opportunity to level an attack skill. I'll recommend the optimal skills and you'll choose which skill you wish to use." (Youya)

"Yay!" (Luna)

Luna smiled happily as her tail shook back and forth. She seems happy that she'll finally get an attack skill.

For thieves, there aren't any actual attacking skills although offensive skills do exist. For offensive skills, there are two styles that can be used. One was a style that specializes in critical hits while the other specializes in abnormality effects.

The former has a high skill floor, requiring talent and technical ability. If successfully executed, it will provide the user with tremendous explosive power whereas the latter requires knowledge and battle sense. Once the user has enough experience with his abilities, he will become an important asset in future battles.

Although it is certain that Luna will choose the first option, I will have to determine whether she has the talent for Critical specialization. Although having the ability to land critical hits packs a huge punch, if the user doesn't have the talent for critical strikes, the skills learnt would become dead skills as they wouldn't be used in any other way.

Relying on Luna's *Presence Detection*

, we successfully evaded monsters as we travelled down the mountain

towards the exit.

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For our first adventure, it is impressive that we managed to level up five times while obtaining a rare drop at the same time.

We headed towards the guild hall as we returned from the dungeon

The guild plays three important roles.

Firstly, the guild serves as a consultant for adventurers. When inquired, the guild staff will explain specific details about dungeons including the level and monsters that will appear.

Secondly, the guild serves as a store that collects drop items from dungeons. Everything that is dropped by monsters can be sold at the guild. Using its huge network, anything can be sold and delivered to anywhere around the country.

Lastly, the guild is the distributor of quests in the countries. Quests accepted from all around the world are shown here for adventurers to accept.

The guild is a crucial lynchpin for the lives of adventurers as they were arguably the main source of income for us. Without them, it would be difficult for us to sell the items from dungeons to other vendors. The guild also takes a commission depending on the amount given for the drop items. Depending on the commission, guild points are given and once the amount of points reaches a certain amount, the adventurer will be promoted to a higher rank. The higher the adventurer's rank, the more advantageous it would be when travelling around the country. There are special privileges that are only given in certain countries and cities once you are at a high enough rank. Therefore it is rare for adventurers to avoid cashing out their items at the guild unless it was an absurd amount.

However, there was something strange that caught my eye.

When I took a look at my status back in the dungeon, I realized that my rank was currently Bronze, the lowest rank for adventurers. Back then, I was at the

top rank, White.

Although I expected my status to completely reset thanks to the goddess statue, I didn't expect the statue to reset my guild points as well.

Looks like I'll have to raise my guild rank as well as my level this time.

I sneaked a peek at the quest board before heading to the cashier. Just as I hoped, I found a quest that requested for the

Karakuri heart from the *Rock Golem*. After defeating three golems, two *Karakuri* hearts were dropped.

I'll be submitting only one of the hearts for the quest and the other will be kept for crafting magical items in the future.

Turning in items for quests were much more beneficial than simply cashing them in for money.

By completing quests, not only do you earn a bonus, but you also earn the original price of the item back in cash as well as guild points.

The amount that we had earned was quite a hefty sum for a beginner dungeon. It seems that lady luck has been smiling upon me ever since I met Luna.

"Luna, let's head over to the bar tonight. We earned a lot more money than expected today, thanks to that we can afford to eat more of the meat you liked." (Youya)

The glint in Luna's eyes shined brightly. However, that glint quickly disappeared as Luna began to shake her head.

"It's okay, the new skill is more important. Luna wants to become stronger." (Luna)

I widened my eyes at Luna's statement.

I can't deny that I was looking forward to eating good food tonight, but watching Luna give up the food for training gave me a bit of a shock.

"Alright, then let's settle for a sandwich tonight then. We'll drop by the store later and get the ingredients for the sandwich. That way we can enjoy a

delicious dinner while training." (Youya)

"As expected of Youya! Youya is so smart! I like smart Youya!" (Luna)

Afterwards, we bought plenty of meat as well as other ingredients before returning to the inn.

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Me and Luna were facing each other in the courtyard of the inn. Both of us held a wooden dagger in our hands

"The skill I want Luna to learn is *Assassinate*.

It was the same skill with a cool name that you liked." (Youya)

"Yay! Luna can finally look cool! I want to assassinate!" (Luna)

Her sentence was strange for sure, but somehow I know what she means.

Being an assassin is a difficult task. It depends purely on Luna whether or not she can successfully pull it off.

"*Assassinate*

is a powerful but difficult skill to pull off" (Youya)

"I want to learn! Teach me please." (Luna)

Luna ears begin to perk up as she began to listen.

I started to recall the list of skills available in the game in my previous life. As a former player, I have more or less memorised every single skill in the game. Although I haven't really memorised the explanation for every skill, I have or less grasped the mechanics and effects of the skills. Although it wasn't very impactful in the game, it is important to understand the skill that you are learning so that you avoid learning dead skills as much as possible. Dead skills are prevalent in this world as many beginner adventurers learn skills without understanding their skill's effects and ending up regretting their decisions.

Generally, adventurers should have a general idea of what skills do they wish

to obtain, and narrow down skill tree that they wish to learn. Furthermore, the skills that are present within the skill tree should be narrowed down only to the most important skills as skill points are scarce in this world. Not a single point can be wasted.

In the game, *Assassinate*

was a skill that has the highest damage multiplier that also has the highest power correction value when the attack lands as a critical hit. However, if the attack doesn't land as a critical, it turns into a basic attack without any bonuses.

"*Assassinate*

is an attack that mainly relies on landing critical hits. You have to land the attack on the opponent's weak spot otherwise the skill will not activate."

(Youya)

The activation condition speaks for itself. That was how difficult this skill is. An adventurer who is trained to land critical hits is talented, however it was a tall order for adventurers to land a critical hit to activate their skill. Even possibly leading to their death as their attacks will drain mana even on basic attacks.

"I guess the main difficulty in adding this skill, would be being able to land critical hits consistently?" (Youya)

During the game, it was easy to raise our critical chance by increasing the speed stat. However it was still a percentage chance to land the skill. In this world, that was the most important question when obtaining this skill. Critical hits did not rely on luck, but rather on talent. Everything in this world has a weak spot, if you do not land the attack on their weak spot then it will not activate a critical hit.

"Landing critical hits is an important skill for adventurers to grasp. The weak points vary based on the monster, but generally the weak spot for each monster are soft. When you land a full-power strike onto the weak spot, the damage will be amplified and reverbrate throughout the body. It is an easy idea to understand, it isn't easy to execute. Even with training, only people with talent are capable of performing it. There are some who are unable to execute it even after years of experience." (Youya)

In order to land a critical hit, the skill and knowledge of the monster's weakpoint would be required. For the skill required to land a critical hit, the person would need a sense of swordsmanship and martial arts to transfer power from their whole body into their attacks.

"Sounds incredibly difficult. Can you do it Youya?" (Luna)

"I can almost always land critical hits, especially against monsters." (Youya)

Actually, I had zero sense on how to detect a monster's weak point. However after continuing to hone my swordsmanship for several decades, I've managed to sharpen my concentration. Along with my combat experience, I became able to land a critical hit whenever and wherever I could.

"Youya, I want to try it. I won't be able to learn just by listening." (Luna)

"I feel the same way." (Youya)

I took out a wooden doll from my magic bag and stabbed it into the ground. The magic doll was a magic item, the invincible *Scarecrow*

-kun. It has incredible durability along with automatic regeneration, making it the perfect practice dummy for battles.

"First we will work on your techniques. An average adventurer often swing their sword using their arm strength. However contrary to what people think, that isn't the most effective way to attack." (Youya)

I swung the wooden dagger against Scarecrow-kun, producing a dull wooden sound.

"The most effective way of landing an attack, would be to utilise your whole body, releasing the power of your whole body into the swing." (Youya)

I stepped forward while twisting my waist, bending my arms accordingly while swinging my dagger forward. The impact was a few notches higher than before, producing an explosive ringing sound.

"Wow, they are totally different." (Luna)

"Naturally. The first blow was performed with my arm strength while the second used my entire body. Needless to say, the second blow is required for a critical hit to register." (Youya)

Based on my experience, there isn't even a single adventurer out of a hundred that can perform this as more emphasis was placed on a person's status than their techniques.

"Luna. I am giving you a warning. You will give up on learning

Assassinate

if you aren't able to land a critical hit on Scarecrow-kun who isn't even moving by tomorrow morning. Simply put, you don't have the talent if you can't even do this. Then, you will have to choose a skill that is easier to execute."
(Youya)

"Difficult. There's only one night..." (Luna)

Ho.. She understood that performing that attack wasn't as easy as it looked just from that one attack. It may look simple to perform, but that was because I have been doing it for years. Asking a novice to perform the attack in one night might be too harsh.

But I can't afford to wait for Luna to grow.

"Don't worry about failing to perform the strike. Even if you can't perform the critical hit, you can still specialize on attribute anomalies. Well that is if you fail before the time limit." (Youya)

I faced Scarecrow-kun and released nine consecutive attacks.

Each of these attacks were nine different slashes that can be performed with a blade. Diagonal. Left. Right. Up and down.

The different slashes were

Karatake, Kesaki, Miginagi, Migikiue, Gyakufuu, Hidarikiue, Hidarinagi, Gyaku, Togetsuki.

TLN note: I don't know what these terms are, but I am assuming they are names.

"Eventually you will have to learn how to perform all nine slashes. Otherwise, performing critical hits will merely be a dream. In a battle, not only do you have to understand which slash would to perform, but the opponent will be moving

as well. This is how much you have to prepare in order to master

Assassinate

. If you can't even land a critical hit on a stationary target, it is better to just give up entirely." (Youya)

I am being too harsh on Luna, but if I don't do so, it could be detrimental to her rather than beneficial if she ends up learning the skill without being prepared.

"I understand. I'll do it!" (Luna)

Luna's fox tail began to bounce up and down.

"Now then, try to choose one slash among the nine that you think is comfortable for you and give it your best." (Youya)

"Uhn. Just watch me do it!" (Luna)

Luna held her dagger and swung it at Scarecrow-kun with various patterns that resemble the nine strikes. Her strikes aren't accurate in the slightest but it looks like she is trying to find her most comfortable strike.

It'll probably be too difficult for her to find a comfortable strike as well as learn how to perform it properly. If it was Luna.. i guess the attack would have to be a thrust.

"Luna, try to perform a thrust." (Youya)

I took my dagger and performed a thrust onto the wooden dummy.

"Amazing.. Youya is awesome! Luna wants to do a thrust just like Youya!" (Luna)

Luna looks at me with shining eyes as she saw me perform a thrust on the wooden dummy

"If you can imitate this thrust by tomorrow morning, then you pass." (Youya)

"Ok!" (Luna)

Luna wasted no time in performing a thrust that looks similar to my demonstration.

I could see myself in her actions. It is clear that she was trying to imitate my movements from earlier.

"Luna. Drop your waist a little lower and try not to hyperextend your arms. Stop stretching right before your arm is straight." (Youya)

I stepped behind Luna and grabbed her waist from behind, correcting her posture.

"Let's do the thrust slowly with my assistance. We'll correct your posture after each try." (Youya)

"hhnn? Uhm.. Youya.. Nevermind." (Luna)

After listening to her weird reply, I realized that her face started to turn red.

Is she getting excited from swinging a sword?

After performing the movement multiple times, Luna's movement became much more fluid and she could perform the thrust on her own. She continued to perform the same action after I removed my assistance, then her action started to change, becoming much more personalized for herself. As expected of Luna, she has an incredible sense when it comes to battle techniques. Thrust after thrust, her movements became cleaner and the wasted movements were being minimized.

At this rate, it looks like her attack may be perfected by tonight.

I continued to advise Luna on her actions while cheering for her in my mind. Honestly I hope Luna clears this trial as the skill she likes is a skill i would like to have in my party, but that depends on her.

Good luck Luna!

Chapter 10: The old man rejoices at Luna's progress

The morning sun could be seen rising on the horizon. Magical torches on the walls are still illuminating the dim surroundings. In the courtyard of the inn, Luna desperately struck the invincible Scarecrow-kun while breathing heavily. She was trying to release a thrust that was capable of registering a critical strike and spent the whole night practicing it. However, normal adventurers would require multiple years to master one slash. Even for Luna, she was challenging the impossible in mastering the thrust in a single night. She was trying her hardest, and I support her fully. As expected, it feels like it could be impossible.

At that moment, the atmosphere around Luna changed. Her stance became extremely refined. She rushed forward with a smooth movement as the muscles in her entire body was activated. The force generated from her body was consolidated into her dagger and she thrust her dagger forward. It was a beautiful thrust with zero wasted movement. Luna's dagger pierced Scarecrow-kun, producing a sound completely different from earlier. It was a ringing sound that reverberated throughout the courtyard. Luna's face shone brightly listening to the ringing.

Watching Luna's bright smile while the sun was rising in the background was a beautiful sight that I won't forget.

"That was amazing! Together with Youya! Were you watching?" (Luna)

"Congratulations. I was surprised that you managed to perform a perfect thrust in just one night. You passed the requirement." (Youya)

"Hurray! Now Luna won't be dragging Youya down. Luna can properly battle and be together with Youya!" (Luna)

At that moment, Luna became to sway and collapsed. I was right next to Luna as I was carrying out special training alongside her throughout the night, Luna had overworked herself and collapsed due to fatigue. I hurriedly grabbed Luna to prevent her from falling. It could be due to that last thrust that caused Luna

to use more stamina than expected, causing her to exceed her physical limits.

I stopped my training and headed back to the inn. I had to bring Luna back to our room to recover. It would be reckless to enter a dungeon with her current state. Luna is definitely talented, but her enthusiasm was more than I expected to the point that she passed out.

"You did great. Well done, Luna." (Youya)

I stroked Luna's head. Although she is asleep, it looked like she was smiling slightly. She is definitely a cute girl. That is what has been bothering me.

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The afternoon passed by in a flash.

I was reading a book while sitting next to Luna's bed. The author of the book is one of my favourite authors. While I was enjoying the book, Luna's eyelids started to move.

"Good morning." (Youya)

I smiled at Luna as I greeted her. Then she rubbed her eyes and her fox ears began to twitch.

"*Yawn* Good morning Youya." (Luna)

Luna's stomach began to grumble and her face started to turn red. Although she is pretty daring, she is surprisingly shy when it comes to her stomach.

"Eat this for now. In addition, remember to drink this potion to recover your stamina." (Youya)

"Thank you.. It's delicious." (Luna)

The fruit I passed over to Luna was a banana. In this world, it was a fruit that grew primarily in the south. It is easy to consume and digest and our body converts it to energy quickly, making it a good stamina food. It is fairly expensive but it is still the best fruit to eat when you are tired. After eating the banana and drinking the potion, colour started to return to Luna's face. Luna looked outside the window and her fox ears began to fidget.

"Youya, it is not nighttime yet. Can we go to the dungeon?" (Luna)

"I think you should rest for the day." (Youya)

"I don't wanna. It felt great when I performed the thrust. If I don't try it once more I may forget how to do it" (Luna)

I understand how Luna feels. When you master a new technique or learn something new, until you master it you would want to practice it until it is perfected. Sigh it can't be helped.

"I understand. We'll leave in an hour, be prepared to leave by then." (Youya)

"Uhn. I will prepare myself asap." (Luna)

I quickly averted my eyes as Luna took off her clothes while finishing her sentence.

"I have thought this from the start, but aren't you a little too brazen?" (Youya)

Luna proceeded to change her clothes without any restraint. Although I don't feel any attraction towards Luna who is about 13 or 14, I still feel guilty looking at her naked body.

"But it's Youya. It's fine even if you look at Luna." (Luna)

When I heard that Luna was done changing, I turned my head and saw her wearing the adventurer clothes that I bought for her with Bazerato hanging on her waist.

"Youya, let's head out immediately!" (Luna)

Luna grabbed my hand and pulled me out of the room. Although the hour was supposed to be a break for her to rest, if she feels that she's up to it then we could leave immediately.

"I understand. Lets go. It's time for you to learn *Assassinate*. You can go ahead and place all your skill points and level it to 5." (Youya)

Since it was decided that she was going to learn *Assassinate*, that would be the only attacking skill she'll ever have as a *Thief* so it should be leveled to the maximum.

Ideally, a Thief's skillset should consist of exploration skills, relying only on

Assassinate for battles. There were many exploration skills that were useful besides *Presence Detection* such as *Treasure Hunt*, *Stealing Art* and *Shadow Walk*. These skills gave the user the ability to detect treasures, increase the drop rate of items and hide the party's presence respectively. However, such a skill set would only be possible if the user was capable of utilizing *Assassinate* effectively. Otherwise, regular thieves would have to put more points into combat skills to raise their fighting capabilities while having minimum exploration skills. They were required to take multiple debuff skills such as *Poison*, *Sleep* and *Paralysis*. There were also other debuffs that can be learnt.

I am glad that Luna was capable of utilizing critical hits as this allowed her to learn more exploration skills.

"Skill obtained! Now Luna can use *Assassinate* and defeat monsters with the thrust Youya taught!. I will assassinate all of them." (Luna)

| *Note: This was intentional.*

Luna was very energetic in utilizing her new skill. Her motivation even affected her tail as the fur on her tail were standing, causing her tail to look larger and softer, making her tail look even cuter. Unable to resist the urge, I grabbed her tail in my hand.

"Hiikk." (Luna)

Luna let out a strange voice before jumping a distance away, looking at me with face full of disdain.

"Uhm. Sorry that was my bad." (Youya)

"Youya perverted. You can't just suddenly grab a girl's tail." (Luna)

I really don't understand what Luna is saying.

She casually changes her clothes in front of me and embraces me during our sleep while snuggling herself onto my chest in bed, so why does grabbing the tail make **me** perverted?

"I didn't mean it that way. Humans don't have a tail so we don't know the importance of a tail. That's it. Is it similar to stroking a person's head? If it's bad then I'll never touch it again." (Youya)

"I'll forgive you for now. But next time, you will have to take responsibility for it! Only the person's lover can touch the tail." (Luna)

How does she remember such a thing when she has amnesia.

I had no energy to continue this conversation, so I just nodded back at her reply.

Although.. Her tail felt really nice to touch, it was smooth and fluffy.

Eh? Does it mean that if I become her husband, I'll get to touch her tail?

Ugh. Calm down Youya. She is just a child, what on earth are you thinking.

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We dived into another dungeon from the entrance in the guild.

There were several dungeons meant for beginners. This time, we entered a jungle-type dungeon. The reason why we entered a different dungeon was because of the difficulty in the monsters' weak spots. It is difficult to land a critical hit on the monsters in the rocky mountain dungeon. However, there were many monsters in this dungeon with weak points that were easy to target.

At the distance, I saw the figure of a monster hiding in the shadow of the tree.

The monster was a goblin.

"Luna, it's your turn now. You should have no problem with a goblin at your current level. Ideally, Thieves battle by utilising their speed, quickly rushing their targets and defeating the monsters with a single blow." (Youya)

"Got it. I'll try it!" (Luna)

When I took a look at her status, her stats weren't as bad as mine before the level reset. At her level, she shouldn't have any problem dealing with the goblin. On the contrary, her *Attack* and *Speed* on average increased by 3 every level.

I don't believe that this was based on luck. I have a feeling that her status increase was fixed from the start. She was a fox-beastman that didn't exist in

this world who was trapped in a crystal inside a hidden room. I wouldn't be surprised if she was the only one in the world who had a fixed status increase from the start.

"Kikiki"

The goblin came out of his hiding spot holding a stick. It was a green monster smaller than Luna, with a bulging stomach.

Goblins have low offensive capabilities and low-speed, making them easy prey.

If you approach cautiously, the chance of defeat is low.

Note: Anyone having Goblin-slayer deja vu here?

Luna rushed the goblin the instant it appeared. She was fast. Much faster than her status had implied. As expected of a beastman. She had mastered her body much more than an average person could.

However, the situation was bad. She is rushing too much into the battle. Even though the goblin was right in front of her, she showed no signs of slowing down. If it was me, I would have already slowed down to prepare my stance before throwing out a thrust against the goblin.

Luna continued to prepare her thrust while maintaining her speed, barely achieving the form required for the critical to register.

It is impossible for her to transit into the stance for her thrust with that kind of momentum.

However, she did not show any intention of slowing down her momentum.

Even if she fails here, it will come back to her as a lesson and experience to reflect upon.

As Luna rapidly approaches the goblin, her stride was further increased on her last step directly in front of the goblin.

Surprisingly, instead of slowing down her momentum and transiting into a stance, Luna had transited directly into her thrust while increasing her speed.

The goblin did not expect to be rushed at such a high-speed and stiffened at

Luna's rush. Taking this opportunity, Luna aimed at the goblin's heart which is its weak point.

"Assassinate." (Luna)

Luna threw out her thrust towards the goblin. It was a perfect thrust with the entire body working together with its momentum, concentrating its power into the dagger. The skill with the highest power multiplier among all the classes was activated, and a distinct ringing sound resonated.

The goblin whose breast was gouged out by the thrust turned into blue particles with a single blow.

"What talent.. It doesn't seem balanced for someone to be this talented" (Youya)

Despite just learning the basic thrust this morning, she applied the thrust in addition to a rushing technique. This combination was a powerful combination, be able to perform this meant that her offensive power much higher.

"Youya, I did it!" (Luna)

"I have no words. That was a perfect thrust if I've seen one. Be sure to master that thrust by practicing it." (Youya)

Luna continued searching for enemies with *Presence Detection* while humming happily.

Despite her looks, she is a frightening girl.

"Luna. Let me teach you how to utilize *Presence Detection* offensively. Use it to find moving enemies nearby and approach them from the back. Surprise them with a surprise attack. This is the safest way to ensure you land your attack." (Youya)

"Got it!" (Luna)

This was another one of Luna's amazing traits.

Flexibility only possible to a Beastman that allows them to run in a way different from humans. She was capable of running without making a single sound as well as hide her presence.

Initially i wanted her to obtain skills to help her stealth movements, however it seems that it wasn't necessary.

Once again, Luna defeated another goblin.

She followed my instructions and rushed the goblin with a surprise attack. It didn't realise Luna had approached it up until it died. I doubt even an average adventurer would notice Luna approaching him. She had a talent befitting of the world's best assassin.

"Youya, were you watching me!?" (Luna)

"Yeah I was watching. It's a good move, do not forget that feeling." (Youya)

"Uhn! I will work even harder!" (Luna)

While I was watching Luna's movements, I was thinking about how I could learn from her movements. Just how much more could this girl grow? I can't wait to watch her growth from now on.

However, I can't let myself be defeated by her.

Her training is sufficient for now. It's about time for me to start my training. I still have much room to grow. We both, can grow much stronger from now on.

<End of Chapter>

Hi guys! Thanks for the nice comments so far, they have been really motivating for me to continue translating! As always, thanks for reading and if there are any mistakes or anything you think should be changed, feel free to point it out!

Chapter 11: The old man is caught in the fight between the elf sisters

Luna continued her training in the dungeon until she ran out of mana from repeated uses of *Assassinate*. Meanwhile, I started my own training to practice my usage of *Napalm Strike*. Unlike the game era where the skill can be activated by a press of a button, the skill has to be activated with a chant and it has an activation period where the spell can be activated. Between its long cast time and short activation period, it is a skill that requires a lot of practice to grasp its timing. In the future, there will be a time where I will have to activate *Napalm Strike* in a heated battle against a faster and stronger opponent. If I do not master the timing for the skill, I may not survive that opponent. In any case, I am also practicing my barehanded combat for emergencies where I do not have my swords.

"As expected, it is a risky move to activate *Napalm Strike*." (Youya)

The weak point of *Napalm Strike* was that its activation window was too short whereas its casting time was too long. If I don't land the attack right after casting it, the spell will expire. Its casting time and activation window is much more severe than I thought.

Normally, when a spell's level is increased, its overall effectiveness increases and its casting time gets shorter. For some spells, it's even possible to have an instantaneous activation. However, customized magic spells function differently.

Spells that were customized with *Magic Customization* can neither be reverted or customized, requiring the user to have foresight to customize a spell that can be used in the future.

I'll have to take responsibility for customizing such a difficult spell. I have no choice but take some time to adapt to the spell's timing. It may be difficult, but this spell will be worth it.

This are the kind of challenges that I do not dislike.

I will practice activating *Napalm Strike* today until my mana runs dry.

Although we have only been practicing against goblins so far, we will be returning once our mana runs dry. Goblins could easily be beaten without skills, making them good target practice for us. In addition, we left the inn in the afternoon, and it's getting close to night. It's too dangerous for us to stay in the jungle during the night.

"Luna, it's about time we head back to the inn." (Youya)

"Uhn. I'm worn out but content with my progress today." (Luna)

"Don't be too happy. Your thrusts were getting sloppy towards the end. You still need more practice." (Youya)

"O-tsu! Luna will try her best." (Luna)

I was watching Luna the entire day while she was battling goblins. Physical fatigue started to kick in towards the second half, causing her precision to fall. Her critical rate had fell to about 70%. Her success rate will fall in an actual battle when she is getting pressured by her opponent. It will continue to fall further if she was surrounded by multiple enemies. Her skill is still insufficient, but she still has a lot of room to improve. After watching her performance these past two days, it shouldn't take too long before she completely masters *Assassinate*.

"Luna. Can you pass me the drop items that you picked up from your battles." (Youya)

"Uhn. Only this was dropped." (Luna)

Luna took the item out of her magic bag and passed it over to me. Her bag could hold about 10 kilograms of items. It was only a fraction of my bag's capacity, but it is better than having a normal bag. Without the magic bag, she would have to carry a large backpack with her in the dungeon. Even a 10 kilograms magic bag would cost about 2 million giru. For comparison, bread in this world cost 100 giru. There was a huge demand for magic bags in the marketplace.

Adventurers weren't the only people who wanted a magic bag, but so do peddlers and merchants. The market price for *Magic Bags* were constantly on

the rise due to the increasing number of merchants in the industry. Thus, whenever a bag was discovered, adventurers would often sell them for a high price.

"Alright, quest completed. There was a quest that requested for an item dropped by goblins. Since we were going to train, I accepted the quest before we entered." (Youya)

The item that the goblins dropped was the *Sage*. *Sage* is an herb commonly used in the brewing of potions. Since the demand for potions is always present, collection quests for these kind of herbs are common.

Checking the quest board before departing is one of the basics for being an adventurer.

"Alright, now our guild points will increase again." (Luna)

"And we get some money as a reward too." (Youya)

Me and Luna did a high-five.

Luna got to practice her secret attack while we made progress as a party.

Today was a good day.

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When we returned to the guild, there was a crowd gathering around the reception desk at the front of the guild.

Let's find out what happened.

At the center of the crowd, were two elven girls. Originally, Elfs lived in their villages deep in the forest and were rarely seen outside of their forests. Two of such elfs were currently quarreling with each other.

"Why is my elder sister such an idiot! Why can't I be an adventurer?" (Elf no.1)

"Being an adventurer is a dangerous job. It's normal for an average countryman to become an adventurer. However, whether it is being deceived

by others or losing your life to monsters, it is still a dangerous job. Furthermore, you are a girl. A cute girl with a good body." (Phil)

One of the elves is a well-known figure in this guild who used to be my party member, Phill while the other appears to be her sister. They were both beautiful girls with long ears, blonde hair and jade-colored eyes.

"If my sister can do it, then so can I." (Phil's sister)

"I was just lucky. If that person didn't pick me up, I would have been sold as a slave and most likely end up dead. Please listen to me." (Phil)

I remembered the time when I first met Phil. I had taken up a quest that asked for adventurers to save an elven village from pillagers. That quest turned out to be a success and the village was saved. It was supposed to be a happy ending but what ended up happening was Phil requesting to become an adventurer after being saved. At the time, she was merely a cute elf who admired adventurers. There were many adventurers who were eyeing her and tried to take advantage of that admiration. At the time, I was a solo adventurer who didn't have a party. Watching the scene unfold, in order to save her, I decided to recruit her into a party with me.

At the time, if I did not help Phil, she would have likely been sold as a slave. Elves who are always beautiful and would never grow old are rare and would fetch a high price.

After that, Phil became my disciple and we adventured alone for awhile. After awhile, the extremely talented Leonard and veteran thief Lyle joined our party. Together we conquered a variety of dungeons, and our party became famous.

In a way, that was the peak of my adventuring life.

"Stop with this nonsense and listen to me. I will talk to the people in the guild and cancel the class tomorrow. I'll take a day off and I am bringing you back to the village." (Phil)

"Big sis is an idiot!!" (Phil's sister)

Tears started to form in her eyes as Phil's sister ran in our direction.

This is bad. The girl was rubbing her eyes as she ran without watching where

she's running.

I am too deep into the crowd, there isn't any room for me to evade or hide.

If I can't evade, then I'll take the blow.

She continued running in my direction, until she crashed against my body. Anticipating her movements, I caught her softly as she ran into me. Phil followed right after, chasing after her sister.

"I am sorry, please excuse my sister's actions.....wait. That face.. I've met you somewhere." (Phil)

I was wearing the hat that I used as cover to hide my face. However, even with the hat, if she is this close up the hat wouldn't do any good. The girl who bumped into me earlier looked up.

"Ah! It's my sister's boyfriend! It's the guy whose face was on the letter you sent to the village a long time ago!" (Elf sister)

I screwed up. I shouldn't had let this happen.

Although it's nice to know that Phil had pictures of me, it's especially careless of me since Phil must have been talking about me to her little sister.

"Eh? That can't be. Could you be Youya..? But your level is too low to be him.." (Phil)

Based on what she said, looks like she had suspicions about my identity up until now. However, because she was able to see my level, she probably thought that I was someone who was similar to me.

Phil was getting closer and closer. I took my hat off and looked at her.

"Huh!? Why are you in Rumberg? And your level... How?" (Phil)

"Well.. things happened and here I am." (Youya)

My identity was finally exposed. I always knew it would happen, but I hadn't expected it to happen so soon.

The girl who bumped into me let out a sly smile.

"Hey.. Youya-san. You are onee-chan's boyfriend aren't you. She was always talking about you back in the village, that you are the most reliable person in

the world. Then would you accept a quest from me? I'll give you the treasure of the Elves, and in exchange, please accept me into your party!" (Elf sister)

The girl was asking for an unreasonable request. Phil placed her hand on her face and looked down towards the ground while the surrounding adventurers started becoming noisy.

"Boyfriend!? To THAT Phil?"

"That's a lie.. He is just an old man."

"Laying a hand on our idol.. You wanna die?"

"I just wish for Phil-chan's happiness"

As expected, Phil is extremely popular as the beautiful elf receptionist in the guild.

I felt my hands being pulled by someone.

I looked behind and saw that it was Luna.

Luna interlocked her fingers with mine and looked at the elf sisters.

"Youya is Luna's. Luna won't give Youya away." (Luna)

Suddenly, the guild turned into total silence. Few moments later, whispers could be heard.

"To such a small child.."

"Hes a devil."

"They could be considered parent and child.."

Everyone was clearly misunderstanding the situation.

"Hey, Youya. You can't be doing such things to a small child.. Right?" (Phil)

Oie. Phil. Not you too.

"Isn't it obvious? You of all people know what I'm like. It's the same case with you. I'm just taking up the troublesome role of looking after her." (Youya)

"Ah. That's right.. Theres no way the Youya who didn't lay a hand on me all those years even though I gave him plenty of opportunities would lay a hand on such a small child." (Phil)

For some reason, Luna was puffing her chest out proudly.

"Youya played with Luna's most important place." (Luna)

Phil looks directly at my face with a menacing look. It is blatantly written on her face.

"Sigh. Let's just talk outside later before any other misunderstandings happen. Phil. We'll be waiting for you after your job is over." (Youya)

"It's already after hours. It's my personal time now." (Phil)

"Then let's change the location." (Youya)

"Well. Leaving this aside. There are things that I want to ask and talk about." (Phill)

The conversation resulted in a drinking session with an old colleague.

Well with a bunch of new faces though. Luna was staring intently at Phil's sister. Let's just leave the rumors as it is for the time being.

I've always been weak to pushy people in the past. Seems like that hasn't changed.

Chapter 12: The old man adds an elf to his party.

While training Luna's special technique in the dungeon, we completed an additional quest along the way.

When we came back to the guild, I got involved in a quarrel between the two elf sisters, resulting in my identity being exposed.

Although it was unexpectedly troublesome, it was a blessing in disguise.

I got a chance to reconcile with one of my ex-party members, my disciple Phil. She was one of the two disciples that I left behind whom I treated like my own daughter. The other disciple was Leonard, who was in love with Phil.

Currently, there was a group of four people who were the center of attention walking on the streets.

There were three beautiful teenage girls. First was Phil who looks like a teenager approaching her twenties. Her actual age was around late twenties while her sister and Luna look like a teenager, with their actual ages being in their teens.

And there was me. An old man in his thirties.

There were many men who wanted to approach the girls on our way to the bar, however the moment they noticed that Phil among the girls, they immediately backed off. On the outside, Phil may have a pretty face. But on the inside, Phil was a first class adventurer who has reached Level 50, the level cap for adventurers without completing the *Tower of Trials*. She was the real thing who had accumulated various experiences as an adventurer. An average adventurer would try their best to avoid angering her thanks to her reputation.

"It seems that the old Phil has grown to be a bit more adult-like." (Youya)

The old Phil was much worse at dealing with men, and would often hide behind me whenever she was approached.

"How many years ago are you talking about? As a female adventurer, I had to

become strong if I was to live on my own. I learnt that the moment Youya left, leaving only a letter for each of us. I was terrified and miserable when you left without saying a word and couldn't stop crying when I realised you weren't coming back." (Phil)

It seems that the matter about Phil surviving on her own wasn't a lie. She mentioned that she left the party after I chose to abandon them. Let's be sure to listen to her circumstances afterwards.

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We were guided to a tavern by Phil's recommendation since she was most familiar with the area. The tavern she brought us to had an amazing ambience that drew me in that made me crave for the food here even more.

When we arrived at the bar, each of us ordered our drinks. I ordered a mug of ale, honey sake for Phil while her sister and Luna ordered grape juice. Although her sister looked almost the same age as her, Phil was much older than her as elves grew at a different rate from humans. Elves had a unique characteristic where they would age much slower once they were 11 years old.

"So, why is your level so low, and why are you here acting as a fresh adventurer?" (Phil)

Phil went straight to the point.

"I was adventuring in a wild dungeon when I encountered a huge caterpillar demon that I have never seen before. Furthermore, it was capable of performing *Level Drain*, and my level dropped to level one." (Youya)

"*Level Drain*... So it does exist.." (Phil)

"Yes, and thanks to it I ended up with a second chance to start over from scratch. Do not even think about using it to reduce your levels. Who knows what will happen when you are reduced to a mere Level one adventurer in the middle of an intermediate level dungeon?" (Youya)

I hid the fact that a hidden room with a level reset function exists. *Level Reset*

is a dangerous function. I've known Phil ever since she was young, needless to say that I would entrust my life to her if needed. However, it is dangerous to allow the information about the hidden rooms to spread. The information should be contained as much as possible.

"It must have been tough.. Losing your levels despite working so hard to raise it to 50.." (Phil)

"In my case, it wasn't that bad." (Youya)

Phil had a miserable face as we talked about my lost levels. She was one of the people who understood how much I had lamented my status back when we were in the same party. My status was the worst enemy I had to face back then.

"Don't make a face like that, Phil. Honestly, I feel that losing my levels has been a blessing so far. That's why I came to Rumberg. To start over. Maybe it's because I had to suffer with a low status for so long that my status right now is better than ever." (Youya)

"As always, Youya is always optimistic.. Looking towards the future rather than the past." (Phil)

Phil let out a slight smile.

The waiter who was carrying our drinks arrived while asking for our orders.

The specialty around here was their fish and chips. I ordered a set of fish and chips as it also went well with alcohol.

"So, how did you end up working here as a receptionist? I had thought that you would end up adventuring together with Leonard." (Youya)

Leonard and Phil were excellent adventurers even back when we were adventuring together. Blessed with a good status and talent that exceeded even their status. Not to mention that they are my disciples. When I left the party, I had made sure that I had taught the two of them everything that I knew. I wouldn't be surprised if their swordsmanship has surpassed me at this point.

"When you abandoned the party, I too left the party." (Phil)

"That is surprising. I always thought that you and Leonard would never separate from each other, regardless of the situation." (Youya)

Leonard was the member that joined our party after Phil. Initially he was a reckless guy who only was all talk with no substance. However, he had grown exponentially after becoming my disciple, eventually surpassing me in combat prowess. And although he did not mention it, it was obvious that he was in love with Phil. In order to support their relationship, I left the party while leaving a letter behind knowing that Phil would follow me even when I intended to leave all of them behind. I hoped that Phil would be happier with the young and talented Leonard rather than chasing after this old man.

"After you left the party, Leonard decided to propose to me. Because of that, I left the party." (Phil)

I accidentally spat my ale out onto the table. Although I expected Leonard to confess after I left, it seems he jumped the gun much faster than I thought.

"You didn't have to leave the party just because you rejected his proposal though." (Youya)

"A lot of things had happened after you left the party. More than the rejection, I was afraid of being in the same party as Leonard. When Youya left the party, I felt that my motivation dissipate and I needed a break from adventuring entirely. So I went on a journey alone. While I was on the journey, I thought about what Youya did for me when we first met, and realised that I wanted to help people who were in trouble with my strength just as you did for me." (Phil)

Phil was a receptionist who was once a veteran adventurer. With her experience and strength, it isn't surprising that many adventurers had benefited from her good will. In addition, she is smart and gentle. She was perfect as a receptionist. There are definitely many lives that were saved thanks to Phil.

"Wowww. Onee-chan is putting up such a strong front. Even though you mentioned many horrible things in the letter you sent." (Phil's sister)

Phil's sister started grinning.

"That sounds interesting. Please elaborate." (Youya)

"Various things happened when I became a receptionist such as suffering sexual harassment during my work hours.. Frequently being forced to work

overtime, harassment by my boss and my seniors at work. I was even “advised” to go on an adventure every three days, just to get ambushed on my way home every time.” (Phil)

“Sounds like life as a receptionist is tough.” (Youya)

Life as a receptionist sounds totally different from an adventurer. Although I am worried about her situation, she appears totally unaffected without a hint of anxiety.

“Don’t worry about it.. Although this child mentioned a bunch of unnecessary things, there are still many things that make working as a receptionist worthwhile.” (Youya)

“If it’s you, I know you can do it. ” (Youya)

Me and Phil started smiling as we continued to catch up about what happened after the party was dissolved. It seems that her life as a receptionist is doing really well. I am glad that her life is going well after everything that happened. I hadn’t enjoy a meal like this ever since I escaped from the *Tower of Trials*.

Throughout the meal, Luna was glancing at my face every now and then. She was probably feeling anxious about Phil’s presence.

“Now that we have the chance, I should formally introduce myself. My name is Youya and I used to travel together with Phil. This girl is my current party member, her name is Luna.” (Youya)

“Luna’s name is Luna. Luna is fighting together with Youya.” (Luna)

The introduction was directly mainly at Phil’s sister, but it was also to introduce Luna to Phil.

“My name is Phil Ether Lance, Youya’s former party member and the guild receptionist.” (Phil)

“My name is Till Ether Lance. I am Phil’s younger sister and I came to Rumberg to be an adventurer.” (Till)

Although Phil gave off an impression of a mature adult, her sister Till gave off an impression of a lively young girl. Both of them looked similar with jade eyes,

blonde hair and long ears.

"How old are you Till? I am asking because I know that the age of an elf can't be determined by their appearance." (Youya)

"I am fourteen this year!" (Till)

"Hmm.. That's a good age to become an adventurer. Although I don't recommend it. Especially for a cute girl like you. If a man found you inside an isolated area such as a dungeon, that person would most likely be more dangerous than any beast you could find in a dungeon." (Youya)

It is dangerous for a party consisting of girls, not to mention a solo female adventurer since in the dungeon, a person's strength was the only thing that mattered.

"Then why didn't you say the same thing to my elder sister?" (Till)

"I am not opposing it just because you are my younger sister. If a girl came up to me asking to become an adventurer, I would advise against it. During my adventuring days, I was more afraid of other adventurers than I was towards monsters in the dungeons, much more than you think." (Phil)

In reality, Phil had always struggled when it came to interacting with other adventurers. She was often targeted by other people as a beautiful elf. Me and Leonard often had to protect her in desperate situations. Thinking back, I can understand why Phil would refuse Leonard's proposal and chose to leave the party. If Leonard had decided to assault Phil in the dungeon, she wouldn't be able to stop him. Being in the same party would just be exposing herself to that possibility.

"That is why I made a request to Youya. Please accept my quest." (Till)

Til bowed her heads towards me.

Now that you mention it, she mentioned giving away the treasure of the elves if I accepted her into my party.

"I won't allow that. Till. Youya is still a man. You will never know when he may give in to his desires." (Phil)

Ouch. Those were some harsh words. However, Till is not convinced.

"It's okay isn't it? Although you were in his party for the longest time, nothing happened right? The two of you have even slept in the same bed together. You were essentially a couple outside of the dungeon. It's obvious that he isn't dangerous at all." (Till)

"Wh,wh,wh.. Why did you have to say it like that?" (Phil)

"Could it be.. You ended up doing couple stuff together?" (Till)

"There's no way that happened." (Phil)

Phil started to deny that we were a couple back then. It's true that we weren't though.

Our relationship wasn't that of a couple, but rather a parent and a child.

"Then it's okay right! It's up to Youya whether he wants to accept my quest or not." (Till)

Up to now, the only person who I've seen with an exclusive class was Phil. It was probably an Elf-exclusive class. It's highly likely that Till would be able to choose that class as well. If she does end up selecting that class, it could be a valuable asset to the party thanks to it's war potential.

Honestly speaking, the number of members currently isn't ideal. It would be better to find more allies as soon as possible to have four people in the party.

"Well I'll consider the request. But first, what is the treasure of the elves that you offered?" (Youya)

"Its the *Drop of the World Tree*. It's a special liquid that can only be made by elves. It takes about five years to produce enough for a bottle." (Til)

"*Drop of the World Tree!*? The liquid that can prevent a person from aging?" (Youya)

"If it's a human, just merely drinking a drop everyday is enough to stop the person from aging." (Til)

Til was looking at me while explaining about the treasure. It is a rather famous medicine known for it's anti-aging effects. It was because of this medicine that elf villages were often targeted. Although, the desire to live forever is mostly existent among human beings. If I were to possess a bottle of the drop, I could

halt my aging for up to two years by drinking a drop per day. It is something that I really want to have to prolong my body as much as possible. My body is already on the decline now that I am 36 years old.

If I were to accept her request, I would be able to halt my aging, obtain a new party member with the possibility of taking up a powerful exclusive class. There were many benefits to accepting her request. I want to accept her request.. However. I do not want to support this girl's rebellious actions.

"Ok. If you are able to obtain Phil's permission, then I will accept your request. My party does not accept anybody who runs away from their families without permission." (Youya)

Everyone's attention shifted over to Phil who had the final say.

"Til, Why do you want to become an adventurer so badly? I'll make my decision depending on your answer." (Phil)

Phil looked straight into Til's eyes as she asked about her intentions.

"Because my sister looked like she was having so much fun being an adventurer. Back when I was in the village, I longed to see my older sister so badly that I decided to leave the village in order to see what she saw and experience what she experienced! I want to be like my sister who got to explore the world! Compared to being an adventurer, it is boring to stay in the village where I would only be able to see the forest!" (Til)

That was a good reason. Curiosity is the best driving force as well as the best possible trait of an adventurer. Phil started laughing after she heard her answer.

"I understand. It's also because Youya is a good person, I'll permit you to adventure together with him. I'll give in this time, and let you become an adventurer." (Phil)

"Yay I love you big sis!" (Til)

Til widened her arms and hugged Phil. A pair of elves hugging would make for an beautiful painting.

"If you are going to be in Youya's party, I will ask the guild to prepare a special class for you to attend tomorrow. Needless to say, I will only allow you to be an

adventurer if you stay in his party. Youya, please take care of my sister." (Phil)

Phil bowed her head towards me

"Leave it to me. I'll protect Til with my life." (Youya)

I will not let Phil down if it is a special request from her. However, Luna seems dissatisfied with the current situation.

"Luna, don't pout like that because Til is our party member. It's not like Til is taking me away from you. Think of it as having an extra friend in our party." (Youya)

"Really? Will you not leave Luna behind because Til is here?" (Luna)

"I promise." (Youya)

"Then maybe it is fine. Nice to meet you Til" (Luna)

"Nice to meet you too, Luna-chan" (Til)

Luna and Til shook hands as they greeted each other. It appears that we have come to a resolution. Now it's time for us to celebrate with a meal.

"Tonight's meal will be my treat. It's a celebration for a new party member, everyone help yourself to the menu." (Youya)

With this, the number of people in our party has increased to three. Unlike before, there are a variety of things that we can attempt to do that we couldn't do before. Tomorrow, Til will attend the class and obtain her class. Immediately after, we will dive into a dungeon and evaluate her strength.

The exclusive class given to elves is extremely overpowered. Although it existed during the game era, it was a class that could only be obtained by NPCs. In addition, that class was extremely compatible with my *Magic Customization*. I'm looking forward to entering the dungeon tomorrow.

The food here tasted even more delicious with alcohol. It's been a while since I let loose in a bar.

"Why Youya. Why did you leave me behind?" (Phil)

"I thought that Phil would be happier with Leonard rather than an old man like me." (Youya)

"It's just like Youya to decide things by himself~~.The one that I like is not Leonad....Ahways. We were ahways together, sho why~~?" (Phil)

It seems that the Phil has drank too much and collapsed on the spot. The other two girls were observing the situation closely on the side lines.

"Luna, do you know the way back to the inn?" (Youya)

"Yesh I do." (Luna)

"I'll carry Phil home while you bring Til back to our room at the Inn. On the way back to the inn, there will be an alleyway that is a shortcut back to the Inn. If you find the alleyway, you should end up back at the inn." (Youya)

"Okay." (Luna)

For now, let's settle the matter with Phil before I can think about diving into the dungeon tomorrow. Although she appears to be more of an adult than before, it seems that she is just a child who has just grown a little.

Chapter 13: The old man envisions a Spirit Archer

I asked Luna to send Til back to our room at the inn while I sent Phil back to her place.

"You drank too much. Remember to pace yourself next time when you are drinking." (Youya)

Phil was dead drunk. Even though she should be aware of her own limits, she still ended up getting drunk. Well I'm not completely free of blame this time. It was a reunion after such a long time and I ended up being careless. I nearly got myself drunk as well, but I managed to sober up and drank plenty of water.

"I'm sorry." (Phil)

"Is this the right place?" (Youya)

"Yeah, this is my home." (Phil)

I could feel the warmth of Phil's body on my back. It's a nostalgic feeling. I used to carry her like this so often back then. Although Phil is a first class adventurer right now, back when we just started adventuring together, it was so different. I was tired of carrying her back then. She would often fall down in the middle of the streets, or get injured unnecessarily.

"In the past I often carried you around like this. It was tough work considering how many times I had to do that." (Youya)

"Uhn. How nostalgic. Youya's back is as comfortable as always. It feels like I'm safe so long as I'm here" (Phil)

Phil started to place more weight onto my back, transmitting more of her temperature and even her smell onto my body. She's been trying hard, and I kinda get the message. Although Phil's outer appearance hasn't changed that much because of the elves' racial characteristics, the Phil I knew and the Phil I know now are different. She has grown up to be a wonderful woman.

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I carried Phil towards her room. It was clean and neatly organized. She was always the one in charge of housework, even back when we were living together. She was a great cook too. Back then I often told her she would make a good bride, earning me weird looks from her.

I placed her down onto her bed and loosened her clothes by removing the buttons on her shirt. Now that she is home safely, it's time for me to get back to the inn. There are various things that I have to teach Till before her special course. The only time we have left is tonight and tomorrow morning, which isn't a lot of time since we will be entering the dungeon immediately after her class selection. Although that is if I get to leave the room.

"Phil, could you please let go of my hand?" (Youya)

Phil forcefully turned my head and gently gazed into my eyes. Thanks to the level reset, I do not have the power to resist her force. It's impossible for me to escape unless she lets me go.

"Why, why do you leave me back then. You left without a word, just leaving a letter for us to read Do you know how sad. How lonely I was when you left?" (Phil)

"If I remained, we would had definitely failed to complete the *Tower of Trials*. There was no way we weren't going to attempt it with how enthusiastic Leonard and Lyle was about the tower. I couldn't bear to drag you and Leonard behind, who could become stronger. Because if it was someone who was stronger than me in the party, you guys could definitely clear the trials." (Youya)

The *Tower of Trials* has a survival rate of 2%. It is impossible to survive the tower with someone like me back then. Especially when the tower was designed to only be cleared by a party of four people who had reset their level. Clearing the tower yields multiple rare items and increases the level cap to 70, so that degree of difficulty is natural. In fact, Leonard was the ridiculous one who managed to clear the tower without the bonuses from a level reset.

"You know that is not what I meant. Why didn't you ask me back then? Why

didn't you take me with you? We were always together weren't we? If you didn't want to attempt the trials, I would have followed behind you. I couldn't care less about aiming for the top. That wasn't the reason why I was in that party." (Phil)

Phil's eyes starting to become moist. She had never shown those eyes when we were together back then. She is properly growing up, both in heart and body.

"I have always longed for the Youya who rescued the village, who introduced the idea of being an adventurer to explore the outside world. The same man who saved me when I was about to be taken advantage of by other adventurers. The same person who I've spend forever with. As time went by, my feelings just grew stronger and stronger. I thought that we would be together forever. Thanks to Youya, I felt like the happiest person in the world. But even then. Even so. Why did you abandon me? " (Phil)

It felt like my chest was stabbed by her words. At that moment, I wanted to tell Phil everything.

"I didn't think about what I wanted to do after leaving the party. All I wanted was Phil to be happy with Leonard. If I were to consult the party about me leaving, Phil would surely leave with me, to me that wouldn't make you happy." (Youya)

I thought that it would be best for Phil to be together with Leonard who had loved her deeply. Together the two of them would be able to soar to greater heights. So I decided to leave only the letter behind and disappear on my own.

"Don't go off deciding people's future on your own. We were always together, so why didn't you notice? It was not Leonard. It was never him." (Phil)

Her voice carried a strange tone while her jade eyes caught my eye without relinquishing control. Her entire body seemed to carry an alluring tone. I swallowed my saliva in nervousness

"I'm sorry." (Youya)

"Are you still going to pretend not to notice? I'm not a child anymore." (Phil)

I didn't notice anything back then because I have always treated Phil as a

daughter. Now that we haven't met in a long time, I couldn't help but notice how mature she has become.

"Phil, do you know what you are saying?" (Youya)

"I do. That's why." (Phil)

You told me so far, I understand what you are trying to say. However..

"Ouch~" (Phil)

I did a hard flick onto Phil's forehead with my finger.

"I'm not desperate enough to lay a hand on a drunken woman, nor am I hungry for a woman." (Youya)

"Meanie.." (Phil)

"Sorry." (Youya)

"But I'm relieved. I thought that you had come to dislike me that's why you left me behind. I was anxious thinking that I had done something bad. That's why, could you sleep together with me tonight? Just sleeping. It's lonely to sleep by myself." (Phil)

"Alright. I will." (Youya)

"You have always treated me as a daughter, and I was fine with that. Because Youya was always taking care of me. You were always my first love." (Phil)

Phil closed her eyes, leaving herself defenseless with a man like me. I smiled nervously. I didn't expect to be shaken up this much with her confession.

I had a hard time falling asleep.

Phil wasn't the cute little girl I knew back then. She has grown up into a fine woman. An idea suddenly popped back into my mind.

I could tell everything to Phil. Have her reset her level and fixing her status gain to the maximum, and go on adventures together again. It was extremely tempting. I spent most of the night watching Phil's sleeping face and before I knew it, I fell asleep.

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I returned to the inn at dawn.

Luna was scolding me for being late while Til was teasing me the entire time. However, once they knew that I spent the night at Phil's place, they calmed down. After that, we ordered room service and the owner of the inn delivered our breakfast to our room. While we were eating breakfast, we were explaining the basics of adventurers to Til. This went on until noon.

"Let's start heading towards the guild. If Til misses her class, we won't be able to go into the dungeon afterwards." (Youya)

"Finally I can choose a class! I can become an adventurer now!" (Til)

Til seems excited for her class selection. Now it's just up to Phil to hold the class for Til. While we were talking about such things, the three of us prepared for our departure.

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When we arrived at the guild, we went straight towards the receptionist desk to look for Phil.

Since special classes aside from the weekly lectures aren't considered official lessons, we have to look for Phil in order to attend the class. Strangely enough, Phil wasn't at the receptionist desk.

"Where are you looking?" (Phil)

I heard Phil's voice from behind me, and there stood a Phil in her personal clothes. She looks much better in her private clothes as compared to the guild uniform.

"Now that I think about it, today was your day off." (Youya)

"Initially I was supposed to deliver Til back to the village today, but the situation has changed. I've talked to my superiors about the circumstances and

the procedure has been approved." (Phil)

Despite just drinking yesterday night, Phil still managed to get the class approved. Her makeup looks much better than usual today.

"Thank you big sister!! I will make you proud as an adventurer!" (Til)

"I'll be supporting you as a sister and a receptionist, so try your best alright. I'm sure you'll do fine since Youya is around." (Phil)

"Leave it to me, I will make sure to keep your sister safe." (Youya)

Although I'm protecting Til as a responsibility towards Phil, I'm also doing it for my own benefit. As a reward, Til will be supplying me *Drops of the World Tree*. A liquid that stops the body from aging. With just a drop, a human body can stop aging for a day. Today was the first day I was given the drop, and I took it before we departed. Apparently the drop can only be obtained by elves, I wonder where did the drop come from..?

"Follow me, I'll lead you to the classroom." (Phil)

Following Phil's lead, we went into the room at the back of the guild towards the same room where me and Luna got our classes.

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As expected, the place Phil lead us to was the same classroom.

After the special class ended, Til is standing in front of the statue. She appears totally stiff as she stood still. It seems that she was more excited rather than nervous. Her enthusiasm was overflowing so much that I could feel myself getting excited as well.

"Til remember to let me know what are the classes that appear in your mind." (Youya)

"Uhn. I know." (Til)

Right now, it was in the middle of the afternoon. We spent the entire time explaining the different classes to Til. There wasn't any specific class that I

wanted Til to take, however if the exclusive class that Phil had been present for Til, I will ask her to take that class. If she doesn't have the class, I'll ask her to be a *Magic Caster*. Our party lacks a dedicated attacker. A party needs to have someone capable of dealing with large number of monsters. If a group of monsters were to appear in front of me and Luna, it would be a difficult battle as we had no range attackers who could attack from the back. There were also monsters who could render physical attacks ineffective, and my mana pool isn't large enough to sustain multiple spell casts for each battle. Hence, a *Magic Caster* would be ideal for our party.

If the party member was a human, the *Magic Caster* would be ideal. However, Til was an Elf. For elves, the exclusive class that was present is a class that has priority over the *Wizard* class. It was a powerful class that was limited to NPCs back in the game era, players even thought that the class was unbalanced even in the hands of an NPC.

Til started to pray in front of the statue.

"The classes that appeared were *Warrior, Fighter, Magic Knight, Thief, Magic Caster, Monk, Ranger* and the *Spirit Archer*." (Til)

There it is. The exclusive class that can only be taken by an elf.

"Take the *Spirit Archer*." (Youya)

"Hurray! Will this class let me becoming an amazing adventurer?" (Til)

"That's a special class that can't be taken by ordinary adventurers. It will make you a top-tier adventurer if you can master it. I guarantee it." (Youya)

"Then, let's take it!" (Til)

Til's body was covered in a familiar glow. The light enveloping her body caused her body to become slightly transparent. Her body started to change back to normal after the glow dissipated. Til is now officially a Spirit Archer.

"I am the Spirit Archer Til now!. Please take care of me from now on!" (Til)

"I'll do my best to meet your expectations." (Youya)

Spirit Archer is a powerful class as it's a combination of the *Ranger* class and the *Magic Caster* class. Rangers are capable of attacking from long distance

using a bow while utilizing exploration skills. Magic Casters were capable of casting magic spells of all three attributes: *Fire*, *Water (Ice)*, *Wind (Lightning)*. Spirit Archers were capable of utilising bows for long-ranged attacks while having the ability to cast magic of the *Wind (Lightning)* attribute, giving them two different forms of attacks.

Although the *Spirit Archer* appears to be similar to the *Magic Knight*, magic knights did not have the same status correction that spirit archers have. Spirit archers have improved mana pools, attack power, speed and magic power with a decent increase in physical capabilities. This meant that they have similar benefits in status corrections to rangers and magic casters without the downsides. The class's greatest strength wasn't the ability to utilize two types of attacks, but the ability to use two types of attacks simultaneously, showcasing it's ability as an exclusive class.

It's ability is much more amazing than it appears to be. When I was watching Phil's battles back then as a spirit archer, there were many instances where I wished I could be a spirit archer. Similar to Phil's case, it would be better to have Til experience the strength of her class rather than explaining it in words. I'm sure Til will be as surprised as Phil was back then.

I can't wait to watch Til showcase her power.

Chapter 14: The old man goes to the weapons store.

A third member has joined our party. She is a spirit archer, the class that are only available for elves. Having firsthand knowledge about the strength of that class, it was an incredibly unbalanced class.

"By the way, how good are you with a bow?" (Youya)

I was so engrossed in the fact that our new member was a spirit archer that I forgot the most important thing, whether Til was capable of using a bow. In reality, a bow is a difficult weapon to use and master. It usually requires several years of training before a person can accurately hit a target from a distance. However for people who are unable to master a bow, they end up using a crossbow instead. As compared to bows, crossbows sacrifice range and power for higher accuracy and ease of usage. Majority of rangers and other bow users in this world end up using a crossbow.

"Fufufu.. Don't be foolish. To an elf like me, a bow is merely a toy. I could hit a bullseye from 200 metres away. In the archery tournament back in my village, I won first place easily." (Til)

"That's amazing." (Youya)

The original range of *Fire Storm* was 20 metres. Her range was ten times of that. It is impossible for spells to hit a target over 50 metres away unless the spell was altered by *Magic Customization*. The effectiveness of an attack is directly proportional to the attack's distance. Having the ability to attack a target from a distance was a huge advantage.

I seem to recall Phil mentioning that elves had the ability to read the flow of the wind, allowing elves to perform precise long distance shots that is impossible for humans who are unable to accurately detect changes in the atmosphere. Back in the days, Phil's precision in her shots has helped us on many occasions.

"So where is the bow that you are boasting about?" (Youya)

"Of course it's in my house. Where else could it be. Eh?" (Til)

Til's face turned pale.

I thought so. Yesterday, Til mentioned that she had come to this town by stowing away on Phil's chariot that left the village. That meant that she didn't have the space to carry along her bow, possibly exposing her.

"Before we head to the dungeon, we have to equip ourselves with proper equipment. Let's head towards an arms shop for now. We can't enter a dungeon with an archer without a bow can we? I was thinking that it'll be good for Luna to get a spare dagger as well." (Youya)

"Luna doesn't need it. Because Luna has this." (Luna)

Luna rubbed her cheeks against *Bazerato*. She has always been taking good care of that child, treating it like a treasure and properly maintaining it everyday.

"It is important to carry a spare weapon. Weapons will inevitable be destroyed in the future. Whether that happens during a battle, is a matter of life or death if you do not have another weapon. No matter how much you maintain your weapon, it will still break eventually." (Youya)

"I understand. I'll carry a spare dagger from now on." (Luna)

Luna reluctantly agreed.

Bazerato is a tough dagger, however it's durability will inevitably drop over time. It's an adventurer's job to prepare for the unexpected. If even the slightest possibilities are neglected, it could lead to our death.

"Youya, I'll pay for my younger sister's equipment. It's doesn't feel right to have you pay for her equipment." (Phil)

"No can do. She is already part of my party. When I said that I'll get a bow for her, I meant what I said. For the money, I will subtract it from her portion of the rewards in the future. Furthermore, it isn't good for her to rely on her elder sister all the time." (Youya)

"Youya hasn't changed at all. This is definitely something you would do. I understand." (Phil)

Phil laughed as she talked about the past. Looking at her laugh reminded me of our past together, and I decided to ask her what I was thinking about yesterday.

"Hey Phil. Do you enjoy being a receptionist?" (Youya)

I had a motive to asking her this question. If she didn't enjoy working as a receptionist, or felt that she didn't belong here, I would invite her to my party on the spot. She would be a valuable asset to the party if she joined. Besides, I wanted to travel with her once again.

"Yes I do. Very much." (Phil)

Phil let out a smile from the bottom of her heart.

I guess that Phil has finally found where she belonged. It isn't up to me force her out of something she enjoys. At the very least, I won't be inviting her to the party for now. If in the future, she ever thought otherwise, I would invite her to my party once more.

"Why are you asking that out of the blue?" (Phil)

"It's nothing. I just wanted to hear you say it." (Youya)

The conversation ended there. After completing various procedures, the three of us headed towards the downtown area. This is the city of beginnings. There should be plenty of stores that are selling equipments for adventurers.

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In the downtown area, there was a group of adventurers who were catching a lot of attention. The group consisted of two beautiful girls, one beastman and an Elf, and an old man.

When choosing a weapon, it is important not to waste time entering each store and looking through each of them to see their goods. Instead, you should start by choosing a shop that looks decent. I can mostly tell if the shop is good depending on how the store looks like from the street. As Rumberg is a town that is extremely popular, there are many people who come to the town.

In this world, if you can raise your level, you will become stronger and you will become much safer, making it advantageous to raise your level. Many nobles and rich aristocrats often send their children to the starting towns to get a class and raise their levels. In order to secure their children's safety, they often buy the most expensive equipment if it meant that it would protect their children even more. As such, many stores often aim to deceive these people and squeeze out as much money as possible. After being an adventurer for so long, I'm able to distinguish the decent stores from the scam stores.

"That store looks good." (Youya)

The entrance of the store is clean and the air inside smells of anti corrosion oil as well as moisture removal solution. Unlike the other stores which doesn't have the same smell.

"Let's go. Not only are we looking for weapons for you two, I too look forward to searching for any decent equipment." (Youya)

"Have to choose the best equipment." (Luna)

"fufufu. I can hear my future bow calling out to me" (Til)

Feeling motivated, the three of us entered the store.

There was an old man sitting at the counter performing maintenance on a sword, appearing to be the owner of the store. As he noticed us entering the store, he sloppily gave us a glance before focusing on his work.

"This isn't a store for sightseeing. So hurry up and leave." (Storekeeper)

Although his voice was soft, his words carried a lot of weight.

"I don't mean to intrude, but we came here to find weapons that we can entrust our lives to." (Youya)

I looked at the old man as I tried to convince him of our patronage. Our eyes were in a deadlock before his facial expression became softer.

"Hoh.. I thought that you were mere tourists because you brought two children here, but it seems that you are more interesting than I thought. I would be damned if I let my weapons be ill-treated." (Storekeeper)

"Have faith in these children. They will take good care of your weapons for

sure." (Youya)

The storekeeper complied with me and returned to his work.

"Luna,Til, look around and choose the weapon you feel is best." (Youya)

"Okay." (Luna)

"Well then, time to begin shopping." (Til)

The two of them went to their respective sections of the store to look for a weapon. Luna went towards a shelf containing a dagger. It seems that she had a target from the start. She immediately took a dagger from the shelf and started to test it's weight and center of gravity.

She has a good sense when it came to battles and the like. When searching for a spare weapon, the important thing is to have a weapon that is similar to your current weapon rather than it's performance. If you were to swap between two difference weapons mid fight, you could be thrown off by the difference in your own weapon. This is even more important for Luna as her main mode of attacks were critical hits that required precision.

"Youya, Luna likes this dagger." (Luna)

"That's a good choice. The dagger is made of a mithril and mercury alloy, making it light and strong. Furthermore, it has a fine craftsmanship. That's a keeper." (Youya)

Although that dagger looks plain, it is surprisingly well made. If it was me, I would have chosen the same dagger.

Looking at Til, she was currently stroking a bow with her hand while her jade eyes were examining the bow carefully. She gave off a serious atmosphere that felt like she was in her own world, making it difficult for me to approach her. Til was the champion of an archery contest back in her village. Being the best archer of the race that specializes in the bow, it seems that all that talk wasn't just for show.

After examining all the bows present in the store, Til finally selected a bow. It looks like a plain wooden bow but mana could be sensed being emitted from it. It was probably made from a magical tree that could absorb mana. Such bows could serve both as a bow and a wand to amplify the user's magic power. It was

the best weapon possible for a spirit archer that incorporates both archery and spells in their attacks.

"This bow is good. I can feel that this bow is well crafted. It will be a fitting bow for a top tier archer." (Til)

"I may not be able to determine the quality of the bow, but I do agree that that bow feels excellent." (Youya)

The truth is that I knew nothing about the quality of a bow. I am capable of determining whether the material used was of high quality, however there are more aspects to a bow than it's material making it impossible for me to determine the performance of the bow. Unlike me, Til is a master at archery. Even if I couldn't tell, I am sure she won't be mistaken in the performance of a bow.

I took the dagger and bow chosen by Luna and placed them on the counter. Their weapons cost quite a hefty sum but I am sure the weapons will last for quite a while. While I was preparing to pay the storekeeper, he started to laugh.

"Hahaha. Although you told me to believe in them, those kids are something else. When I look closely at them, I feel compelled to doubt them, but it seems like they are the real deal. They have good eyes, they chose the best weapons I have in the store." (Storekeeper)

The storekeeper took the dagger and the bow and skillfully placed them in their respective holders before checking the amount of money placed on the counter. After confirming the amount, the storekeeper handed over the weapons to the two girls. When they received the weapons, Luna's tail started to shake back and forth while Til was rubbing her cheek on the bow.

"If you feel unsatisfied with the weapons, or you want to have them repaired, remember to return here. I'll see what I can do, and if that isn't enough, I'll introduce you to a good blacksmith." (Storekeeper)

"I'll be relying on you when the time comes." (Youya)

It is important to maintain a good relationship with a trustworthy shop like this. The quality of the weapons may be excellent, however the weapon's maintenance must not be neglected. We are extremely fortunate to meet this

man and his shop.

As we were leaving the store, I felt something call out to me. I looked towards the basket in the corner of the store. Within the basket were countless second-hand goods including swords and other arms. So long as you were not strapped on cash, it was not the place where an adventurer would be looking for a weapon. It was dangerous to choose a low quality weapon to rely on. Well, it's not like the quality of the weapon matters to me.

Unknowingly, my hands reached out towards the pile of swords. My eyes were fixated on the sword at the back of the pile. It was a sword with an unusual shape and a black sheath. I pulled the blade out of its sheath. It's blade had a similar shade of black to its sheath and contained a strange sensation similar to mana, however it didn't feel like mana. It felt a sword designed for hacking and slashing rather than clean slashes that were taught in swordsmanship

It felt like it was meant to be.

"How much is this sword?" (Youya)

"Fuahahahahahaha. I never thought that you would notice that sword. I thought that the children were amazing, but the main course was even more amazing. Don't worry about the money. Just take it." (Storekeeper)

"You sure about this?" (Youya)

"Of course I am. That sword was a masterpiece entrusted to me by my father. It goes without saying that I will only allow people who were chosen by the sword to leave with it. It's been almost fifty years since this sword has last chosen an owner. I never thought that I would get to see it's new owner in my lifetime." (Storekeeper)

The storekeeper looked like he just seen something interesting. I said a word of thanks to him and gracefully received the sword. Unlike the dagger and bow, the shopkeeper wasn't that concerned about the sword. He must have felt like the sword was in capable hands and that there wasn't a need to be too concerned about it.

It was a nice development. I didn't expect to come across a hidden gem when

purchasing new weapons for Luna and Til. I took the sword and hung it at my waist where my trusted sword would be. Although the sword felt comfortable, I wished it was slightly heavier.

"Thank you, be sure to come again." (Storekeeper)

"I am looking forward to coming back." (Youya)

After we finished our business, we left the store. This was a fruitful shopping trip. Looks like it'll be a good idea to stay in this town a little longer.

"Luna, Til. This was a fruitful shopping trip. However it is getting late, we could postpone entering the dungeon to tomorrow morning instead. What do you two think? " (Youya)

I asked the girls a question I knew the answer to.

"Of course, we leave right away!" (Luna)

"I can't wait to show off my skill in the dungeon!" (Til)

"Alright. Let's go then." (Youya)

There aren't any adventurers who don't look forward to testing out their new equipment.

I took the two motivated girls and returned back to the guild. It's the first time we are entering a dungeon with three people. Let's witness how powerful Til's archery is and her power as a Spirit Archer.

Chapter 15: The old man with a new style of battle.

This marks the first exploration since Til joined our party. This time, we entered the a prairie-type dungeon. I want to observe how good Til's shooting ability actually is. This dungeon would be more appropriate for that since a rocky mountain as well as a jungle would make firing a bow difficult. Thus, it is ideal to choose an open field like a prairie where there are few obstacle.

I'll like to see it. The ability to hit any target within 200 metres.

In reality, the biggest hurdle for every archer would be to accurately hit a target. The status may increase, and the equipment may become increasingly effective, raising the power of each shot. However, all of these are redundant if the arrow doesn't land. Unlike the sword and the spear, the bow user requires practice and accuracy for the bow to be effective. It would be impossible for a new archer to accurately hit a target at 200 metres away unless it was a massive monster.

It takes a new bow user at least five years minimum before he can become a first-class archer. There are several first-class bow users that are well-known through the world, however almost all of them specialize in the crossbow. There aren't many people who would spend years of their life to master a bow when they could simply use a crossbow which was easier to use. Even if the crossbow sacrifices power and range, it was still effective as a range weapon.

Mastering the bow was avoided mainly due to the commitment required to merely utilise effectively. However, once mastered, it is one of the most powerful weapons. Bowmen could easily let loose waves of arrows down upon swordsmen and spearmen with a force close to a sword strike. It is a weapon that can be the strongest if mastered, and the weakest when unprepared.

"Luna, can you search for enemies nearby?" (Youya)

"Uhn. I'll try to." (Luna)

Luna began to search for enemies using *Presence Detection*. *Presence*

Detection is a convenient ability to have as it allows us to search in a radius of 150 metres around us, increasing our hunting efficiency as well as preventing surprise attacks.

"Found it. Youya. Til. In this direction, there is a rabbit monster hiding in the grass 140 metres away." (Luna)

In the direction that Luna pointed, the grass that grew to knee level, could be seen moving unnaturally as if there was something inside. It would have easily been dismissed as the wind if we didn't have Luna's *Presence Detection*. After listening to Luna's directions, Til's expression changed. The atmosphere around her changed from an energetic young girl to a seasoned hunter as she generated an arrow.

"Til. Can you see it?" (Youya)

"Yeah. The eyes of an elf is special. Especially the eyes that belong to an Ether Lance. I can see the rabbit in the grass as clear as day." (Til)

Looking closely, her jade-coloured eyes were shining with a jade glow.

Thinking back, I've heard about the eyes inherited by her family. Among the elves, there are families who have a stronger connection to their ancestor's blood as compared to a normal elf. This gave them the ability to see long distances, fluoroscopic ability, dynamic vision that far surpasses a human's ability and even the ability to predict several seconds into the future. This was an ability that every bowmen desperately wanted as it was an ability that raises their combat effectiveness beyond their status.

Til released her hand and arrows flew through the air. It wasn't just one arrow but three arrows. She released three arrows in a single breath with such refined movement that even an amateur could understand. The arrows weren't flying directly at the target, but rather drawing a huge arc as it rode the strong winds blowing in the plains. When shooting a target a hundred metres away, even without exposure to strong winds, it would be impossible to predict where the arrows would land. However, the arrows that Til released flew through the plains as if it was one with the wind.

"PII GYUUU"

The scream of the monster could be heard in the distance, and the sensation of power welling up from within could be felt. It is the sensation a person feels when they are gaining experience points.

"Uhn. That was amazing. All three shots landed." (Luna)

"Your aim is as good as Phil's." (Youya)

"Because we have the same teacher. After she left, I was always the best in the competition! I can hit my target about 200 metres away with about 70% accuracy! If it's three hundred.. Maa I'll manage somehow!" (Til)

That is a reliable accuracy. With this range, we can perform a one-sided hunt with arrows from a distance. There is no safer way to hunt monsters than to hunt a monster even further than the range of *Presence Detection*. In addition, it can be used for *luring*.

"I understand that your archery skills are top-notch now. Did you allocate all of your skill points properly?" (Youya)

"Yeah. I did as you told me to and put three points into *Arrow generation*." (Til)

"Good. It will be an important skill for you in the future. As it is now, a quiver of arrows won't last very long in the dungeon. Using the skill will allow you to produce arrows using your mana. In addition, the quality of the arrows corresponds with your status, meaning that the arrows will become stronger as you level up. Eventually, it will be stronger than any commercially available arrows sold in stores everywhere." (Youya)

"hee. That sounds pretty amazing. I did feel that the arrows I made earlier was pretty bad, so they will become better in the future." (Til)

"I guarantee it. What about the other two points?" (Youya)

"I properly placed them in the other skill." (Til)

"Good girl." (Youya)

That skill was necessary to unlock the strongest benefit of a Spirit Archer.

Well then, time to continue the hunt.

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Afterwards, the hunt progressed smoothly. Til was able to spot enemies from a distance thanks to her superior vision. That vision itself was a powerful weapon for battles. Monsters that were hidden from her vision was revealed by Luna's *Presence Detection*. If there were any monsters who were approaching us, we would defeat them with ranged attacks. From this, I could tell that Til's accuracy wasn't the only thing noteworthy. Her rate of fire and power were exceptional as well.

Til's level is raising steadily as well. She is currently level 3, and the skill points were immediately used. At the moment, her skills were sufficient. It's about time for us to venture deeper into the plains. Generally, the deeper you enter in a dungeon, the stronger the monsters.

"Youya, something big is approaching us quickly from the ground! (Luna)

Finally, it's here.

The enemies that we hunted earlier were far too weak to display Til's full power, but with this monster, it should be possible.

The area ten metres ahead of us exploded as something came out of the ground. We had no choice but to let it approach this close as we wouldn't be able to attack it from a distance when it's in the ground. What came out of the ground was a bipedal bear that far surpassed my height, *Mad Bear*, the strongest monster in the dungeon.

It was a powerful monster, albeit not as strong as the *Rock Golem*, beginners were heavy pressed to defeat this foe. It boasts a high attacking power, with explosive power due to it's strong muscles and sharp nails along with high defensive power thanks to it's thick fur, preventing any blade from passing.

"I'll be the front line. Luna. When you see an opening, push in with your *Assassinate*. It's weak spot is it's sides. Til, stay at the back and support us .

"Leave it to me." (Luna)

"Understood." (Til)

The three of us moved to our respective positions, forming a party formation. With the three of us battling in a formation, makes it feel like an actual party battle. I can feel the adrenaline starting to kick in throughout my body.

The main focus in this fight will be on Til. I ran behind a wall and began my chant for a spell while focusing on the monster's movements. In the next instant, the *Mad Bear* swung its claws towards my position. Movements at this level is easy to predict. Using my sword as a shield, I received while simultaneously deflecting its attack to the side. Realizing its attack was easily deflected, the beast became infuriated and continued throwing attacks after attacks. Monotonous attacks like these based on pure rage won't even land a scratch on me.

"As usual, Til is good with her bow." (Youya)

Arrows rained over the monster from a distance as Til continued to provide support.

As the front line, focusing on our prey's movements allows me to avoid attacks while simultaneously throwing out my own. However, to attack a moving target with only an arrow, you will have to predict the prey's movements a few seconds ahead. The *Mad Bear* began to scream as both of its eyes got pierced by the arrows. From the beginning, Til has been firing arrows from about 30 metres away. She managed to attack the bear's eyes with pinpoint accuracy at that distance. What unbelievable skill. She seems to have been much more than I imagined. After getting robbed of its vision, the bear began to retreat. While it was beginning to retreat, a shadow rushed into its large body at a high-speed. Luna found an opening just as the beast began to retreat and rushed in with her full power. It was a rush which was refined by diligently training everyday. Her dagger entered the side of the beast and the sound of a critical hit resonated throughout the plains.

"GUUUGAAAAAA"

The characteristic of *Asssinate* was its extremely high damage multiplier that activates only on a critical hit. The beast's expression began to distort into one of agony. Seems like the battle will be over soon. This whole time, Til has

been providing support by releasing waves after waves of arrows. She had been chanting ever since the battle started. Spirit Archers did not have the same restriction as other classes while chanting, allowing them to simultaneously chant while moving, albeit only a single spell at any given time. This gave the Spirit Archers high offensively capabilities as they were also bow users. Even if a magic caster could move while chanting, they were unable to provide support during their chant. That is why spirit archers were effective as a back line attacker, as they were able to perform long ranged attacks with bows while casting spells.

Til finished chanting and began to cast her spell advanced tier magic *Thunder*.

As her level was still relatively low, the time taken for her to cast a high-ranking spell with high power and wide range was extremely long. In addition, her current mana pool was only capable of one shot, but that one shot was all that was needed. I backed away from the beast as her chant was completed to prevent any friendly fire.

The next moment, the *Mad Bear* collapsed and turned into blue particles.

"Man, a spirit archer is tough as expected." (Youya)

The spirit archer's greatest strength was the ability to simultaneously utilise both physical and magical attacks at range. They could effectively increase the number of hands in the party by shooting arrows from range while they were chanting. This prevented any bow skills from activated but a bow still has a power that is high for a basic attack. Til's elder sister, Phil had focused her skills on her passive magical skills (abilities that are always invoked) and her bow skills. Spirit archers were inferior to magic casters in the *Wind (Lightning)* attribute and did not possess the utility that rangers possessed, but their advantages aren't noticeable to the unaware. Even in our current party, we will be relying on her abilities much more often in the future. It is a style that greatly resembles my own.

As Til fired her bow while chanting, she displayed her ability as an adventurer in the back line, firing arrows while chanting spells, just like a magic knight utilising magic in the front line. This feat is impossible back in the game era as any attack commands recognized by the system would cancel the chant, making

this a style that is only feasible because that game has become a reality unbound by any systems.

This is getting exciting. Both me and my party are definitely becoming stronger.

Now that the fight is over, Til and Luna gathered together with me.

"Just as big sis said, Youya's swordsmanship is amazing. You took the blows from the bear like it was nothing! Luna too! Your thrust looked so simple yet it was so powerful!" (Til)

"Uhn! It was the technique that Youya taught me. But Til is even more amazing. All your arrows hit your target and yet you could still cast magic. That is so amazing!" (Luna)

Luna and Til were complimenting each other.

Looks like their friendship is just beginning to blossom after watching each other's abilities. They will be getting along well before they even know it.

Looking towards the sky, the sun has begun to fall. It is about time for us to head back, but after looking at how motivated the two of them are..

Let's stretch the time limit and hunt as much as we can, this way we can improve our coordination and their friendship .

"The two of you, we will continue to hunt until the last-minute today! The three of us still have much to learn!" (Youya)

"Uhn! Leave it to me! That attack felt good, I want to do it more! Even more assassin!" (Luna)

"I'll try my best too!" (Til)

We continued to search for our next prey as we ventured deeper into the dungeon. This has been an exciting hunt so far. With this trio, I am sure that we can reach further than I did back in my prime. We can continue to grow together and become stronger. That night, we continued to hunt much longer than we had planned.

Chapter 16: The old man's party becomes stronger.

Today marks one week ever since the Spirit Archer Till joined our party. Our party has been progressing extremely well as a three squad this past week. Right now, I am hunting inside the rock mountain dungeon for *Rock Golems*. Since this dungeon can only be accessed by adventurers up to level 10, I would like to maximize the number of *Karakuri Hearts* I can obtain, plus the rock golems provide a large amount of experience. My routine for the past week has been to search for any worthwhile quests to complete. If such quests weren't available, then I would continue to hunt for *Karakuri Hearts*.

However, today will be the last day I am able to come here. I should be able to obtain level 11 after this hunt. To respect the level limit, I won't be able to enter this dungeon anymore where the level limit was set to prevent veteran adventurers from entering.

My fist begins to glow red and becomes ablaze.

"*Napalm Strike.*" (Youya)

I pierced the belly of the golem with my burning palm and burnt it from the inside. The body of the *Rock Golem* began to turn into blue particles. Finally, the last *Rock Golem* gave me a *Karakuri Heart*. With gratitude, I stored the item into my magic bag.

"It's going to become much tougher from now on." (Youya)

Ah, I accidentally said my thoughts out loud.

Thanks to Luna who possessed exploration skills, our hunt went without a problem. Although thieves generally didn't possess much firepower, Luna overturned that general perception by mastering *Assassinate*.

And I am the front-line of our party. *Magic Knight* is a class that has the fitness and defensive strength of a front-line class. Although, this was possible only due to the hidden room which fixed my status increased every level to the

max, allowing me to have the same defensive power as an ordinary warrior. With this status and my ability with a sword, I can become a wall for my party that is equivalent or stronger than any first-tier warrior of the same level. In addition, I possessed *Customized Magic* which has its own strength and overwhelming firepower. My offensive power as a front-liner was much higher as well.

Lastly, our backline which currently consists of Til. She is a Spirit archer who is capable of casting magic while simultaneously providing support with her bow. She was supplementing for a magic caster by providing magic spells, providing firepower equivalent to two people.

With us three each playing an important role, individually we were important parts of our party as we have performed much more than our roles required us to. It is obvious that we were making good progress due to this.

Since the battle is over, Luna and Til began to rendezvous on my position.

"Good job, the both of you." (Youya)

"Luna worked hard today. I have assassinated plenty today as well!" (Luna)

Luna expresses her successful *Assassinates* with a weird term, however that expression is surprisingly cute. Personally, I like that term. When I stroke Luna's head, Luna narrows her eyes, showing that it feels pleasant and shakes her tail back and forth. Surprisingly, she worked extremely hard and managed almost a 70% critical rate in this short amount of time. Not to undermine Luna's hard work, but the thrust is the best attack in landing critical hits and most compatible attack with Luna's soft and silent high-speed rush.

However, the stronger the monster, the faster their movements, and the harder it is to land a critical hit. It won't be long before she encounters a monster that she can't *Assassinate* with just the thrust.

Landing a critical hit in any situation with any position. In order to perfect that technique, she will have to master all nine types of slashes. Now that her thrust has become more or less perfect, we should begin to work on her range of slashes.

"Aaa, it's not fair to praise only Luna. I did my best too! Praise me!! Praise

me!" (Til)

Til's cheeks puffed up as she complained about the situation.

In reality, Til's progression was far more terrifying than Luna's. As her level increased, her mana pool increased as well as her mana efficiency. IN addition, her usage of magic along with her bow became much more refined as compared to the battle with the *Mad Bear*.

However, there are still many weak points present in her battle style. She is first class when it came to archery, however the rest of her movements were still amateurish. There is no point in having the strongest offense when you aren't able to protect yourself. Her position in the part is part of the back line where she's safe from the main battle. It is ideal for her current state but this provides a risk. There are many cases in dungeons where monsters will sneak up from the back, causing our positions to be reverted and exposing danger to the back line. This is especially dangerous for Til, as she tunnels her entire concentration into firing her arrows, she neglects looking out for her surroundings as she is attacking.

For now, I asked Luna to look out for Til with *Presence Detection* and to follow-up in the event that we were ambushed. Although such an incident has yet to happen, we should assume the worst situation where we would have to protect ourselves. For this, I've been thinking about giving Til special lessons about close quarter combat.

"Til did great too. You were our valuable ace when it comes to defeating groups of monsters." (Youya)

"Eeh? Just lip service?" (Til)

"I guess I don't have a choice." (Youya)

I pat Til's head. Together with Luna, the two of them narrowed their eyes in pleasure.

The two of them became good friends over the course of this week. The number of capable children has also increased by one. Even though the two of them have strengths, they are also full of faults, they still have a long way to go. Somehow, I feel relieved watching the two of them acting like normal girls

around each other. Even though they are special in certain ways, there are still merely children. I'm lucky that these girls are working hard under my guidance .

"It's about time for us to head back. If we stay here too long, Phil may get worried." (Youya)

"Uhn.Tonight's a feast. It was a promise." (Luna)

"I too remember that if we reached level 11 today, Youya would let us ask for a special order at the bar!" (Til)

"I know that. I plan to uphold that promise." (Youya)

"Yay! Luna loves Youya!" (Luna)

"Me too!" (Til)

Luna on my right hand and Til on my left. The two of them hugged my hand as we returned back to the guild. Well I'm also looking forward to eating something good tonight as well. Besides, my food always taste better when eating with these two.

Although, because of how clingy these two girls are, my reputation in the guild has dropped drastically. I've even been given names such as lolicon or loli knight. Rumors have also spread that I am only successful as a magic knight because i've managed to attract talented girls into my party. I have to take action soon to prevent the situation from worsening. I am definitely not a paedophile.

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When we arrived at the guild, we headed straight towards the reception to turn in our quest, earning us a bunch of guild points and cash.Obviously, the receptionist was Phil. Phil is popular among the adventurers and thus often has a queue in front of her. However the guild is similar to a private organization where anything can be done with money. It is possible to have an appointment with a receptionist by paying an additional fee. It is thanks to this appointment system that I can consult Phil directly without waiting in the queue.

By the way, Phil herself paid the appointment fee to the guild. Since majority of the fee is given to the receptionist as a bonus, majority of the fee would return to her. She requested to do so as she wanted to 'keep track of her sister's movements as well as to help her out when needed'. After listening to her reason, I had no choice but to concede to her. Out of curiosity, when I inquired another female receptionist about Phil's popularity, it seems that her abundant knowledge and experience, apparent strength and appearance were the reasons that she was popular. Her reservation slots were also completely filled. It seems that she had some control over the list seeing as she could fit us into her packed schedule.

The surrounding adventurers were making an envious face as Phil smiled while looking directly at me and shook my hand. Somehow it feels like Phil is oblivious to how popular she actually is in the guild. I sat in front of her as I report the status of the party.

"Youya, even if it's you leading the party, isn't your pace a little bit too quick? Just after a week and everyone is over level 10. I've been a receptionist for a while but this is the first time I've seen this." (Phil)

Phil squinted her eyes as she looked at me carefully.

"It's not anything special isn't it? It'll be like this if we completed the quests you recommended to us as well as hunt *Rock Golems* daily in the dungeon." (Youya)

"It's the fact that you can even beat the golem that is strange." (Phil)

Phil is definitely an excellent receptionist. Although I report our party's levels every night when I deliver the quest document and materials, the next morning she would have prepared and introduce a delicious quest to us for that day. The quests would often be difficult enough for us to clear while providing excellent rewards. They played a huge part in our speed although the *Rock Golem* did provide a lot of experience.

Since beginners can't defeat dungeon exclusive monsters, the only ones hunting the *Rock Golems* were us. It is possible to match our pace if you have Phil's introductions while hunting other monsters in the dungeon, however there would be competition as everyone else would be hunting those monsters

as well. Whereas we could freely hunt the golems without waiting for the monsters to respawn every week. Their individual experience values were high and rare items could also be dropped. Thanks to that, everyone was able to achieve level 11 in just one week.

"Heres the material for the quest and these are the items that I would like to cash out please." (Youya)

"This much!!? Aren't you earning as much as an intermediate adventurer?" (Phil)

"Well yeah. If it's after their respawn, in a beginner dungeon with fewer competition, it's possible" (Youya)

With their spawn rate fixed weekly, the monsters and treasures respawn and the geography of the dungeon changes. Although the risk is higher, it is the most efficient day to go into the dungeon. That's why we entered the dungeon earlier today and hunted from the early mornings. Thanks to that we were more exhausted than expected, but we got a level higher than our goal.

"You are definitely doing something! Even if Til has the firepower of two people, even if Luna's increased power from *Assassinate*, it shouldn't be THIS fast! It still doesn't add up!" (Phil)

As expected of a professional receptionist. Just by looking at our party composition, she could estimate how much we can achieve with our capabilities.

"You're a former adventurer aren't you. Us adventurers have things that we must not reveal carelessly." (Youya)

"You're right. I won't ask any more. But about tomorrow's dungeon and quest.." (Phil)

"It's alright. The dungeon tomorrow has already been decided." (Youya)

Thinking back, we are finally level 11. Thanks to this, we can't enter the mountain dungeon anymore. With items from my peak and other special bonuses, there are a bunch of methods available to us that is impossible for others.

"I have a bad feeling about this. Where do you plan to go tomorrow?" (Phil)

"The seafloor dungeon." (Youya)

Phil gasped.

Well that is to be expected. The seafloor dungeon isn't a dungeon meant for beginners in the first place. That dungeon has a recommended level 25, it isn't a place for chicks at level 11 to enter. Far from making a mistake, it's a place where even making half a step incorrectly would be dangerous.

"That's suicidal!" (Phil)

"Don't worry about it. If I was alone, that'll be true. But I'm not alone this time. I have friends entering with me. If there are others, I have a plan." (Youya)

Our hunting so far has been within the realm of common sense, even if it's pushing the limit. However, now that we're level 11, we will finally begin hunts that are extraordinary. If I were to stick to conventional hunts, I would die of old age before I even reach level 50. Phil puffed up her cheeks while looking at me, before letting out a sigh.

"I'm guessing that is also a secret." (Phil)

"Yeah." (Youya)

"Sigh. Fine. I believe that Youya wouldn't put Luna and Til in any danger, but just in case, please keep this with you." (Phil)

Phil took out three blue jewels from her pocket.

"Those are *Return Stones* aren't they? I can't receive such expensive things." (Youya)

"It's my feelings as an older sister thinking about her younger sister. Don't worry about the money, they are items that I obtained back when I was still adventuring." (Phil)

Return Stones are items that can be used to escape from a dungeon instantly, regardless of the situation. It is impossible to create these stones, as they are items that can only be obtained from chests in the dungeon. For adventurers, this was akin to a lifeline that everyone wanted, causing the price of the stone to rise.

"Then I'll humbly receive them. I'll try my best so that we will never need to use them." (Youya)

"Well they are only used when you are in the worst of the worst situation."
(Phil)

"Of course." (Youya)

Phil looks at me and laughs. With this, the conversation ends. Phil hands over the quest reward and drop item fee and I leave the guild.

Now then, I can't leave two kids starving and waiting for too long. Tonight's superstar menu will be a gigantic roasted pig foot. Those two will definitely enjoy tonight's meal.

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The next morning, we entered the seafloor dungeon.

"Youya. Looks weird." (Luna)

"You are not wearing your usual leather armour today?" (Til)

"Well." (Youya)

I equipped a different set of equipment from my usual equipment this time around. I wore a robe instead of my usual leather armour, and a cane with a jewel at the top instead of a sword at my waist.

"I just felt like wearing this today." (Youya)

We came here to do some a unique hunt not within the realm of common sense in this world utilizing my *Magic Customization*. My customized spells doesn't consist of only *Napalm Strike* and in this dungeon, there are other magics that can truly shine because of the dungeon. We will kill monsters with levels that far surpass our own to raise our levels as quickly as possible. It is also possible for us to go the standard route and raise it slowly, but this method is far more desirable than that.

Now let's get hyped up. From here on we are shifting into full gears. To be the

fastest to reach level 50 in this world.

Chapter 17: The old man releases a bolt of lightning

Today we are in a seafloor dungeon with a recommended level of 25.

The seafloor dungeon isn't a dungeon meant for beginners at level 11, it was a dungeon where even veterans would come to hunt. That is the reason why we came today, as the number of monsters are reduced thanks to the veterans, making it much safer than it appears to be.

Usually, coming into this dungeon at level 11 would be suicidal. Despite our excellent equipment, and reset bonuses, it is still insufficient for us to have a proper hunt here. However, having magic catered to this sort of situations will allow us to get by somehow.

The higher the difference in level, the higher the bonus experience will be. For every level, the monster will provide an additional 5% experience points. If there is a level difference of 14, the experience given will be 1.05¹⁴ which is roughly 1.98 times the usual experience given. In the first place, the experience value given by a monster increases depending on their levels. If a level 25 monster's experience value doubles when it's defeated by a level 11, our levels will raise at an exponential rate.

"Let's go, Luna, Til. Remember to have your return stones ready in case of an emergency." (Youya)

"Uhn. Properly ready." (Luna)

"My sister went out of her way to give it to us, of course I'm ready." (Til)

The two of them held a blue jewel in their hands before placing it in their pockets. Clothing with deep pockets are an adventurer's best friend. Therefore I suggested it to them as well. The more pockets there are, the more convenient it will be in the dungeon

"Actually, it is more beneficial to place the stone around your waist." (Youya)

If there is an emphasis on how quickly a person can utilise an item, it would

be better to attach the item to your waist belt. However, doing so with such an expensive item would require us to remove it when we are around other people as it would cause other people to become greedy, possibly exposing us to more danger.

"Now then, let's go." (Youya)

"Uhn.But.. I'm worried about Youya's weird get-up." (Luna)

"It feels like he's a full-fledged *Magic Caster* right?" (Til)

"Well technically I am a knight who is capable of casting magic. But for now, I will be a *Magic Caster* who is able to use a sword." (Youya)

Right now, my equipment resembles more of a *Magic Caster* than it is a *Magic Knight*. I was carrying a sword with me, but it was hung on my back. In both my hands, I held a two-handed cane and wore a robe instead of armour. Right now, even if it's a mere 11 level difference, I should be able to handle the skills from monsters in the area. However, the fact about this dungeon is that the monsters have an abnormally high attack power. Even if I raised my defense power with my best equipment, the battle would still be over if I took a direct hit. Therefore, I decided to raise my magical power instead by equipping this set of equipment instead. The robe I was wearing now has a special effect of raising my magic power while my staff improved my magic chants.

"But the only magic I've seen you use has an extremely short-range. It's dangerous to go close to any monsters he with such equipment. Especially without a sword, it's too dangerous." (Til)

"The magic that I'm using today will be much more magician-like. It's a new magic that I haven't used yet, but it's a magic that I can finally use today." (Youya)

The customized magic I have made by *Magic Customization* doesn't just consist of *Napalm Strike*. This time, I'll be using a customized version of *Thunderstorm*.

"As we planned, Luna did you raise the level of *Presence Detection* to level 10?" (Youya)

"Of course." (Luna)

"Well done." (Youya)

Presence Detection could go up to level 10 with skill points, however there aren't any exceptional bonuses after level 5 and it was sufficient to stop at level 5. However, it was still a good skill to take to level 10. At level 5, you can detect the number and position of nearby enemies. However, at level 10 you will be able to clearly detect their figures as well as determine who had the monster's attention.

"Til, your "Luring" will be the important factor in this hunt." (Youya)

"Hehe, leave it to me! My bow is absolute!" (Til)

The plan in our dungeon is simple. Luna discovers the monsters with her *Presence Detection*, Til "lures" the monsters with her bow while I finish them off. If we pull this off successfully, we will be able to hunt safely in this dungeon.

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As the name of the dungeon implies, the seafloor dungeon is a dungeon at the bottom of the sea. More precisely, it is a cave at the bottom of the ocean. The ceiling of the cave is transparent, allowing sunlight to enter from above the ocean. Thanks to this, there was good visibility in the dungeon. There were also wide roads in the cave, making it easier and safer to transverse. This was the main reason why this dungeon is popular among veteran adventurers. Yesterday, it was easy to move around by avoiding monsters with *Presence Detection* when we were hunting.

"Wow, I can't see the end of this wide path." (Til)

"This is one of the reasons why we came to this dungeon." (Youya)

Even though the layout of the dungeon changes during the respawn every week, the fundamental concept of the dungeon doesn't change. That is why this long path can be expected inside this dungeon.

Relying on Luna's *Presence Detection* to avoid monsters, we ventured deeper into the dungeon before encountering a giant hermit crab-type monster. Luna's

fox ears started to shake.

"The monster Youya mentioned is right there. It's soo big." (Luna)

"Alright, this time, I'll defeat him alone." (Youya)

The monster is a *Hermit Crab*, a giant hermit crab over 3 metres in size. It has extremely high defense, attacking power and a ridiculous rushing power. Although it's rush isn't very fast, it has a long-range, high power and a decent speed for a rushing skill. It's rush frequently connects with the back line, causing the *Magic Caster* to be blown away while chanting.

However it has a crucial weak point. It has practically no defense against magic. However, it is only susceptible to *Wind(Lightning)* spells as it has resistance against *Fire* and *Water(Ice)*. It typically activates it's rush when it detects a magical chant in it's vicinity. Although it's greatest weakness was a *Magic Caster*, it is a monster suited for defeating *Magic Casters* as well. Parties often have to avoid this monster as long as they didn't have a *Magic Caster* capable of defeating it, even when their levels were similar to the monster. Countless adventurers have fallen to this monster thanks to this, therefore they often clear the dungeon while avoiding this monster.

"However, there are lots of enemies around the *Hermit Crab*. Fishmen, shellfish and even insects." (Luna)

"Because monsters naturally gather around him." (Youya)

Although it isn't understood why, there are many monsters surrounding the *Hermit Crab*. Such monsters were often declared as Mid-bosses as they were difficult to defeat with the monsters constantly respawning and surrounding them. However, we have Til in our party.

"That is why Til's bow will become important. Luna, let's approach the monsters slowly. If any monster other than the hermit crab notices us, we will run away at full speed." (Youya)

"Uhn. Got it." (Luna)

We started to approach the group of monsters slowly. Luna has been reading the distance between us ever since we noticed the monsters.

"Til, we are 200 metres away." (Luna)

The monsters were far away, at the end of the huge road. I could see it.

"On my count, you shoot an arrow and make sure not to hit any of the surrounding monsters." (Youya)

"I know. Believe in my bow." (Til)

Now let's get started.

There are several reasons why I chose to hunt the *Hermit Crab* in this dungeon.

Firstly, among the available monsters at it's level, the *Hermit Crab* gives more experience as compared to it's other counterparts. This is probably due to the monster's difficulty.

Second, if you possessed sufficient firepower in the *Wind (Lightning)* attribute, you could easily defeat the monster with a single spell.

Normally, a magic caster would be unable to get over the fear of it's rush as they rarely had spells that could be casted outside of it's 30 metres detection range. However, I can use magic beyond 30 metres by utilizing magic that isn't ordinary.

"Prepare for battle. Luna, Til, straighten yourselves. If we fail this, it's certain death." (Youya)

The two of them nod with a serious face and I start my chant.

I felt my magical power rising. *Napalm Strike* is a customized *Firestorm* which threw away every concept in exchange for power. However, the magic customized from *Thunderstorm* is different. I compress its area of effect into a straight line, resembling a bullet while increasing it's cast time to improve it's power. Right now, it takes about a minute for me to finish one chant. This spell won't be usable in a high-speed battle, but there isn't a problem.

This spell is designed for long-range shots or accurate sniping. With *Presence Detection*, I can fire at enemies outside of their range while escaping if we were noticed, and the long cast time won't matter anymore.

The area of effect and casting time is worsened to improve it's range and

power. With *Magic Customization*, the spell that produces a rain of thunder over multiple enemies has become a spell that shoots an enemy from afar with a rifle made of thunder boasting a range of 100 metres.

It has been over 30 seconds since I began my chant. I gave the signal to Til and she shot the *Hermit Crab* from two hundred metres away. She easily landed her attacks on the crab. Originally, all monsters will attack anyone in its active range. Although it differs from monster to monster, the longest range is 100 metres while the shortest is about 5 metres. Unless the adventurers are within that range, the monsters would not notice them. However, whenever an attack lands on the monster, somehow the monster will automatically detect and move towards your location. These two rules can be abuse to “lure” monsters.

"Youya. Til. The crab has hostility towards Til." (Luna)

Following Luna's report, the crab can be seen moving towards our position. That was what we were aiming for. We weren't in the other monsters' perceptive range and thus none of them has noticed our positions. However, the *Hermit Crab* runs towards our position, drawing aggression onto Til. This is “Luring”.

Now, the *Hermit Crab* is isolated from its surroundings. In a few minutes, the monsters will be drawn to its current position, we'll have to defeat it by then.

20 seconds until my chant is complete. I point the tip of my staff directly towards the crab which is receiving waves and waves of arrows onto it's body. Thanks to it's high defensive power, the arrows weren't having any effect. It was pushing through the rain of arrows, closing the distance with tremendous force.

I felt cold sweat flowing down my back. Although my spell would be able to kill the crab in one hit, *Magic Casters* have their life endangered if the distance was reduced too quickly between them and the target. If my chant does not complete before it enters within 30 metres, it is over and my life will be forfeit. Thus, we have to defeat him from a distance in order to prevent endangering our lives.

It felt like an eternity as I watched the crab close the distance between us. However, time flowed much faster than I thought. The remaining distance is

110 metres. My chant was completed and the timing was perfect. Magic power began to gather around the tip of the staff and electricity started to crackle.

Intermediate Magic Customization Thunderstorm.

"*Superconductive Bullet.*" (Youya)

A bolt of lightning was released from the tip of the staff, moving at light speed. It is a long-range shot, made by sacrificing its area of effect and casting time to gain overwhelming distance and power, along with the characteristics of lightning that prevents you from dodging. This characteristic is the reason why *Thunderstorm* was the most-suited for a sniping-type spell. Fire and ice-type spells would not be as effective.

Superconductive Bullet easily penetrates the *Hermit Crab*, scorching a large hole into its body.

The crab was penetrated with so much speed and power that it didn't notice the fact that it is already dead, continuing to run towards us as it turns into blue particles. Unlike *Napalm Strike*, *Superconductive Bullet* had both its range and power strengthened, this meant that its power was lower than *Napalm Strike* which focuses on pure power. However, its power is still extraordinary. Whatever the level difference is between the *Hermit Crab* and us, the crab will not be able to take a hit from *Superconductive Bullet* as its a huge weak point.

A large amount of experience points flow into our body and our level rises. Power flows throughout our body.

"As expected of a level 25 monster, with this large of a level difference, our levels will rise multiple times each kill." (Youya)

"Amazing, we gained three levels. We're already level 14!" (Luna)

"Didn't big sis tell me that it would be harder to level up once we hit level 11?" (Til)

"It wasn't a lie. It's rather strange for us to gain three levels this quickly." (Youya)

It is a simple task to get to level 11 when starting out as an adventurer. However, after every 10 levels, the experience required to level increases

exponentially. Usually, it takes about three days to achieve level 12.

"Now, let's continue the hunt. Luna finds the crab. Til lures it and I'll defeat it." (Youya)

"I'll try my best! I want to become stronger!" (Luna)

"Can't be helped. If Youya needs my help, I'll lend a hand." (Til)

I felt the appeal of their motivation rubbing onto me as I myself got more excited.

"Let's go. Together we will become stronger." (Youya)

Thanks to the increase in levels, the maximum number of *Superconductive Bullets* I can shoot increases to 6. I'll leave one shot for emergencies, so let's hunt four *Hermit Crabs* before turning back. At this pace, we will reach level 20 in less than a month, definitely the fastest pace in all of history,.

Chapter 18: The old man agrees to participate in the festival

As usual, I returned to the guild to cash in after our hunt. This time, we didn't accept any requests so I will just be cashing in the materials and drop items we obtained in the dungeon

"Uhm, hey Youya. This morning I was telling you about how it's weird that you got level 11 in such a short time.. Right?" (Phil)

"Uhhh.. Yeah.. You were definitely saying that.." (Youya)

"So HOW are you already level 18? Whats more you have two people who are already graduating from being novice adventurers!!?" (Phil)

Adventurers are only truly considered an adventurer once they reach level 20. Once you reach level 21, the beginner dungeons available in Rumberg will be out of limits as you aren't considered a beginner anymore. The dungeons available in Rumberg were beginner dungeons for level 10 and below, beginner dungeons for level 20 and below and ordinary dungeons. Once you obtain level 21, you will have to survive on your own power and enter ordinary dungeons. Every 10 levels, the experience required to level up increases exponentially, causing most adventurer's pace to slow down once they arrive at this point.

"Well if you try really hard, it's not that hard to reach up to level 20 in this short amount of time." (Youya)

"There is still a limit to everything!. It's supposed to take two weeks to reach level 10, one year and a half for level 20! I have never heard or seen of anybody reaching level 18 in a week! If people knew about this, they would just call it a fairy tale!" (Phil)

"Well I think so too." (Youya)

I do think that I have overdone on the hunt for the *Hermit Crab*. If someone were to tell me that they killed a *Hermit Crab* at level 11, I would never believe it.

"Even if you told me that there was a plan. I wasn't told that the plan included confronting the grim reaper of the seafloor dungeon! Who was the one that told me to avoid that monster at all cost and abandon all thought of defeating it!?" (Phil)

Originally, the *Hermit Crab* is a monster that should be avoided at all cost. The only way to defeat it is to abuse its weakness to the *Wind (Lightning)* element with a magic spell. However, a *Magic Caster* capable enough of defeating the crab is as threatening to the crab as the crab is to the *Magic Caster*. When the crab detects a magical reaction, it will immediately activate its rushing technique to take down the *Magic Caster* capable of defeating it. And because of the monsters in the surroundings, the front-line will have difficulty acting as the shield for the rear guard.

"I challenged the *Hermit Crab* because I was confident of defeating it safely."
(Youya)

"Sigh. I won't bother asking anymore. Changing the topic, do you know about the festival taking place in Rumberg four days from now?" (Phil)

"Of course I do." (Youya)

In Rumberg, there is a big and flashy festival that occurs once every year. There are also tournaments held where adventurers can participate, while tourists rush to obtain tickets to witness these tournaments.

"There is a tournament meant for new adventurers to participate. It consists of a one on one combat with a weapon made of wood. The level limit is 20. Skills are prohibited and one good blow or exiting the ring will end the match. It's also a safe tournament as the medical team will be on standby outside the ring." (Phil)

"So what does that got to do with me?" (Youya)

"I thought about sending you a recommendation for participation as the deadline for applications is today." (Phil)

"Let's stop right there." (Youya)

It is unfair for me to participate in this kind of tournaments meant for beginners. By definition, I am not a rookie adventurer plus I received a reset

bonus along with my fixed status increase. In the first place, old men like me shouldn't steal the limelight from the young and upcoming adventurers.

"I thought so.. However, the victor will not just receive money, but also a rare item you know. It's a rare item that you could never see again you know." (Phil)

I took a look at the documents taken out by Phil and gasped at its contents.

This is..! I didn't think that it actually existed. I definitely want that item. However, I still feel that I should not participate in the tournament.

"Youya you're late. I'm hungry! Hurry let's go to the bar!" (Luna)

It seems that quite a fair bit of time passed since we returned to the guild that Luna became impatient. Hmm? Wait a minute. I just thought of a good idea.

"Luna, how do you feel about testing your swordsmanship?" (Youya)

"Hmm? My swordsmanship?" (Luna)

Luna tilted her head.

"There is a tournament coming up where adventurers level 20 and below compete to see who is the strongest." (Youya)

"Sounds interesting." (Luna)

Luna's eyes started to glow.

"Wait a moment, Youya. She's just a little child." (Phil)

"You should know from experience not to judge a person's strength on their appearance." (Youya)

The difference between Luna's status and her actual physical appearance was extremely large.

"Youya! Luna will attend the tournament!." (Luna)

"My thoughts precisely. Luna is much more suited to the tournament than I am." (Youya)

Luna has shown countless times that her speed has surpassed what her status implies. She doesn't feel fear from battling against monsters as well. However, when it came to battles with humans, her experience is far from sufficient. This tournament could be a good experience for Luna.... And when she does win it,

she'll ask for something else in exchange for the tournament reward because she wouldn't have any interest in it.

"Okay! Luna wants to join the tournament!. Youya! Train me more!" (Luna)

"Of course. We'll make Luna stronger by the day of the tournament! At the end of the day, I guess I won't be able to teach you something other than the thrust." (Youya)

Our course of action will be to spend tomorrow and the day after to reach level 20, and spend the rest of the days teaching Luna the basic hand-to-hand combat and self-defense techniques and have her master them. I might as well have Til join in on the training as well, she should learn to be able to protect herself for worst case scenarios. I won't be able to raise our levels beyond level 20 until the end of the tournament. This is actually a good way for us to slow down our progress. It's a good chance for us to train and practice other strengths as they could be insufficient if we raise our level too quickly.

"Alright, then I will file an application for Luna to enter the tournament. Also, what about this?" (Phil)

"There is an event where adventurers will be battling monsters in the stadium. It also has a level limit of 20 for all entries." (Phil)

"I'll like to appeal that this event is safe for newcomers to enter.. But, this time the monster in question is a little dangerous." (Phil)

Fights against monsters in the city is a common spectacle for an adventurer city as audiences enjoy watching monsters and adventurers fight for their lives.

"*Killer Ape*. That isn't a monster for beginners to fight." (Youya)

"I objected against it, however the guild chief approved of the monster without consulting anyone. Lucky for us, the event won't be a true one on one battle but rather a three versus one." (Youya)

A gigantic ape monster, *Killer Ape*. It has power, speed and hair on its body that acts as armour against any slashing weapons. It's one of the monsters that possess high attack power, defensive power and speed. Furthermore, ape-type monsters have the ability to use martial art skills and techniques. Based on its level, it is only level 25. However, if you are pitting three level 20 adventurers

against it, then those adventurers might as well be stronger than their level implies.

It isn't a monster that ordinary adventurers can beat. In fact, even with a medical team nearby, there is a high risk of the adventurers dying to the monster in the battle.

"I understand. I'll join that event. I won't take no for an answer. There is something fishy about that event." (Youya)

"Thank you, Youya! Actually the other two adventurers have already been decided! When it comes to their skills.. Well it's just standard, along with the arrogance that comes with it. I was worried that there would be no one to wipe their asses should shit hit the fan." (Phil)

"Aren't you even worried about me?" (Youya)

"Youya will definitely win. You may have avoided showing me your status up till now, but you mentioned that your status is doing much better than before. Youya with a strong status is undefeatable." (Phil)

Phil talks so confidently about my victory as if it was fact. It makes me embarrassed.

"Whatever the case is, I will participate in that battle." (Youya)

"Alright. My work today has officially ended. If its alright, can I join you for a meal? I'll like to advise Luna and Til about various things as well." (Phil)

"Of course you can. I've also wanted to have a meal with you.." (Youya)

Phil's face started turning red.

"But remember to control yourself when it comes to alcohol. You might as well be considered a drunkard at this stage." (Youya)

"After all, Youya is a meanie." (Phil)

With this, Luna's participation in the tournament is confirmed as well as my challenge against the *Killer Ape*.

I'm looking forward to watching how Luna performs in the tournament. Since she doesn't have much experience battling other adventurers, I am unsure if

she is capable of defeating a dedicated swordsmen who has undergone proper training. Still, there is something about Luna that makes me wonder.

I'm waiting at the guild hall as Phil went to change into her personal clothes. Then, a familiar face appeared.

"Youya-san! I saw someone having a conversation with Phil-san and I knew it just had to be you! I have a favor to ask of you." (Boy)

So far the only person in the trio with a name is Kevin. I am unsure of who is talking here so I'll leave it as Boy

It was one of the boys that got involved in an incident with us whom we saved from the *Rock Golem*. Luna stood behind me warily as she stared at the boy.

"What is it?" (Youya)

I'm not such a nice guy that I will accept the request without knowing what it is, but I'm not so evil to decline without listen to the details.

"Truth is.. I've talked with my older brother about the challenge against the *Killer Ape* and advised against it. The two of us have been training together ever since we were young and we were both confident of our skills. We also received strong equipment from our parents when we started adventuring. However, because of Youya-san, I've come to understand that we are in over our heads by attempting battles that were out of our league. That's why, I hope that Youya-san will look after my brother in the challenge as I am afraid that he would make the same mistake as I did." (Boy)

I let out a wry smile at the boy's request. Following what Phil mentioned earlier, I am guessing that this boy's brother probably started adventuring over a year ago as he managed to achieve somewhat close to level 20. I bet this is the overconfident adventurer that she had mentioned was in the challenge as well.

"Alright. Let's pretend this conversation never happened and you blurted out his participation thanks to alcohol. Irregardless, since I am participating in the challenge as a party member, I would never intentionally leave my party members out to dry." (Youya)

"Thank you very much! I am also thank you on my brother's behalf!" (Boy)

The boy lowered his head at a 90 degree angle.

It seems like both my challenge and Luna's tournament has their stakes risen by quite abit. However, the limitation on the battle is somewhat suffocating. I have the duty of looking out for his brother and I won't have the leeway to utilize *Magic Customization* as freely as I would like. If possible, I would like to avoid using it in a situation where it will become a spectacle.

Well I'm sure it'll turn out alright somehow. After all, I am also strong with just a sword.

"Youya.Til.Luna. Thank you for waiting. Shall we leave now?" (Phil)

When Phil showed up, the boy's face turned red as they turned away. Well Phil is the idol of the guild after all. It's likely that this boy is one of Phil's diehard fans.

"I'm heading over to a bar at the moment, would you and your friends like to join us?" (Youya)

"Uh.Of cou-. I mean. Uh. It's okay.It's a pleasure especially since Phil. but .. uh. I'm sorry!!" (boy)

The boy ran away, despite coming over so cheerfully with a favor.

"Youya, what is wrong with those children?" (Phil)

"I don't really understand either." (Youya)

Phil is scratching her head at our current situation. It looks like she hasn't noticed it herself. Ignorance may be bliss but insensitivity is a sin. Anyway, it's time for us to return to the bar at the inn. There are plenty of things to prepare for tomorrow's hunt.

Chapter 19: The old man goes on a treasure hunt.

Two days have passed since we decided that Luna will be participating in the battle tournament while I will participating in the *Killer Ape event*.

Currently we are inside the beginner dungeon for adventurers level 20 and below. Our goal today isn't to raise our levels but to train. Although we are at level 20, it is important not to neglect the strength that a person can obtain from training. I was capable of demonstrating power equivalent to an average adventurer despite my lower status when I was at my peak.

"mmmmmm. I wanted to participate too. The tournament. Hmph" (Til)

Til was complaining with an envious face.

"Don't say that. You have a class suited for long-range battles. If you were to enter a ring 20 metres wide you wouldn't allow be able to utilize your strengths to the fullest." (Youya)

"But I've been getting better at other weapons too such as knives and other stuff." (Til)

At the moment, Til was juggling three knives which she usually kept hidden on her body. She caught the knives between her fingers and threw them towards a tree, sticking them into the same tree. Although *Spirit Archers* didn't typically use knives for battles, Til was already a master at handling knives.

"I'll admit that Til is very skilled as a fighter. And I've always thought it was strange that you do not seem like an amateur at all. It's as if you have learnt martial arts before." (Youya)

Phil was skilled with a bow from the start, however aside from that she was average. For me, I have been scavenging and hunting in the mountains since I was young and my physical strength is higher than an average person, however it wasn't anything exceptional. However, in Til's case there is evidence to believe that she has been doing properly training. That wouldn't be the case if

one led a normal life.

"Because the art of a bow comes naturally to all elves, everyone had learnt how to use one. In addition, I have always been dreaming about being an adventurer, so I trained under the wing of the village's number one warrior. However, one day he said that he had to leave the village, and apologised to me as he had only trained me for a short time. As a result, I only have the fundamentals of the fundamentals drilled into me." (Til)

"So that's it." (Youya)

I've met that number one warrior from her village. We fought together once as brothers in arms. If it's him, then I'm convinced. Just having the fundamentals separates the novice from an amateur.

"But even if you learn how to handle a knife or have good stamina. That is different from having a job that synergize with knives. You don't have the status correction that comes from having an actual job and a class benefit. A *Spirit Archer* that eats a blow from a wooden blade in close quarter combat is still dangerous. I can't approve of it. If someday there is a tournament that suits Til, I'll be sure to let you attend." (Youya)

I put a piece of Panam fruit into my mouth.

Although Til has many complaints about the situation, she is still taking her training seriously. If she continues to work hard at her current pace, she will be able to defend herself even without needing Luna to protect her.

Now then, I wonder how Luna is doing.

"Luna. Looks like your yokonagi is able to land critical hits as well now."
(Youya)

"Uhn. This is the second one!" (Luna)

Among the nine types of slashes, Luna's second choice is Yokonagi. It is a good choice considering Luna's small stature. Yokonagi is a downward slash with a small movement and there aren't many situations where this could be used. However, one effective use of the Yokonagi slash is to utilise it after the stab where it's short range and range of motion can be beneficial. More than anything, it is an easier for Luna to land critical hits than a stab as it was a

slashing movement.

"Now then. Let's move on to sparring practice. I'll be using a wooden sword while you will use a dagger. For the next thirty minutes, I'll only be defending myself and I won't counter or attempt an attack. If you land a single hit on me within the time limit, you will win the match." (Youya)

"The rules are too lenient towards Luna! At least counter Luna's attacks."
(Luna)

"You'll understand once we start the match. Let's see.. If you win the match, I'll grant you one request. " (Youya)

"!! Really!?" (Luna)

"Only if it's within my power of course. But yeah. Any request." (Youya)

"Alright! Luna will try her best and win!" (Luna)

Luna became motivated instantly and her fluffy fox tail swung back and forth.

I'm suddenly afraid of what she will request of me. But I guess it's much more fun this way now that the stakes are higher.

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Thirty minutes have passed.

Luna's body gave way and she fell onto the ground, losing her grip on her dagger. She had attacked me for the entire thirty minutes without letting up so it isn't unexpected.

"Was the match too easy? Should I revise the rules again?" (Youya)

"Youya is strong! Even though Luna is faster." (Luna)

Based on our basic status, my stats are slightly higher than Luna's. However, with the class stat corrections, Luna's speed got a huge boost and her overall status is better. However, she won't be able to beat me using just pure speed. I have spent decades battling monsters and people who were far stronger and faster than I was. She'll need more than just speed to beat me. If anything, she needs to come up with a strategy in order to land a hit.

"If you want to defeat me, you must be sure to watch my movements. Watch how I receive your blows and pace myself in battle. How I breath. My footwork. And think about how you can interrupt it. These are the skills that Luna doesn't have. Once you start noticing these things, you will begin to become more familiar with my battle style and eventually, you will be able to push through. We'll do this spar session everyday at the inn for thirty minutes." (Youya)

"Youya. If it isn't today, will Luna still get a reward for winning?" (Luna)

"Of course. There won't be any tension if there isn't a prize to be won. However, I will place a deadline. The deadline is one month. If you don't win within the month, the prize will be forfeit." (Youya)

Without the strength to stand up, Luna's eyes started shining while she was laying on the ground. She opened her mouth and drank a stamina potion before proceeding to her own training.

Somehow she feels more motivated than before.

"By the way, what do you plan on asking for if you do win?" (Youya)

Luna paused for a moment before puffing up her cheeks and turning away. Glancing at her neck, it looks like she's red down to her neck.

"it's a secret." (Luna)

That was a boring answer. But I'm sure Luna wouldn't ask for anything unreasonable. If she is able to land a single blow on me in this next month, I plan to fulfill her request to the best of my ability.

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The main reason we came to the dungeon isn't to train, but to go on a treasure hunt. Dungeons aren't just filled with monsters for adventurers to hunt. The monsters are mostly cleared out on the day they spawn so adventurers often spend the other days treasure hunting. We may not be able to raise our levels due to the tournament rules, but if it's just a treasure hunt then we will be fine. We could also avoid raising our level by utilising Luna's

Presence Detection.

"Youya, I smell treasure over there." (Luna)

Luna's nose began to twitch as she sniffs the air. This cute movement fits really well with Luna's appearance and her age. The reason why Luna said that she could "smell" treasure is due to her new skill, *Treasure Sense*. As the name implies, it allows Luna to sense any treasure chests in our vicinity similar to *Presence Detection*. There are many chests in dungeons that are placed in conspicuous areas, however as a veteran adventurer I am certain that there are many chests that are hidden within the dungeon walls itself. Chests that can be easily found are certain to be looted by other adventurers. Thus we are hunting for the chests that are hidden instead. By using *Treasure Sense*, rather than persistently searching throughout the dungeon Luna will be able to sense their locations if we get close enough.

"Weird. The treasure chest is directly ahead of us, but it's a dead-end?" (Luna)

As Luna said, we have arrived at a dead-end. It isn't possible to return and take a different path as the previous turn is quite a distance away.

"In that case, there should be a hidden room behind the wall. Try to tap the wall and listen to the sound." (Youya)

I knocked the wall with my knuckles and a loud noise reverberated throughout the wall.

Bingo. It seems that there was indeed a hidden room. There are several ways we could go about opening this room, but based on the sound the wall is quite thin as compared to the surroundings. For a thin wall, there is a simple way for us to pass through.

"Luna. Til. Be prepared to dodge the debris." (Youya0)

"Uhn." (Luna)

"Roger that." (Til)

The two of them lowered their bodies towards the ground as I grabbed my sword. One of the most commonly used skill for swords, *Bash*. It can be activated easily with an efficient mana cost for its attack multiplier. The wall

collapses as my sword collides with it. Although it is simple to destroy walls with this method, this is only possible as the wall is abnormally thin. If this is performed against a normal wall, there is a high chance that the sword will be damaged rather than destroying the wall.

"Woah, the wall actually broke." (Til)

"Ah! The treasure really is behind the wall!" (Luna)

Luna and Til walked past the collapsed wall and entered the hidden room.

"Luna, did you put points into *Lockpick*?" (Youya)

Original name was 解錠 which translates to "Release", but changed to *Lockpick*

"As you told me to, I put three points." (Luna)

"Good. That will be enough for now." (Youya)

We can't lower our guard just because we found the chest. There are traps that have a 50% chance of activating when opening a chest. There have been instances where a poisonous gas is released or paralysing needles are shot out from the chest so on and so forth. With *Lockpick*, not only is the chest easier to open, but the traps can also be deactivated depending on the person's status. With Luna's current status, level 3 is sufficient to deactivate the chest.

"Youya it's opened." (Luna)

"Nice. It's a *Magic Bag (Small)*. It can only hold up to 10 kilograms of items but it's worth at least two million gils on the marketplace." (Youya)

"If it's two million, we could play around the town for three months." (Til)

"Amazing! Today is a good day!" (Luna)

Luna and Til are grabbing each other's hands in celebration of our loot. However.

"We won't be selling this bag. Til will be using it instead." (Youya)

"You sure? Giving me this kind of item." (Til)

"Definitely. I was actually hoping of finding another bag for you. Wouldn't it

be difficult to carry a bow around in the town? If you had a magic bag you could place your bow inside rather than carry it around." (Youya)

Bows are useful but they are quite troublesome to carry about. Their arrows are quite bulky as well. That is why *Spirit Archers* often carry around a magic bag. I was planning to pass her a bag from the start but I already passed my spare bag to Luna. When I asked Luna to pass her bag to Til, she looked so devastated that I couldn't bear to take her bag away from her so I held back on the thought.

"Thank you so much! I'll treasure this." (Til)

"Please do so. We definitely have the goddess's blessings as we are very lucky to find such a rare item on our first chest. " (Youya)

Til hugs the magic bag tightly in her arms. I'm sure she will take good care of it.

"Now then. It's about time to head back. We've obtained a good souvenir for today." (Youya)

"Let's go! Let's do special training when we return! I will definitely land a hit on Youya by the end of the month!" (Luna)

Luna is extremely motivated for our challenge. I will do everything in my power to stop that. After all, I won't have the qualifications to be a teacher if I lose to my own student in just a few days.

"Me too! I'll make big sis proud of me! I heard from her that having a magic bag is proof of being a top-tier adventurer!" (Til)

"Yeah. That's right." (Youya)

Very few adventurers actually carry around a magic bag. Even if a party do find a magic bag, they will often sell it and split the profits between the members.

As usual, the party is progressing smoothly. Let's continue treasure hunting while training the two everyday until the day of the festival since it will be a good experience for the two of them.

Chapter 20: The old man is unable to escape

Currently it is the day before the festival. In the inn's courtyard where that we stay, Me and Luna are facing each other while breathing heavily. This has been a daily occurrence for the past month. I issued a challenge to Luna to land a single hit on me by the end of the month, and today is the last day for the challenge. The remaining time left is three minutes.

I'm impressed by Luna's resilience. Although I caught a glimpse of her talent back when she learnt the thrust in one night, her growth this past month has been even more abnormal to say the least. This girl's battle sense and learning capacity is far too large. Not only does she have excellent parameters, she has a pair of eyes that sees much more than an average person, capable of seeing and absorbing my battle movements into her own.

"Hou." (Luna)

She took a deep breath and applied more force into her legs. My movements isn't something a person can easily imitate and assimilate into their own. I can't help but wonder how much can this girl grow in the future. She is a jewel that far exceeds even Leonard in talent.

In an instant, Luna closed the distance between us with a large acceleration. Looking at her speed, I assume that she is performing her signature thrust. Unless you are familiar with Luna's battle style, you will definitely be thrown off by her high-speed rush and her ability to transition into a thrust at that speed.

Having experienced that thrust for the past month, I had made it a point to parry Luna's thrust the moment I notice her preliminary movement. I wouldn't be able to parry it in time if I wait for her rush. She has been repeating this for the past 27 minutes, unable to pass through my defense. However, this time she pulled her blade back rather than thrusting it forward, catching me off guard as I didn't have the time to pull my wooden sword back. I have not seen her done this even once for the past month, could this be her talent at work or

is this her plan from the start?

Luna stared firmly at my right shoulder, throwing out a thrust in the moment when I am moving my sword to parry her initial rush.

Can I still intercept with my sword? There isn't enough time. My sword won't make it in time.

I twist my body, letting Luna slip through the side of my body.

In the next moment, Luna lands with another powerful step and pushes forcefully off the ground, twisting her body sideways. These series of movements are far too advanced for her to be adapting in the heat of the moment. She must have been training secretly in order to defeat me today. My sword is in a bad position while my balance has been broken. However it's a shame. Using my left hand, I struck the side of Luna's dagger with my palm, adjusting its trajectory downwards from above. By striking the side of the sword, it is possible to defend yourself with just your bare hands, although it is near impossible to catch a blade with two fingers. While regaining my balance and my form, I rotate my body and move behind Luna.

"Time's up. It's a shame but I am the winner again this time." (Youya)

"Youya said that even if Luna landed an attack then Luna is the winner. But hitting the side of my blade is cheating!" (Luna)

"That is a valid defensive move even in an actual battle. It was regrettable that you weren't fast enough even with your high-speed combo attacks. If I had defended the way I usually did, you would have definitely succeeded, and I wouldn't have made it in time." (Youya)

"Cheater Youya! Youya is an adult! No excuses allowed. Luna properly hit Youya." (Luna)

Unhappy with the outcome, Luna puffed up her face and complained about the results.

Although, rather than intimidating, her action looks much cuter as the fur on her tail is standing while her face looked like a pufferfish. I don't mind conceding the win so long as I wasn't defeated by Luna this quickly. She still has much room to grow.

I will definitely reflect upon this battle later. Her footwork, her pacing and her breathing has improved drastically, even releasing a combinations of movements to perform a feint along with a lethal thrust at the end. There is much to improve on but for now this is sufficient. She should be ready for the tournament tomorrow.

"Alright. You win the challenge, but it's hard to say that you won the match. I'll give you the reward but these matches will continue even after the tournament." (Youya)

"Yay! Luna wanted to continue with Youya too! Luna still has many skills to steal from Youya!" (Luna)

"Starting in the next match, I will begin to counterattack to raise the difficulty a little bit. If you focus on attacking without worrying about defending, I will not hold back on my attacks." (Youya)

"I'll do my best!" (Luna)

Luna is burning up. She will become a good swordsman in the future and surpass me for sure. I'll be sure to drill everything I know into this girl. In order to let her soar through her future from now on.

"If you return to the inn, remember to arrange a meal with the bar for you and Til." (Youya)

"Youya what about you?" (Luna)

"I made a promise to meet someone today." (Youya)

It was sudden but Phil asked me to meet her today. If Phil is going out of her way to talk to me outside of the guild, it should be something serious. I'll be sure to listen to what she says carefully.

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After the training session with Luna, I met up with Phil at her place.

Her house is as well-maintained as ever. Even her equipment back when she

was an adventurer looks brand new with a bunch of decorations. It is clear that she cherished her time as an adventurer.

"Youya's favourite food is still spicy fried noodles isn't it?" (Phil)

"Yeah. Preferably with extra meat please." (Youya)

"Your tastes doesn't change even with time huh. I'm relieved. It's a good thing that the ingredients I bought beforehand won't be wasted. You can look forward to my special dishes." (Phil)

"An old man's preference wouldn't change even after a long time." (Youya)

The kitchen in Phil's home is large and has all the essential equipment a person would need. Phil changed her clothes and grabbed a frying pan in the kitchen. Noodles covered in a red and spicy sauce began dancing in the air as she began to prepare the dishes. Her cooking skills is still as amazing as ever. While we were traveling together, if there was an interesting dish that caught her eye, she could easily learn the dish and improve it to her liking, adding another dish to her already large repertoire.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. Heres Phil's specialty, Spicy pasta with meatballs." (Phil)

"Looks delicious." (Youya)

"Of course it's delicious! Do you remember the pasta in the bar back in Kaltara? Back then I asked the chef if he could tell me the recipe and altered it to suit Youya's taste." (Phil)

"That is nostalgic. That bar had one of the best food I have ever eaten." (Youya)

The pasta tastes delicious. She must have seasoned the meat with some miso and cooked it with the tomato sauce and the noodles. Although the noodles was delicious when mixed with the sauce, I like it more when there are plenty of meatballs along with the noodles.

The flavor of the meatball spreads throughout my mouth

"Heres some ale. It's Youya favourite drink isn't it?" (Phil)

"Oh. Yeah, ale tastes the best after all." (Phil)

"I've always wondered why do you only drink ale although you can afford spending more on alcohol. Now it makes sense." (Phil)

Phil is currently drinking a honey-flavored sake.

"Aren't you the same as me. You have always favoured honey sake over wine unlike others. At the end of the day, it's better to follow what you like rather than worry about what other people think." (Youya)

"It's all about our own perspective, that's what I've learnt from you after all this time." (Phil)

Phil elegantly brought the pasta to her mouth.

Phil mentioned that she made the pasta specially for my liking, and I can't say that it isn't true. It is incredibly delicious. It's been a long time since I've ate something so delicious. It even goes well with ale. I hope next time Luna and Til could join us for the next meal. Our conversation continued throughout lunch as the spicy hot pasta slowly entered into our stomachs.

I became increasingly embarrassed as I watched Phil's bright smile throughout the meal. Being embarrassed, I opened my mouth.

"So what was the reason for inviting me over to lunch?" (Youya)

"There's something I need to tell you that I don't want other people to hear. My room is quite expensive as I made it soundproof." (Phil)

Her place was indeed a nice place. If it was made to be soundproof, it must be quite a hefty sum to obtain this place. It couldn't be compared to the inn that I am staying at. Seems like being a receptionist is much more profitable than I thought. Now that I think about it, there is also the bonus that a receptionist can earn from the reservations placed. Phil who is always fully booked must have earned a huge sum just from that alone.

"Please tell me more about it." (Youya)

"There is something suspicious about the upcoming festival. The vendors who were supplying monsters for the events were changed without any explanations with the guildmaster's approval. And although I have been voicing out against these actions, the guild has been aggressively holding me back from assisting in managing the festival. It's as if they are hiding something and they do not want

me to be there." (Phil)

"Aren't you just thinking too much about this?" (Youya)

"I think so too. But I still have a bad feeling about this. Something really bad is going to happen. That's why I wanted to tell you about this. There might be something going on behind the scenes, and I hope you will be careful during the event." (Phil)

Looking into her jade coloured eyes, she seems to be much more vigilant than before.

"I understand. If there is trouble during the event, I will lend my strength. However much I can do as a level 20 adventurer." (Youya)

"It's because that strong Youya has become level 20 that I am asking for your help." (Phil)

"You're thinking too highly of me." (Youya)

"Naturally. Because it's the person that I look up to." (Phil)

Having a relaxing meal like this with Phil isn't bad once in a while.

"Also, there's another reason why I called you here today." (Phil)

"What is it? It seems more important than the matter about the event."
(Youya)

"I was hoping that you would be willing to make a move this time." (Phil)

"Are you drunk again?" (Youya)

"Truth is I haven't been drinking honey sake, but honey lemon water instead. "I'm not desperate enough to lay a hand on a drunken woman, nor am I hungry for a woman" I won't let you use this excuse a second time." (Phil)

"Fuh." (Youya)

I was instantly cornered.

"There were several things that I wanted to tell you before the festival including what I told you that day. Everything that I said that day was the truth and I wanted to tell you that before you leave the town." (Phil)

"You knew?" (Youya)

"Of course I did. How many years do you think I've been a receptionist?" (Phil)

Rumberg only has dungeons up to the intermediate level, that's why it's the town of beginnings. The limit for entering the dungeons here is level 25. If a person plans to go beyond level 25, they would have to leave the town for a city with stronger dungeons.

"Youya. If I asked you to bring me along with you and leave this town, would you do it?" (Phil)

"If you thought that it would make you happier than being a receptionist here, I would." (Youya)

"That's such a bad answer. If you wanted me to follow you then you should just tell me to. Maa, I guess that is a Youya-like answer." (Phil)

The two of us started smiling.

However, that doesn't mean I'll give up on this. I just want Phil to be happy, regardless of the outcome. Whether she remains as a receptionist or my student. Whatever path she chooses, I will do my best to support her.

"It'll be much harder for us to raise our levels now that we are approaching level 21, so it'll take awhile before we leave the town. I hope you will support me from now on as a receptionist." (Youya)

"I'll be glad to. I'm glad to help Youya in any way I can." (Phil)

Just like this, the day quickly changed to night. We continued to talk about what happened after we separated. Phil told me stories about her vacation while I told her about my life as an exclusive adventurer.

"It's getting dark soon. It's about time I head back to the inn." (Youya)

"In the end, you aren't going to do it. Sigh even after resisting my beloved honey sake." (Phil)

"Phil, if you say that I may end up doing it for real you know." (Youya)

"Don't worry about it, I have always been serious. The people under my care are adventurers, it doesn't matter if I'm not there for one day. Or is it that I'm just not that attractive to you?" (Phil)

I swallowed my saliva.

I walked towards Phil and pushed her down.

"You sure about this?" (Youya)

"Yes. I've been sure about this forever. Even if Youya chooses to leave me, I will still look forward to meeting you once again in the future." (Phil)

"I have always thought of you as a daughter in the past." (Youya)

I have always thought that she was like a daughter to me. Whenever I think back, I could feel the past pulling the brakes, stopping me from moving forward. However, Phil has become beautiful when I wasn't around. She has become a wonderful woman.

"Sorry for being an incompetent teacher. But I do not regret it in the slightest." (Youya)

Phil eyes started to tear as I wiped her tears away. Her breathing became heavier and her gaze became more passionate.

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In the end, I stayed over at Phil's place until the next morning.

Luna was sniffing everywhere wondering why she could smell Phil in the inn while Til caught on quick and started to tease me about it.

Now then, the long-awaited festival is about to begin. It's Luna's long awaited day to shine. Heres to hoping that Phil's concerns were just her imagination.

Chapter 21: The old man witnesses his disciple's big moment

Today is the day of the festival. People from all around the world gather here for this yearly event, stalls are set up everywhere along the streets and people gathered around those stalls.

"Uwahh, so many people!" (Luna)

"Ughh. I'm starting to feel a little claustrophobic." (Til)

Right now, we are walking around exploring the city during the festival. Luna's fox ears and Til's elf ears are currently twitching as we are walking around. Luna's tournament will begin in the afternoon and my challenge against the *Killer Ape* occurs right after. Although we woke up early today for our sparring session, Luna will have to fight in six battles if she is going to win the tournament. It is important for her to take a break until the tournament starts.

This festival occurs only once a year, we should try our best to enjoy today as much as we can.

"Youya, over there! That looks delicious." (Luna)

I grabbed the overly excited fox tail with my hand to prevent Luna from running off. The stall Luna mentioned is a stall selling roasted lamb meat.. The stall owner is kneading a variety of spices onto a large lump of lamb meat before stabbing it with a skewer and roasting it over a fire. Whenever he receives an order, he would scrape the cooked meat on the surface of the lump and place it on a piece of bread along with some onions and sauce.

It is extremely similar to a dish called Doner Kebab back in my previous life. The intense smell released from the mixture of spices mixed with the juice from the meat stimulates the appetite.

"Smells good. There is a lot of meat juice." (Luna)

Being a young and growing fox girl, Luna is in love with meat.

"How much should we buy... Actually. Til. Luna. Let's have lunch. I'll go buy

some drinks and head over there while the two of you buy the food. The two of you go ahead and buy some food for us to eat. Let's see.. Each of you can buy up to three things that you like. Since it's a festival, it should be more interesting for us to each different things little by little right?" (Youya)

"Three things! I'll try my best to look for something delicious!" (Luna)

"I have a good eye! Luna. Let's have a match! Let's see who can find the most delicious food in the festival." (Til)

"I won't lose." (Luna)

I hand over a large sum of money to each of them. Luna ran to the right while Til ran towards the left. Today's goal is to enjoy the festival above anything else. I had intended to take Luna's mind off of the tournament to relieve her tension but it seems like it was unnecessary.

I'm a little uneasy though. I hope the two of them don't get lost being engrossed in their challenge.

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Typically, food stalls prepare an eating area with tables and eating utensils. I am currently at one of those tables.

"Luna has brought food that is delicious! Luna won't lose to Til!" (Luna)

"I don't have any intention of losing either!" (Til)

Luna and Til both place their items onto the table. Luna brought a Doner Kebab, roast chicken with plenty of yoghurt sauce and chilli sauce and a gigantic pork rib seasoned with herbs. All of them are meat dishes as expected but the volume of food she obtained is surprising. I'm glad that I let her choose her own dishes. It is amazing that she even managed to get this much food from a food stand.

"As expected, Luna's choice of food is only meat." (Til)

"Meat is the most delicious food in the world! My instinct says so" (Luna)

Luna's tail straightened to the limit. It seems that Luna made the choice to follow her instincts for this battle.

"Fufufu. You are still a child. I won't lose! Jya jyan~" (Til)

Til's items are completely different as compared to Luna. Her items are toast with cheese, soup with tomato base, plenty of vegetables with motsu and various sliced fruits such as frozen mango.

"When eating a meal, it is standard to have soup and dessert right after." (Til)

"If it was only Luna choosing our dishes, we will only have meat for lunch. I do love meat but it would be difficult if it was just meat." (Youya)

"Luna is fine with just meat!" (Luna)

"Only you are fine with that." (Youya)

We're saved. Although the kebab is fine, it'll be hard for us to finish the roast chicken and spare ribs without any bread or soup. It is possible for me if I had some alcohol with us, but me and Luna still have our events later this afternoon. So I went ahead and got us some grape juice instead.

Also, I'm looking forward to the desert afterwards. Frozen fruits taste great and are delicious as dessert after a heavy meal.

"Youya. Luna or Til. Who is the winner?" (Luna)

"The one that decides the winner is Youya isn't it." (Til)

Both of them leaned forward towards me and stared at my face. It feels like a terrifying show curtain.

"I can't make a decision without trying the food first. How about let's have lunch first?" (Youya)

"Uhn. I understand." (Luna)

"Luna, You remember the promise right?" (Til)

"I do. We'll let Youya decide if we should buy it." (Luna)

The two of them seem to be betting on something that I'm not aware about. Without noticing it, the two of them have become this close. I cut and distributed the small dishes that I bought while waiting for the two of them.

Now then, shall we begin our lunch?

As I thought that, a familiar face entered the eating area.

Phil is talking to a handsome man who looks like he's in his late twenties. Phil smiled towards the man as she said something to him. My interest is piqued as I am very curious about what she is talking about with him. However, I am unable to pick out most of the conversation at this distance. Luna began to listen in to their conversation as her ears started twitching.

"Luna are you able to hear what Phil is saying?" (Youya)

"Possible. Luna's ears are good." (Luna)

As expected of a fox. Her large and cute ears are quite sharp as compared to human ears.

"Can you tell me what they are talking about?" (Youya)

"Uhm.. The guy is currently confessing and proposing. He will ensure she has no difficulty for the rest of her life and his parents are nobles or something."
(Luna)

Phil is popular in the guild after all. It seems like the guild idol isn't on a date although I am worried about her smile. Could it be that she accepted his proposal?

"Youya is making a scary face." (Luna)

"Don't worry about it. So what did Phil say?" (Youya)

"I am unable to believe the fact that you love me. I can't even consider that possibility. If in another ten years you are still able to say that you love me, then at that time I will consider your proposal." (Luna)

I couldn't help but laugh at her reply. She is definitely referring to herself and me with that last statement. Ten years have passed since I last saw Phil. And even after ten years her feelings hasn't changed. The young man was shocked that he was rejected and walked away with a bitter face.

"Youya's expression has been terrifying for a while now but now it is happy."
(Luna)

"I agree. Youya is weird. Hey, is it fine if I asked big sis to come over and eat with us?" (Til)

"That's a good idea." (Youya)

Til stood up and began waving her hands.

"Big sis, over here, over here." (Til)

Phil noticed Til and began walking over.

"Youya, Luna-chan, Til. Looks like you guys are enjoying the festival." (Phil)

"Yeah. It's a rare opportunity for us to try out different foods from all around the world. Now we are eating various foods that Luna and Til chose. Do you wanna eat with us?" (Youya)

"Sounds wonderful. I would like to." (Phil)

On the surface our behavior seems normal, however it feels more awkward than usual. Phil turns her head away whenever we exchange looks and her face turns red for a while. Luna hasn't notice yet while Til is grinning at the side.

"Big sis, you were walking weirdly when you came over, did you hurt yourself somewhere?" (Til)

Phil started to blush as she looks down.

I really want to reprimand Til for acting like a perverted uncle.

"It's nothing, don't worry about it. Rather than that, let's eat. Look. Luna has been holding herself back and drooling while we are talking." (Phil)

Everyone's attention shifted to Luna.

As Phil said, Luna's face became a mess from all her drool. Any more drool would ruin her cute face.

"Then, shall we eat?" (Youya)

"Uhn. I've been waiting." (Luna)

"Me too." (Til)

"Itadakimasu." (Phil)

And so, our fun lunch party has begun.

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I enjoyed the frozen mango for our dessert. It has a strong sweet and sour taste with a nice texture indicating that it was fresh. In addition, it is a cold dessert which tastes great in the middle of the afternoon.

"This is Luna's defeat.. Such a dirty plan. Your food is only delicious because of my meat! I'll only accept it because Youya said so!" (Luna)

"Fufufu, it was all calculated!." (Til)

It was Til's victory. Having a delicious cold, sweet and sour fruit after eating the greasy meat is definitely foul play.

"Phil, is it fine for you to be spending your time with us rather than participating in the management for the festival?" (Youya)

"Although the management is in chaos right now, the guild officials especially the experienced ones were excused from their duties. Thanks to that, I have some spare time now." (Phil)

What Phil told me yesterday flashed across my mind. My uncertainty and vigilance is increased to the maximum.

"Now I am able to cheer on Luna and Youya during your events. So both of you try your best!" (Phil)

"Uhn. Luna will try her best to win!" (Luna)

"I'll try my best but I plan to have the younger men take the spotlight."
(Youya)

Luna is fired up but I'm afraid that it will be tough for her to win the tournament. Honestly, it'll be difficult for her to hold up against someone who has been trained in martial arts as she lacks the discipline. Although she did manage to land a single blow on me in the sparring match. I think that she should be able to get a few wins in the tournament.

"It's about time for us to leave. If we don't leave now we may not be able to find any seats." (Phil)

"I agree." (Til)

After the meal, we headed towards the Colosseum for the event. On the way there, a guy who I see often in the guild came over to talk to Phil.

"Sorry, Luna, Youya. I won't be able to cheer you two on in the event. Seems like there's trouble happening somewhere and I have to go." (Phil)

"Its alright. Good luck with your work." (Youya)

I hope Phil's work goes smoothly and wish her luck. However, I feel that the timing is a little suspicious. Since Rumberg is the city of beginnings, with a max level of 25 for adventurers, there aren't many high level adventurers in the city. It could be a plan to keep the max level Phil away from the event. I hope I'm reading too much into this, but just in case I'll keep my guard up.

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Luna's tournament battle has begun.

In the Colosseum, there is a ring in the center while the spectators seat form a circle around the ring. The atmosphere in the Colosseum is extremely heated as cheers roared whenever a match starts. There were also bets being placed on the contestants. Me and Til were watching all of Luna's battles in the tournament.

"Youya bet a lot of money on Luna's victory right?" (Til)

"Yeah since the return is quite high." (Youya)

No matter how you see it, Luna is just a girl around the age of 13 or 14 whose only weapon is a dagger which is unreliable in a one on one battle in an open arena. Most customers would wisely refrain from betting on her. Because of that, the bets were incredibly one-sided. There is no reason for me to give up such a profitable opportunity.

"Do you believe that Luna will win the tournament?" (Til)

"Shes my cute disciple. In addition, she managed to land one blow on me

during our sparing match this morning. There's no way she would lose to these inexperienced chicks." (Youya)

It is finally the tournament finals. Multiple matches were conducted simultaneously up until the quarterfinals, and only one match was conducted from the semifinals. Right now, everybody's attention is focused on the final match.

Luna's final opponent is a spear man. Just going by their weapons Luna is already at a disadvantage. A spear already has a range advantage even against a swordsman, but a battle against a dagger wouldn't be a contest. That is, if the dagger-user was a normal opponent.

As the battle started, Luna jumped backwards, increasing the distance from her opponent. Jeers came from the crowd as they viewed it as an act of cowardice.

"Luna, shut these people up." (Youya)

I know it very well. This is a move by Luna to prepare the distance for her top speed rush. After jumping backwards, Luna suddenly jumped forward towards her opponent. Spearmen were people who preyed others in a head-on battle. However, Luna's rush is low and abnormally fast. The spear man likely hasn't experienced any movements this fast and gets thrown off his pace. Unable to predict Luna's movements, the spear man attempts to attack in Luna's direction hoping it will deter her rush, however his reaction is too late. A spear without a target doesn't have a chance of hitting Luna. Luna is capable of accelerating to her top speed in an instant and before the spear was even raised in Luna's direction, her thrust had already landed into his chest.

"Clean hit! Winner, the *Thief* Luna!" (Referee)

The referee announced Luna's victory. Cheers for the Luna's unexpected victory roared throughout the arena and the wrath of the people who bet on the spear man echoed behind.

Luna ignored the roar of the loud crowd and looked in my direction, showing a wide smile as proof of her complete victory.

"Luna, you did great." (Youya)

I can't help but take pride in my disciple's victory. Looking at it from afar, her movements were very similar to my own movements. She is really catching on quick. Although it was slightly different due to our choice of weapons, her breathing, footwork, center of gravity. I could see me in each and every one of those movements. I am really looking forward to her growth in the future. She learnt to imitate my movements with her incredible sense and presence of mind to become strong. I was thoroughly studied and absorbed in this short amount of time. I'll praise her more when we meet up later.

Now then, next is my turn.

My disciple went on to win her tournament. I can't disappoint her by losing my battle.

While caring for the chicks in my team, let's make the battle with the *Killer Ape* an exciting one.

Chapter 22: The old man leads the young men

Luna's tournament had just ended with her complete victory. I can't wait to meet up with her and reward her for her victory, but sadly I have to head over to the waiting room for my own event while Luna will be preoccupied with her award ceremony. While thinking of what we should do for her reward, I headed over to the waiting room.

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After arriving at the waiting room, me and the other members gathered together to receive an explanation of the rules

"This is a opportunity for us to show that adventurers from Rumberg more capable than those from the other starter towns, please show everyone the result of your trainings in the town. Moving on to the rules of the event..."
(Event Staff)

While listening to the rules, I observed the young men in arms who I would cooperate with for the battle against *Killer Ape*. As I have heard from Phil, my party members were young men who were full of ambition and pride.

The two of them only cared about showcasing their own capabilities rather than collaborating together for the battle. One of them is a warrior who is Kevin's older brother, Nicholas.

The other is a fighter named Isaruk. Based on how he carries himself, it looks like he has some experience as a martial artist but is extremely overconfident.

| *Note: Isaruk speaks using -sessha and -gozaru*

"Don't drag our feet down old man. Try your best to keep up with us. It is impossible for magic knights like you to defeat *Killer apes*." (Nicholas)

"Nicole-dono, let's see who will be the one to land the finishing blow."
(Isaruk)

"You two shouldn't underestimate me." (Youya)

The warrior Nicholas and fighter Isaruk clearly do not plan on cooperating with each other and think that they are capable of defeating it themselves. It is bad news if our group of level 20 adventurers do not collaborate in the battle as the battle will be difficult individually.

The two of them heard me as I let out a sigh. Times like this make me appreciate Til and Luna even more. Those children may be equally ambitious but they properly listen to my instructions.

"Magic is even prohibited in this battle for the crowd as they are more excited to watch us brawl out with the *Killer Ape*. This is really a terrible handicap"
(Youya)

Without my magic, my firepower won't be enough to take down the ape. I'll have to defeat it with just my sword. It will be a difficult if not impossible task to perform. I spent the time before the battle to prepare myself.

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The event is about to start and the contestants enter the ring. The warrior Nicholas and the fighter Isaruk waved towards the audience, brimming with confidence and making themselves standing out.

"Youya, do your best!" (Luna)

"Show everyone your good side!" (Til)

Hidden amongst the cheers of the audience, I could hear the voices of the two girls and waved towards them. I was starting to get depressed talking to these two people and I can feel a little bit of motivation coming back to me.

The crowd's cheers started becoming louder and louder as our enemy entered the arena. The *Killer Ape* was brought into the arena trapped in a mithril cage. It is a gorilla at least 50% larger and taller than me with purple hair

all over its body. That purple hair served as an armor, harder than steel, flexible enough to absorb impacts and greasy enough that any blade that lands will be directed away. However, what made it terrifying was its abnormally large arms that boasts as much strength as it look, and its intellect which was more intelligent than a typical beast. There is even a chance of instant death if we make a mistake in the battle.

"We will be activating the barrier." (Announcer)

A spherical barrier starts to surround the arena as a precaution to protect the audience from any collateral damage. However, this also means that we will be unable to escape from the battle. In addition, the staff started sprinkling perfume onto the contestants, agitating the ape while making the crowd more excited. This was done to ensure that the ape would be more focused on us rather than its surroundings.

"For today's main event, it is the exciting battle between a powerful monster and Rumberg's very own adventurers!" (Announcer)

The staff announced the start of the battle and unlocked the cage. An angry *Killer Ape* officially enters the arena.

Now, it's the start of the battle.

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The first person who took the initiative is the fighter Isaruk. Thanks to the *Fighter's* stat corrections, he moves quicker than any of us in the arena. As he has the air of an overconfident martial artist, I followed behind him in order to provide support and prevent the worst-case scenario. In my opinion, martial artists who are inexperienced are much more dangerous than amateur martial artists due to their overconfidence whereas amateur martial artists typically understand where their limits lie. As far as I can tell, Isaruk's defensive stats should be enough to survive a hit against the *Killer Ape* so I'll support him on his attempt rather than stopping him outright. As Isaruk approaches the gorilla, he sidesteps the gorilla's attacks and steps into its body.

Those are good movements.

"AH CHA CHA CHA." (Isaruk)

He lands a series of consecutive blows with the *Fighter* skill *Iron Fist*. It's a skill that hardens his fist as hard as iron, raising the power of his punches.

"Uhoaaaa" (*Killer Ape*)

The *Killer Ape's* roar reverberates throughout the arena, however it wasn't a cry for pain but a roar in rage. The flurry of punches did not affect the gorilla in the slightest. It didn't matter how hard the fist was hardened, the bristles present on its body would cushion each blow, killing the power from the punch. Although he was advised to attack the areas without bristles, it seem that he ignored that advice and continued to attack the bristles anyway.

In the first place in a battle of power, it isn't practical to release a flurry of punches rather than a single powerful punch. If he tried to push through with a single powerful punch, there was a chance that he could inflict some damage through the bristles. The *Killer Ape* swung its arms towards Isaruk and he is blown off to the side of the area. Watching his trajectory, I slid in front of him and caught him before he landed on the ground on his head.

"Pathetic, Isaruk. End of the day, it seems that the hero will be me." (Nicholas)

While throwing a one-liner towards Isaruk, the warrior Nicholas entered the battle. He immediately ran towards the gorilla and releases a single strike against the tough bristles on the *Killer Ape*. However, it was a slash that a person would expect rather than a thrust, ignoring the advice given to him backstage. Typically, it would be more effective to thrust against the *Killer Ape* as it was possible to slide the blade in between the bristles and directly attacking its body.

"Take this! *Bash!*" (Nicholas)

Attacking from above with pure power by using *Bash*. However, the *Killer Ape* does not avoid it. As if it was natural, the sword slips on the greasy hard bristles, getting redirected back onto the ground

"ARGHHH." (Nicholas)

Nicholas drops his sword onto the ground and screams in pain. This is expected if you are going to *Bash* onto a stone floor at full strength. The *Killer Ape* raised his arms and lands a direct punch onto his face, instantly blowing him away towards the arena wall. His life will be endangered if he slams into the wall with that momentum.

I run towards Nicholas's flying body to grab him, using my own body to kill the momentum as much as possible.

"ouh ouh ouh ouh" (*Killer Ape*)

The *Killer Ape* pounds his chest in celebration as I turn to face Nicholas and Isaruk.

"Our first round ended badly, but it's time for round two. Now, you two ready for some revenge?" (Youya)

The two defeated adventurers were trembling in fear, closing their eyes trying to drown out the roar of the *Killer Ape*. Their minds seem to be breaking just by battling the ape for a few seconds. They are forced to face the reality that none of their attacks worked on the beast and they would be badly injured if I did not step in. More than anything, their hearts were breaking when faced with an opponent with a overwhelming advantage in ability. They must have not participated in a battle against a monster where their superior techniques and equipment is unable to protect them. They grew as an adventurer experiencing victories after victories without experiencing a defeat. Having their first defeat with such an overwhelming difference has inflicted too much damage on their self-confidence. At this rate, they will become unable to continue as an adventurer.

I could continue to defeat the *Killer Ape* but that is no good. If the two of them ends the battle in this state, it will become a traumatic experience for them. They may never stand up on their own two feet ever again. This is all they would ever amount to in their life.

I can't bear to leave the two of them like this. The two of them are still growing and young, they have plenty of time to fail and learn from their mistakes. It feels too much of a waste for their journeys to end right here.

"If you guys won't do it, then am I supposed to defeat it alone?" (Youya)

"It's impossible. To defeat that." (Nicholas)

"At our level, it's impossible for us to defeat it." (Isaruk)

"Then sit there and watch." (Youya)

I stepped forward and cast my new skill *Warcry*. It's an ability that draws a monster's attention and provokes it, forcing them to focus their attacks on one target. It's an essential skill for the front-line.

"OHHHHH"" (Killer Ape)

Without sparing a thought for the two fallen warriors, the Killer ape attacked me using both it's arms without worrying about a flank, sometimes throwing in a kick showcasing it's dexterity.

I receive each of its attacks with my sword and deflect it to the side.

It's attacks are much heavier than the *Rock Golem* in the dungeon with different variations, coming from the sides, above and even from below. However, it is still manageable as it also has more preliminary movement.

Predict it's movements by a few seconds ahead to find an opening and land a strong blow.

I don't have access to my magic so I won't be able to inflict any major damage without an opening.

Wait and predict, be patient until you get a chance.

Meanwhile, the two losers are on the ground watching the battle with widened eyes.

"Amazing.. Such an intense battle." (Isaruk)

"Just who is that old man?" (Nicholas)

The *Killer Ape* throws out a telegraphed punch. This is my chance. If it's like this, then I'm sure the message will reach them. I deflect the punch towards the ground, throwing the *Killer Ape's* center of gravity forward, lowering his height. When it is retracting it's hand, I shorten the distance and release a thrust into it's right eye. One of the *Killer Ape's* weak points is its face which isn't covered by bristles, making it softer than anything.

"UGOHHH" (Killer Ape)

Blood flows out of its gouged right eye. The *Killer Ape* cries in pain as it jumps away, creating distance. When battling against an opponent with an impenetrable defense, it is a standard move to target the opponent's eyes as it is highly likely to inflict damage while hindering the opponent's vision.

The *Killer Ape* growls at a distance in provocation. Somewhere in that provocation, fear could be sensed. Now is the time.

"Nicholas, Isaruk. How long are you guys going to sleep for? You were watching weren't you? Are you going to leave the battle as it is? At this rate you guys will exit this arena as a loser who relied on an old man to clean up after you. And you will remain as losers until your death without facing another strong enemy ever again. Are you fine with that?" (Youya)

I have said my piece. It's up to them whether they choose to stand up and face their fears.

"OHHH. I can still do it. I'm not a loser." (Nicholas)

"You are not alone in this." (Isaruk)

The two of them stood up with trembling feet, following behind me as I stand at the front.

I let loose a slight smile. I don't dislike people who try their best. The Killer ape started beating his chest and rushed towards us.

"Both of you stay behind me. I'll open up a gap. When the time comes, both of you release your strongest attack right into him. Don't hold anything back." (Youya)

"OUH!" (Nicholas)

"Roger." (Isaruk)

The two of them ignored the advice given earlier before the battle, however this time they properly listened to my instruction.

This time, rather than deflect and wait for an opening, I am slowly inching forward while deflecting. Eventually I will get a chance to counter and forcefully open up a gap.

Driven by fear, the *Killer Ape* continues to fire a flurry of blows trying to deter me from approaching. With this, the match is decided. The faster you throw out attacks, the quicker your stamina drains. Eventually, the ape paid the price. It ran out of breath and its balance is thrown off. Seizing this opportunity, I moved around to the back of the *Killer Ape* and slash its exposed heel.

"UGYAAAAA"

Having its tendon cut, the *Killer Ape* is unable to stand and is put on his knees, cutting his mobility.

"Now, it's your chance! End the battle!" (Youya)

I shouted towards the two of them to end the battle. The warrior Nicole's blade starts to shine brightly while the fighter Isaruk's body is enveloped by steam. Nicholas activated the warrior's special skill *Strike Impact*. It's a skill with high mana consumption, but it's easy to use with its high speed and rushing distance. The blade slides between the bristles and gouges out the flesh of the *Killer Ape*. The fighter *Isaruk* activated one of the *Fighter's* more powerful skills *Reverberation*, focusing all his power into his elbow. It is a technique that focuses the person's power into a single point. This technique renders the bristles useless as the shockwave is sent internally through the body.

Note: The name for Reverberation is 寸勁 which is also used for Bruce Lee's famous "One inch punch", however Isaruk uses it on his elbow instead of his hand so I decided to wing the name.

After the two of them landed their skills, the *Killer Ape* collapsed and blue particles start to rise.

But there's something off. The blue particles seem to be appearing too slowly. Is it just me or is his body not disintegrating?

"We won.. We actually won right?" (Nicholas)

"It's our victory." (Isaruk)

The two of them have definitely stopped trembling. It seems that the two of them has gotten over their trauma.

"Good work. Now you know that old men can flourish in battles as well."
(Youya)

"We were rude to you and had to rely on you to save us. I am terribly sorry for my mistakes!" (Nicholas)

"I have also been reflecting on myself. When I saw your battle, I felt ashamed. I am sorry." (Isaruk)

Looks like these two men are still young in spirit after all. I am glad that I managed to save their spirits.

"What you did isn't important. It's what you do afterwards that's important. So long as you are alive, you can atone for your mistakes. But now, it's time to rejoice for our victory. When you come across a strong monster, you laugh and bump fists. That is a party." (Youya)

"Yes Sir!"

I raised my fist and the three of us bump our fists and laughing in celebration. Somehow we managed to survive the battle without any major injuries.

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Suddenly, I felt a chill rush down my spine.

Following my instincts, I pushed the two of them aside, grabbed my blade and turned around. I felt a huge impact throughout my body.

It was the *Killer Ape* that is assumed to be dead. However, it's muscles were larger than before, it's nails became even sharper and its bristles changed to silver in colour.

It was ridiculously strong impact. I placed my hand on my knee and pushed myself upright.

The *Killer Ape* raised his hand and swung towards me. I quickly performed a forward roll to the side to avoid the punch. The stone ring was unable to withstand the impact of the ape's punch and broke apart.

"It.. changed?" (Youya)

And it isn't stopping there. It continues to change as time goes by. It shouldn't be that easy for a monster to alter its body. This is already on the level of evolution.

Just what is this monster?

Even if I were to go all out, I don't think I'll be able to defeat this monster, that is how terrifying this beast has become.

"From here on, we will fight together!" (Nicholas)

"Both of you get away!" (Youya)

The staff outside of the barrier took out their swords and began to attack the monster resembling the ape. The staff which consists of high level adventurers who were on standby stood up against the beast. However, it was futile.

"GAHH"

With just one swing of its arm, one after another the adventurers merely became clumps of meat on the barrier.

This is bad. What can we do in this situation?

What should we do?

While I was contemplating our next move, a broadcast began to play.

"Greetings everybody. Congratulations to the adventurers who won the first round. However, now it's the real deal. It's the start of the second round. Everyone here is lucky enough to witness the first ever documented case of monster evolution. And the end of the adventurer age. With our secret art of evolution and our monsters, we will rule over the world." (Broadcast)

This voice sounds familiar. It's the voice of the guildmaster.

From his broadcast, I've understood the situation. No matter what, we have to manage this monster somehow. I feel the pain down to the bones in my body, but I have to do it now. The damage is contained for now thanks to the barrier around the arena.

Phil isn't here right now thanks to her duties.

If this beast is released from the barrier, there won't be any adventurers present in the town of beginnings that is capable of dealing with the beast.

For the second round, I don't have to hide my magic anymore. It is a breach of rules to use magic, but it isn't the first offense committed here today.

There is a customized magic spell that can't be used until level 20.

It's time to demonstrate, the power of the *Magic Knight*.

Chapter 23: The battle that the old man has to win

"Greetings everybody. Congratulations to the adventurers who won the first round. However, now its the real deal. It's the start of the second round. Everyone here is lucky enough to witness the first ever documented case of monster evolution. And the end of the adventurer age. With our secret art of evolution and our monsters, we will rule over the world." (Broadcast)

The evolved *Killer Ape* became eerily quiet. Listening to the guild master's broadcast, it seems that he has complete control over the monster.

"Until now we have always relied on those savages, adventurers to protect us. In reality, without adventurers we would suffer at the hands of wild monsters. It was all we could do as normal citizens to suck up to adventurers as they abuse their power in current society. We had no choice but to cater to their every whim." (Guildmaster)

Suddenly, the guildmaster began to give a speech. It had never occurred to me that a person hating adventurers would ever become the guildmaster that supports adventurers in every way.

Actually, it could be the other way. He became to dislike adventurers after becoming the guild master.

"However, it will be different from now on. The ability to rule over wild monsters has been discovered. And by researching this ability, We have managed to discover the ability to mutate monsters, to make them grow beyond their previous capabilities and evolve them. Everyone should be able to understand this. Rather than spending so much time and resources into raising weak humans into strong adventurers, we can instead raise strong monsters, far stronger than anything humanly possible. Unlike adventurers, they are also completely obedient. Please take a look at the power of the evolved *Killer Ape*." (Guildmaster)

Seems like we are the unfortunate ones that were chosen to be sacrificial

lambs.

The staff panicked and outside the barrier removed the barrier trying to get us out of the arena. The moment the barrier was lifted, chaos ensued as screams came out from the audience and every began rushing to the exits. The staff are good people, but unfortunately it was the wrong move.

Even if it meant trapping us with it, the monster should be left contained inside the barrier.

If I were to inform them about the voice belonging to the guildmaster, there is a chance that they would refuse to believe it.

Nicholas and Isaruk ran towards the exit trying to escape.

"Old man, you should escape too." (Nicholas)

"That monster is too powerful." (Isaruk)

Escaping is the correct option to take here.

The mutated *Killer Ape's* strength feels like it's on par with a level 50 monster. There is zero chance of winning this battle.

"Piece of advice to the adventurers in the ring. If all of you escape the ring or die, I'll order the monster to attack all the civilians in the area. It will become a BIG incident. Well I'm sure all of you are going to escape anyways! You adventurers, are self-centered people who only look out for themselves! Even if reinforcements arrive, I'll kill all of them!" (Guildmaster)

Giving advice to us adventurers, such a nice person.

I prepared my stance while grabbing my sword.

Although the audience had started evacuating a while back, everyone is disorganized and in a mess. The evacuation hasn't progressed one bit. I don't want to imagine the damage it will cause if the guildmaster were to let the monster loose.

"You heard what he said. You guys get away, I'll stay here and fight." (Youya)

"No way. In that case, I'll sta-" (Nicholas)

"I'll stay to-" (Isaruk)

"There's no need. He mentioned that everyone has to leave before he'll unleash that beast. Only one person has to stay behind." (Youya)

Nicholas and Isaruk both gasped in shock.

"We aren't going to leave you here to die!" (Nicholas)

"We can provide support! Even a little if we're here!" (Isaruk)

It is hard to believe that the two of them were trembling before the *Killer Ape* earlier after a rough beat. I'm glad that pulling off a show to pull their spirits back wasn't a waste of effort. They will become amazing adventurers in the future.

"Having the courage to battle against an opponent that you may or may not defeat is a privilege that belongs to the young. But take heed of the fact that too much courage leads to recklessness. So I request of you to give up on this battle. If you were to join in the battle you will die. That is without a doubt. You guys will just be dragging me down in the battle. Now GO." (Youya)

The two of them remained silent as they recalled how overwhelming the mutated ape is based on their encounter against it pre-evolution.

"No.. I refuse. If we leave you to die here.. Then we are the losers here. That kind of loss-" (Nicholas)

I put on an air and started laughing.

"Since earlier just what have you been trying to imply? Self sacrifice. Dying. Doing what you want without regrets. I think you have misunderstood. If you guys aren't here being dead weights. Then I can win this easily." (Youya)

Increase my concentration and control my breathing.

"I mentioned earlier that the courage and recklessness to dive into a battle against an overwhelming opponent is the privilege of the youth. If that is the case, then the privilege of the old would be the accumulation of experience from constantly diving into battles to the death, finding ways to overcome opponents that you would have no chance to defeat otherwise. Old men only participates in battles where he can win." (Youya)

The brave men who planned on sacrificing themselves are began crying while

leaving the battlefield. With this, I have even more reason to ensure that I do not fall here to prevent wounding their pride even further. As their senior, that is something I will absolutely not do.

I would have two win conditions where I get to survive with my life.

First would be to defeat the monster and survive.

Second would be to survive and buy enough time for other adventurers that are capable of defeating this monster. If only Phil was among the audience, then this situation wouldn't be as dire as it is.

However, thinking about it clearly, my conditions aren't impossible.

"Oh? Only one adventurer was willing to stay? Trash will remain trash no matter what. No one else would ever consider abandoning their friends for their own survival. Now, enough waiting. Go, my cute toy." (Guildmaster)

The mutated *Killer Ape* is finally ready to battle. On the other hand, I have been ready from the start.

"Oie you public display. How long are you goona stare at me with that "I hate you for gouging my eye out" look?" (Youya)

"OUHHHHH" (Mutated Killer Ape)

Now then, it's the start of the second round.

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Back in the days where I had a shitty status, I obtained a means of overcoming my low status to allow me to compete against other adventurers. For me who had neither speed nor power, it was the only thing that I had. *Deflect* was difficult to maintain but it made me stronger by a huge margin. However omnipotent it could be, there was a limit.

Note: I gave a name to Youya's technique as it fit the description of his technique while making it easier to write.

"UHOOOOO" (Mutated Killer Ape)

"UWOOOOO" (Youya)

I properly received the blow and diverted the force elsewhere. It doesn't matter how fast the *Killer Ape* could move nor how powerful his blows are. So long as I can anticipate his movements several seconds into the future, *Deflect* can be used perfectly. However, it wasn't enough to nullify his power and each blow threw me around the arena.

Deflect isn't a technique that nullifies a person's attack, but rather a technique that allows me to receive an attack roughly ten times my strength. Regardless of how perfect I perform it, it is inevitable for me to receive some of the impact and damage when performing *Deflect*.

If it's the worse case scenario where the opponent has strength far superior than I can deflect, then I'll be blown away. Just like what is happening right now.

Right now, even though I am killing my momentum after each blow, I'm immediately sent flying once more. The mutated ape became so fast that he could easily move to where I was sent flying in an instant, cracking the ground in the process.

"Ugh. This is difficult." (Youya)

His power is probably at least eleven or twelve times my own. It's not a level where I can manage with just *Deflect*. Even my *Deflect* is starting to falter to his power and my footing is becoming worse.

If I were to directly impact the wall of the arena or the ground without breaking my momentum, I will suffer substantial damage.

I could feel the pain from each blow penetrating into my arms as if my bones were shattering.

It's taking my all just to avoid taking a fatal blow.

I received the same attack five times consecutively without being able to counterattack. My body is slowly getting heavier and my arms can't be lifted anymore.,

At this rate, I won't be able to move around soon.

The longer I survive, the further the citizens can get away from here and the closer I get to my second win condition. It is still not impossible for me to win.

Without caring about defense, the mutated *Killer Ape* dashed towards me from the front.

"It's finally done. *Superconductive Bullet!*" (Youya)

A bullet resembling a lightning bolt flies towards the *Killer Ape*. It's the magic that I began casting at the start of the battle, customized from the *Intermediate* class magic *Thunderstorm* focusing on its power and range by sacrificing its area of effect and casting time. All in all the chant took one minute, and I had to buy time for that minute.

Based on raw power, *Napalm Strike* would be more powerful than *Superconductive Bullet*, however that spell's activation period was too short for me to use in this battle to land cleanly onto my opponent.

The lightning bullet sent towards the ape penetrates the left side of its chest, scorching a hole.

"UGAHOOOOO" (Mutated Killer Ape)

Although the bullet wasn't powerful enough to completely scorch through to its back, it bought several seconds as the ape suffered burns as well as paralysis due to the electric element.

If it's now, I can do it.

I started a new chant, quickly closing the distance between the two of us as fast as I could.

My left hand began to shine red as it started trembling.

"*Napalm Strike!!*" (Youya)

It was my strongest spell that focused every element into its power. The strongest fire that blasts a super high temperature blast at point-blank.

I struck my glowing left hand into the *Killer Ape's* left chest.

This was my goal from the beginning.

By using *Superconductive Bullet*, I can paralyze and stop the monster's movements while burning the bristles around it's chest, giving me the opening to cast my strongest spell *Napalm Strike*.

It is the reason why I spent the last-minute being thrown like a ragdoll!

Let this blow penetrate through!

"UGAAAA" (Killer Ape)

However, that was naive of me.

The blow that I hoped to end the battle with, was stopped at his skin.

The *Killer Ape* swung his right leg.

I brought up my left hand to intercept his kick.

A dull crushing sound could be heard.

Along with my armour, my left arm was crushed and I was blown away.

Somehow, I managed to stand and glared at the monster

"Even my *Napalm Strike* was defended against just by his skin." (Youya)

My left arm was in extreme pain from being broken.

I'm lucky that it wasn't my main hand as a right hander but it means that I can't cast *Napalm Strike* anymore. If I were to use it on my right hand, it meant throwing my sword away which I needed for my *Deflect*. Based on my status, it should had been possible for *Napalm Strike* to effective against the monster, however it appears that somehow it developed a resistance against fire due to its evolution. Thanks to that my calculations were thrown off-course.

However, my plan wasn't in vain.

Thanks to the damage it received, the *Killer Ape* became wary and began keeping a distance between us, allowing me some breathing room.

"Youya! Luna will fight too!" (Luna)

"If it's support then that's my specialty!" (Til)

Appearing from the exit were Luna and Til. I'm glad that the two of them showed up. If I were to lose here, then the more adventurers around the better.

However.

"Don't interfere!" (Youya)

"But, you are.." (Luna)

"Don't worry. I can win this. So watch and learn. We will fight together in the next battle." (Youya)

Luna is a sharp child but she is still a child. If I were to just tell her not to join, she would argue against it. However, if I told her to watch so that she could be more effective in helping next time, she will listen.

Luna silently nods and continued to watch my battle from afar.

"Til. I'll leave Luna to you." (Youya)

"I understand, but are you really able to win?" (Til)

"Don't worry, I still have a trump card. From now on, its no holding back."
(Youya)

I feels like it's time to activate my trump card. However, it's a shame that I won't be able to activate it along with an attack magic. If I'm unable to use an attacking magic, then I'll use that spell instead. Theres no doubt that the situation is worsening by the minute. My body has accumulated a lot of damage and fatigue. In addition my left hand is unusable.

Finally, it looks like the *Killer Ape* is ready to attack once more. I took a deep breath to prepare myself.

This time, I'll activate two of my trump cards.

First is the power that I obtained thanks to my knowledge of my previous life. The power that *Magic Knights* were known for back in the game era.

Second is the power I obtained from my experience living in this life. The power that I obtained when I suffered from my incompetent status.

The *Killer Ape* prepares for the third round. It is a little bit intimidating that I no longer have the option to use *Deflect* and receive his attacks.

But I'm not afraid. I absolutely cannot lose this battle. This is a test of the experience accumulated in this life and the knowledge from my previous life.

There is too much at stake for me to lose here.

Now, let the third round begin.

Chapter 24: The old man's power

My plan to defeat the *Killer Ape* by paralyzing it with *Superconductive Bullet* and finishing it off with *Napalm Strike* failed thanks to its mutation, granting it fire resistance. However, there are still many reasons why I absolutely must not lose here. The cost of the failure was having one of my arm broken. I never thought that I would be taught a lesson at my age.

"UWHOOOO" (Mutated Killer Ape)

The *Killer Ape* started running in my direction. Seems like it was quite agitated by my attack earlier. It is emitting an overwhelming bloodlust.

Calm down and concentrate.

I closed my eyes and began to concentrate my consciousness.

This is the moment where I have to activate one of my trump cards.

This is the strength I obtained in this life, the ability to compensate for the low status that I obtained in the past. The power that was never discovered back in the game era.

"..." (Youya)

Why does a person become stronger whenever their status went up? This was a question that had been on my mind for a long time. I was constantly thinking about the possible answers to the question. Until one day, on the brink of death, "it" became visible. Surrounding everyone's body was a white aura. It wasn't until afterwards when I realised that the aura was the manifestation of a person's status, becoming brighter as the person's status becomes stronger.

Then it occurred to me. If I could control the aura surrounding my body, then I could use that power to make myself stronger. And that idea became reality.

The attack that I was unable to defend against, that threw me around was coming once again.

"What's wrong? Are you that frustrated that the arms you were so proud of could be easily stopped?" (Youya)

"Ugahhh" (Mutated Killer Ape)

I received the blow without being blown away.

I express my usage of the white aura as "opening the door".

The essence of the aura was released from the individual's soul, which then wraps itself around the soul's body. By imagining the white aura overflowing from the soul, the aura can be increased by 20%, which then increases my overall status by the same amount.

Not only am I able to increase the amount of aura coming out from my body, I am also able to focus the aura into one part of my body. The blow that came from the *Killer Ape* wouldn't be stopped just by increasing my overall status by 20%. It was only possible by concentrating the aura around my body onto my arm receiving the blow and the leg that was holding me in place. By doing this, I can increase my power from 20% to 50%. With a 50% increase, my power isn't that much different from the *Killer Ape*.

Perhaps there are other adventurers who also gained the ability to see the aura on their deathbed. This is the ability that is awarded to people who have put in the effort. Even after gaining the ability to see it, it took me ten years before learning how to utilize the white aura. Since then I've been practicing to increase the amount of time I could maintain the increased aura. Anyone who has put in this much effort in their lives would never be stupid enough to give up after ten years.

"Now, it's my turn!" (Youya)

I completed defended against the ape's attack, disrupting its balance. Although its dexterity is higher than usual for a monster, throwing such a powerful attack is sure to disrupt its balance once deflected, resulting in a large opening that is impossible to miss.

Opening the door requires a large amount of concentration. Normally, I am able to leave it open for about a minute, however in my wounded state I can probably only last for thirty seconds.

Once this battle is over, it's highly likely that I won't be able to move a finger. Opening the door for an extended period of time places a large burden on my

body. If I don't end this before then, it will most likely result in my death. The moment I used this technique, I was already resolved to finish this battle as soon as possible.

"UGA000" (Mutated Killer Ape)

The mutated *Killer Ape* is trembling in fear. I am surprised at this. Monsters who only battle with an overwhelming large difference in their status. True adventurers draw their power not from their status, but from their strong will and training. This wasn't something that monsters possessed.

"I'm sorry but I am going to end this quickly." (Youya)

I activate my magic spell.

However, instead of an attack magic, I will be activating one of my support magic.

Back when *Magic Customization* was discovered, one of the advantages that a *Magic Knight* possessed was their support magic. A spell that represented a *Magic Knight* was *Power Gain*. It is a spell that increases a person's power by 20 percent for 10 seconds. It is a convenient spell that is used often but often lacked any huge impact that other spells had.

However, *Magic Customization* completed changed that. Raising a person's power for an extended period of time was unnecessary so long as the person's power was amplified when their attack is released. That's why people often decreased it's effect duration while increasing its power amplification to the maximum. As a result, the increase in power became over a dozen times the original strength.

This is that customized version of *Power Gain*. It's name is...

"*God's Strength!*" (Youya)

It is the strongest spell that a *Magic Knight* can cast but is difficult to use. It's chant requires 2.5 seconds. In other words, you would have to cast it preemptively before the activation period which lasts only for a few moments. It is difficult but thanks to my usage of the aura, it is possible.

However, it is still not enough to take down the *Killer Ape* in a single blow.

Increase the power of my trump card even further. Focusing all my power into a full-power thrust. Without splitting the aura in my body, I focus the aura onto my foot when launching myself towards the *Killer Ape*, redirecting it to my waist when twisting my body, followed by my shoulder, pushing my blade forward then redirecting the aura towards my arms, following the flow of kinetic energy in my body.

This is my true trump card. My usage of the abilities I possess. It doesn't matter how much knowledge I obtain from my previous life nor the overpowered skills that I possess. It is the power I obtained when trying to overcome the low status which drove me to despair.

After 2.5 seconds, my power amplification spell timing coincided with my thrust, penetrating the left breast of the *Killer Ape*.

The monster that wasn't staggered by the combination of *Superconductive Bullet* and *Napalm Strike*, was struck down by the combination of *God's Strength* and the thrust amplified by the power of the aura.

After completing the thrust, I let go of the sword and jumped backwards.

The moment I landed on the ground, it's fist landed onto the ground at my original position. Although it's heart has already been stabbed, his fighting spirit hasn't waned in the slightest. It continues to lose a large amount of blood and will most likely die soon. It plans to take me along with it.

"UGAWHH" (Mutated Killer Ape)

It started running towards me. With the accumulation of fatigue, my movements are starting to become sluggish. I have five seconds left before I reach my limit.

I have enough mana remaining to cast one more spell, however *Napalm Strike* won't be effective against an opponent with fire resistance while *Superconductive Bullet* takes too long to chant. My beloved sword was also currently in it's chest. It is the worst case scenario.

At that time, the other sword in my possession appeared in my mind. The magic sword I got from the weapon store back then.

"Are you telling me to use you?" (Youya)

I felt the sword call out to me as if it was responding to my question. If that's the case, then I'll trust you. The sword that I chose from the barrel.

I lowered my center of gravity as I grasp the sheathe of the blade.

If piercing its heart isn't enough to finish it, then there is only one other place which could be lethal. I cast *God's Strength* a few moments before it closes the distance between us. I'll push forward with all my strength against the *Killer Ape*.

"Sorry but my cute disciple is watching us. There is no way that I can lose now." (Youya)

The black blade shines in the air and a red liquid flows out from the neck of the ape. As he approached me, I jumped out and slashed at its neck with my entire body.

Aside from his face, the weakest point on the *Killer Ape's* body is its neck where the bristles are thinner. Besides that, it was a bet on whether it would be enough to finish it off.

The next moment, the mutated ape collapsed onto the ground, this time disintegrating into blue particles for sure.

The time limit on the door ended and I collapsed onto the ground.

"That was dangerous." (Youya)

I can't even move a single finger. I felt my sweat flowing, my heart beating profusely and my ragged breathing. I barely survived the final round.

The reason why I barely managed to win the battle was due to the fact that my currently status was similar to my status before the level reset, causing my body to move near perfectly according to the image that I have pictured for decades. This allowed me to control my body perfectly when utilizing complicated combinations like this. A single misstep would have cost me my life. If my status was any higher than this, my control would go haywire, making it impossible to fight like I did earlier.

However, that fight was still enjoyable. I was pushed to the limit and somehow managed to increase my speed and power even further. I was somewhat held

back by the time limit, however what drove me forward wasn't the pain of losing my life, but hope for surviving towards the future.

"Youya!!"

Luna and Til started running towards me from the exit. The two of them held me upright and Luna took out a health recovery potion and a stamina recovery potion. However, strength was absent from my body and the liquid spills onto the ground.

"Youya, try to swallow it." (Luna)

I'm properly trying to, but I can't. Luna cried as she looked at me, however her face changed somewhat to a determined face. Then, without hesitation, she poured the liquid into her mouth and pushed her lips to mine, attempting to force me to swallow through mouth-to-mouth. While feeling the soft warmth of Luna's lips, I couldn't help but notice how beautiful Luna looked up close. After awhile, I felt a slight amount of energy return to my body.

"Youya, please get up." (Luna)

Luna desperately tries to feed me the potion while crying. However, my body still isn't moving. I should show my guts and try to comfort her.

"It's alright, I'm better now." (Youya)

I felt some sensation on my fingertips as I lifted my hand and pat Luna's head.

"I'm glad, Youya." (Luna)

Luna jumped towards my upper body which was held up and as if the dam had been broken, started to cry uncontrollably. Thanks to her I managed to recover a little bit of strength, but it still isn't enough.

Honestly, I am trying to resist the urge to close my eyes and fall asleep, however the match isn't over yet. I have to do something about the guildmaster. If he had the liberty of showcasing a demon like the mutated *Killer Ape*, he must have at least another monster on the same level escorting him. If that's the case, it's impossible for normal adventurers to go after him. I am the only one capable of doing so. And yet..

"It looks like my battle has come to an end.. I leave the rest to you." (Youya)

In the distance, I saw the appearance of a girl with beautiful blond hair carrying a bow, heading in the direction of the guild. This is good enough. I'll leave it to you.

If it's Phil, then I can relax knowing it's in good hands. Besides, I'm sure she isn't alone. After all, I've heard rumors that he is currently in Rumberg. If both of them are there, then this old man isn't needed.

Using my own power, I forced myself to grab the potion, and drank from the bottle directly.

"Luna, Til. Let's return to the inn. I'm a little tired." (Youya)

"Uhn. Lets go." (Luna)

"Youya, lean onto my shoulder." (Til)

My job in this incident is over. I'll hear the details from Phil later. I ought to have the right to know why the guildmaster acted this way and what kind of people he is working with or working under.

Arc 1 Epilogue: The old man makes a promise

After the battle with the mutated *Killer Ape*, investigations were conducted and by the time we were released, the sun was about to set. Towards the end of the investigation, word was received that the guild master was finally apprehended. That is to be expected, since he and Phil were the ones pursuing him. Borrowing Til's shoulder, we somehow managed to return to the inn where quickly washed up before going to bed as we were all exhausted.

Suddenly, I felt an intense blood lust and got out of bed.

"Honestly, is this how you greet someone?" (Youya)

After grabbing a change of clothes, I grabbed my sword and left the room.

It would appear that we have an unexpected visitor.

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I headed towards the back of the inn alone to meet the guy who emitted a large amount of blood lust towards my room.

"What is with you, being all stealthy like this. How about showing your face for once? Since we are on the same side, we don't have to hide things from one another." (Youya)

When Phil went after the guildmaster, she wasn't alone. There was a handsome youth in his mid-twenties with silver hair extending to his shoulder wearing a mask. At a glance, it would look like he is an old man. However, if you look carefully, the person carries the air of a dignified swordsman that has zero openings.

"It's been a long time. Teacher." (Masked Man)

"You don't have to be so polite with an old man like me, hero..Leonard." (Youya)

It is the hero Leonard. One of the only men who managed to conquer the *Tower of Trials* that has a 2% survival rate, increasing his level limit to 70 and becoming stronger than anyone can hope to be. A man who could be said to be the strongest adventurer. A disciple who had everything drilled into him by me. This is our first meeting in ten years.

"No matter how much the circumstances has changed, you are the master whom I respect, and the teacher who guided me back when I was a reckless young youth..and my important friend." (Leonard)

"Don't you have a grudge towards me for what I've done?" (Youya)

"Of course not. Back then I knew that teacher's decision was the correct one. Or rather, it was me that was stupid. Because of my actions, my teacher abandoned me and Phil decided to leave. Once I matured, I finally conquered the *Tower of Trials*." (Leonard)

The Leonard standing before me feels completely different from the Leonard that I remember. Just what did he experience this past decade?

"I was watching the entire time. From the audience seat. It was an amazing fight. But aren't you being too cruel teacher? This whole time you have never showed me such a technique." (Leonard)

"It's been ten years since we last met you know. Even I can learn a trick or two in ten years. And about that, if you were in the audience then you could have lent a hand in the battle a little earlier. Letting me, a level 20 adventurer to battle that monster all on my own." (Youya)

"I thought about lending a hand, but despite being level 20, my teacher was as strong as I remember back when he was level 50, with skills that were even stronger. I would never give up the opportunity to observe such wonderful swordsmanship either. As expected of teacher, you are amazing. Even with the title "Sword Hero", I'm still nowhere close to my teacher's level. It's frustrating." (Leonard)

Note: the original name for sword hero is 剣技, which sounds a lot like swordsmanship / technique

I was caught red-handed.

I felt intense blood lust coming out from Leonard.

"I came to this town today for the sake of meeting Phil once more. Lyle received a message from the guildmaster in this town that Phil is currently living in this town, and told me about it. Once I heard about it, I didn't stop until I got here." (Leonard)

That guildmaster. Did he seriously dig his own grave?

He went out of his way to showcase the power of his monsters, just to let Leonard come out and arrest him by giving out Phil's location? That is unexpected.

"I thought that if it was the current me, then there was a chance that Phil would accept me. However, I miscalculated. I had forgotten about my own teacher after 10 years. Unfortunately my teacher reunited with Phil before I did. The teacher who was superior to me in every aspect except for swordsmanship. And although it wasn't easy to catch Phil's affection. You did it just by reuniting

with her earlier than I did, isn't that too cruel?" (Leonard)

Leonard's hand started to grip the sword on his waist.

"Your blood lust has been growing stronger for a while now. Are you thinking that you can win Phil's heart just by killing me? It seems that you have changed quite a bit this past ten years." (Youya)

The possibility of me beating Leonard in the current situation is impossible.

He is a genius who managed to master all my techniques and even improved them further. In addition his level was raised to 70 thanks to the *Tower of Trial*.

"I do. However, the way I am right now, I will completely overwhelm teacher. That is why I have a request. One year from now, we will have a battle to the death. So please do your best to become stronger from now on. A year from now, I will steal every technique and skill that you possess and become the true "Sword Hero". Then I will steal Phil's heart. After all, I've managed to obtain everything I ever wanted after teacher left." (Leonard)

That wasn't a joke. He is serious in killing me.

"Even if you kill me, there is no way that Phil ever falls for you," (Youya)

"Ahahahaha. Don't worry about that. I have my ways of forcing her into submission. It doesn't matter what she feels. Right now at least. I understand it now. It'll never work because teacher is here. It's uncool of me to be inferior to my teacher isn't it? Teacher, I'll take my leave. I look forward to seeing you again." (Leonard)

Leonard turned and walked into the night.

He was always this hard-headed even back then, but he wasn't like this. Just what happened to him to make him change this much?

Regardless, there is something I have to do. When a disciple strays from the right path, it's the master's job to bring him back. A year from now, I will beat him down with my full strength.

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Several days have passed since my reunion with Leonard.

Due to the incident caused by the guild master, the entire guild was suspended, making it impossible to enter dungeons or to accept quests. Rather than sitting idly, I've been spending this time training with Luna and Til without entering the dungeons.

The guild master's intention was discovered as a result of the investigations. After advertising the ability to evolve and control a monster in the Colosseum, he planned to escape from the town and make a living selling monsters. He thought that he would be able to escape due to having three monsters on par with the mutated *Killer Ape* as his bodyguards, however it was thanks to his unusual bodyguards that he was discovered and eventually defeated by Phil and the hero Leonard.

"He was a nuisance until the very end huh." (Youya)

Causing a national scandal during the festival, ruining the event and incurring the hate of the people. Even adventurers were unable to hold in their anger and stress towards the guildmaster. His plan was to hold the audience hostage and force the adventurers in the event to make the decision to escape with their life, leaving the hostages to die and displaying the disgusting personalities of adventurers. Simultaneously, he would prepare his escape while the mutated *Killer Ape* would display its strength by battling Phil or Leonard who would be attracted by the noise.

Furthermore, in order to ensure the plan's success, he leaked the information about Phil's whereabouts to her former party member, the *Thief* Lyle in order to lure Leonard here and created a situation where a novice adventurer would have to either escape from the arena or defeated by the monster.

"His well-thought and meticulous plan was ruined.. By me huh." (Youya)

Not only did I choose to stay without abandoning the audience, I even defeated the mutated *Killer Ape* which possessed overwhelming power. The public image of adventurers was protected by a "novice" adventurer who chose to confront the monster with overwhelming strength, even ruining his display of power by defeating the monster. His bodyguards were also easily defeated, resulting in his arrest. In the end, even if he managed to escape, his plan

wouldn't have succeeded. Everything turned out near perfect for us. However, afterwards it was discovered that the guildmaster was assassinated in the prison, most likely by his collaborators to prevent any information from leaking out. This confirmed to us that the true threat hasn't been eliminated, and there were more people with the similar ability to evolve monsters.

"Luna, Til, it's about time to take a break." (Youya)

"Uhn. I understand." (Luna)

"My throat is so dry, I want a cold drink~." (Til)

The two girls who were training in the courtyard started walking back towards the inn. The girls were sweaty and wearing light clothing, making it difficult to look at them directly.

Luna began drinking the special nutritious drink that I made. Her face began to cramp up.

"During training, I suddenly thought back to Youya's fight. Youya was amazing. It was completely different from sparring with Luna. Even though I tried to, I couldn't replicate Youya's movements. The difference is too large. Frustrating.."
(Luna)

"Me too. When I saw the battle, I couldn't help but tremble even when I wasn't involved. There is still so much to learn. I'll have to continue to do more self-defense training." (Til)

I see. No wonder they have been so fired up recently, so the two of them were just inspired by my fight that they ended up trying even harder than before.

"Don't worry about it. The two of you are talented, far more than I. Eventually you will be able to do a battle like that too." (Youya)

"I can't say that I agree with you. It was overwhelming. The monster was too strong and I was scared. Even if you say that we will be able to do that eventually, it feels like that time would never come." (Til)

Before I knew it, Luna approached me and grabbed my side.

"Uhm, Youya. Do you remember our promise. After the tournament, you

would reward Luna for winning." (Luna)

"Of course I do. It's for my cute disciple, I'll do anything." (Youya)

Luna got shocked after hearing my reply, her fox ears going limp.

"Youya. Luna's request is to make a promise." (Luna)

Luna stares directly at me with eyes mixed with uneasiness and expectation, as if she was making a request with her eyes.

"Luna wants to be with Youya forever, so never leave Luna's side." (Luna)

"I thought it was something important since you said it like that, so it's just that." (Youya)

"It's not just "that"! Youya abandoned Phil.. Luna doesn't want that.." (Luna)

Although I thought she was just being her brazen and happy self following me ever since we met, it looks like she has been worrying about this the entire time. She was afraid that I would leave her.

I let out a smile and caress Luna's head.

"I promise. Until Luna wishes so, we will always be together." (Youya)

Luna's face bloomed like a beautiful flower after hearing my answer.

"I love Youya!" (Luna)

Luna jumps into my chest as she grins uncontrollably. Her fox tail was also moving back and forth. Such cute actions fit Luna very well and I gave her lots of pampering. Til who was watching at the side started grinning.

"I want to celebrate with Luna but... As a sister I'm worried. It's the rise of a powerful rival! Well I guess it doesn't matter at this point. Fuu fuu. Congratulations you two. Fuu fuu. Don't the two of you have the hots?" (Til)

This girl.. Although I wonder if it does look that way towards other people. It doesn't feel that bad though. I'll stay with Luna as long as she wants to.

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Even after finishing our dinner, Luna continued to cling onto me and was sitting on my lap. Occasionally, I would lean back and let out a laugh. In such a setting, a visitor came. It was Phil.

"Youya. Sorry for being late. I really wanted to come here sooner but some stuff happened. Also.. If I had reached earlier then.. You wouldn't have to do such a dangerous thing." (Phil)

"Maa. It turned out fine so don't worry about it. How about you? Guild work after the incident must be tough right?" (Youya)

"It's really tough. But don't worry, I will do something about it! It's my job after all." (Phil)

After that, the conversation with Phil continued on. Since we were the only people around, we also talked about the incidents and other matters.

"Youya. I came here today to explain what happened on the day of the festival, and that I had to give my reply someday." (Phil)

On that day we officially became a couple and I asked her several important questions.

"You asked me that if I wanted to go on a journey with you, whether I would be happier being a receptionist or an adventurer with you. I've thought about my answer carefully since then." (Phil)

"Ah. I did say something like that." (Youya)

"I was in a bind, and constantly worrying about my answer. I want to be with Youya, but I enjoy being a receptionist and helping others. I felt satisfied and fulfilled at my job. But in the end, I feel the happiest is being together with you." (Phil)

"I see. We're still together aren't we?" (Youya)

I stretched my hand out to Phil. But she didn't take it.

"Not now. At the very least, for the time being, not for a while. Thanks to the incident, the guild is in shambles and if I'm not here, the guild will eventually crumble and the city will inevitably be doomed." (Phil)

Shes right. It is an important time for Rumberg right now. It'll take time

before the guild can restore its credibility.

"I can't do something as irresponsible as that. I love the guild and the adventurers here too. Give me two months. No. A month to restore the guild. And once that's done. I'll come for you. So please, wait for me until then." (Phil)

It's going to a little bit lonely since the trip with Phil has been postponed. But I'm proud of her answer. She has grown up to be a fine woman who became capable of thinking about others, the guild and the adventurers. There is only one thing I can do. To support her decision.

"I understand. Then I'll wait for the day when I can see you once more. Do your best for your own battles." (Youya)

"Of course. I'll definitely return to your side." (Phil)

Phil leaned in and we kissed.

Luna raised her fox tail and Til was covering her eyes, watching from the gaps between her fingers. At our level, we are already approaching the limit for the dungeons in the area. We will be leaving the town soon, we will have to separate from Phil. However, I'll wait for the day when we can meet once more. I've decided to tell her everything on that day.

Luna came between me and Phil and began hissing towards Phil.

It isn't an act caused by any romantic feelings from Luna. It's just that child's desire to monopolize me. Her actions are definitely weird, I'm looking even more forward towards our future reunion. Unable to hold it in, I started laughing.

Living the days with futile effort, I've moved forward without being rewarded for my actions. But it all started to change the day I met Luna. And since then, the fruits of my hard work started to appear one by one. I was finally rewarded. Being rewarded for my efforts felt really sweet. I wish these days would continue on forever.