

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

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そのおっさん、 異世界で。 二週目プレイを

満喫中



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The Old Man Who Got a Second Round in Another World

Arc 2

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[Novel Updates](#)

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Chapter 1: The old man goes dating at a high-class restaurant.

I received an invitation ticket to a high-class restaurant for completing a quest to collect Shrimp Meat (Average). Immediately after completing the quest, I decided to use the ticket and brought Til, Phil and Luna to the restaurant.

"Since it's a high-class restaurant, do we have to worry about any dress code?" (Youya)

"Don't worry, there isn't any dress code required for the store. Since many adventurers are fairly wealthy, there aren't any stores here that impose a dress code." (Phil)

That's a relief. Although adventurers frequent public stores available to everybody, as a top tier adventurer there are times when you will have to go to a place that requires a dress code. As such, I've prepared the clothes in my Magic Bag in the event that it is needed. However, I have not prepared clothes for Luna and Til. Even if I did, both of them would definitely be against it. Generally, demi-humans such as a fox-girl and elves both love their freedom and nature and dislike restrictions.

"Tonight is a feast! There must be a large chunk of meat!" (Luna)

"I hope there are delicious fruits that I have never eaten before." (Til)

Luna and Til kept repeating "I want to eat", "I want to eat delicious food" non-stop. It makes them appear more childish and energetic. Looking at the two of them, Phil and I started feeling awkward.

"We have arrived." (Phil)

The name of the shop is Charlotte. From its appearance, it seems to be a high-class and refined store. If there are other upper-class people present, I'll have to ask the two of them to remain quiet. While thinking of this, we entered the store.

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The inside of the store has a calm atmosphere and the furniture is decorated with gold. To complement the atmosphere, a piano is being played live in the store. The store itself oozes elegance and has a nice look.

"Well if it's a city of adventurers then it should be like this." (Youya)

Although I had somewhat expected it, there were quite a few adventurers being extremely rowdy and ruining the atmosphere of the store.

"Does Youya dislike this kind of stores?" (Phil)

"I don't particularly hate them. But I do feel that the store is being wasted having this kind of customers despite having such a nice premise." (Youya)

If the mood is going to be destroyed anyway, then there isn't a need to make a mood in the first place. They have the option of having cheaper furnishing instead of putting in futile effort.

"It's not like that. For adventurers who have decent earnings, they come to this sort of stores for a change of pace. This store is quite popular among adventurers actually." (Phil)

"Sounds complicated." (Youya)

Truth be told, luxurious shops like this could be a popular store for adventurers. It's a special thing for adventurers to be able to afford this kind of store.

"Anyway if a person wants to properly enjoy the mood and the atmosphere, they can go to the second floor if they pay a fee. Many people who know about this often choose to pay the fee. To be honest, it would have been nice if we could go to the second floor but it looks like it has been fully booked." (Phil)

"We did come unexpectedly with the ticket. That can't be helped." (Youya)

It is better for us to remain on the first floor either way. With a noisy atmosphere, Luna and Til get to enjoy themselves fully without bothering anyone. Let's reset and enjoy the food.

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"Youya, the shrimp meat is delicious!" (Luna)

"It's so juicy. And it has a lot of volume!" (Til)

Luna and Til ate plenty of food and were thoroughly enjoying the main dish.

Tonight's main dish is a large piece of shrimp meat cooked over a frying pan similar to steak. The meat was served to us rare and has a sweet taste. Juices flowed out whenever we took a bite. The sauce that came along with it was also delicious. It was a sauce made with eggs, vinegar and oil which fit well with the meat. It is a dish that can't be replicated using ordinary shrimp due to its large mass and volume.

"Phil, this store is great. Both the food and alcohol are both first-class. I never thought I would enjoy eating it this much." (Youya)

"Right? It was much better than I imagined. The main dish was very tasty, and so are the appetizers that came before it. I feel ashamed that I have not noticed this store after living here for so long." (Phil)

I tilted the glass towards my mouth and drank the wine. As expected of such a store, its wine is first class. It's rare that I find myself enjoying the alcohol without ordering any ale. Even if I am a fan of ale, I can understand that this wine is of high quality.

"Did you enjoy yourselves?"

A grey-haired cook with broad shoulders came over to our table.

"Yeah. The food here is amazing. I've travelled all around the world and seen many different shops but not many can compare to it." (Youya)

"Thank you for your kind words. Thanks to your work, the store can continue to serve it's signature dish. I am extremely grateful." (Chef)

"That's just work. It's amazing that you guys are able to sustain having this dish as your main course. There aren't many adventurers in Rumberg that actually go to the seafloor dungeon. Even if they did, they are probably

preparing themselves to move to another town to continue leveling. It isn't easy to sustain a dish made of Shrimp Meat (Average)." (Youya)

The strongest dungeon in Rumberg is the seafloor dungeon. If anyone is able to hunt regularly in that dungeon, it is likely that they will begin to reach a plateau where they can't climb anymore in Rumberg. If they are aiming to further increase their levels, they will most likely travel to another city.

"We obtain our supply of shrimp meat from another city where the seaside dungeon is popular. Due to its popularity, the market price for Shrimp Meat (Average) is much lower at that town. Even after factoring in the transportation costs, the total price averages out about the same as purchasing directly from the local marketplace in Rumberg. However, the highway that is typically used was blocked and that route has become impassable, delaying our supply." (Chef)

The highway? If its a town with a popular seaside dungeon, that town is quite close to the next town that I plan on visiting. Something seems suspicious.

"The 40 kilos of meat that you requested doesn't seem like it'll last very long." (Youya)

Although the meat isn't in any risk of decomposing, the store has a fairly large number of customers. Assuming a single person's portion is about 200 grams, with at least 50 orders a day, the meat would only last about 4 days.

"Don't worry about that. We have been informed that the highway will be repaired in three more days. Until then, the meat you delivered will be enough to cover for the time being." (Chef)

"Ah then that's good. I was thinking of coming here again another day but I was afraid that you wouldn't have enough meat for another day." (Youya)

The chef and I laughed together as we continued to chat.

"Although I came here because of Richard's recommendation, just what is this store? There is more to enjoying a meal than just delicious food! How can someone eat in a zoo just like this?" (???)

A man bangs his fists onto the table and leaves his table heading directly to the exit.. Looking at his attire, he looks pretty wealthy.

"Please wait a moment! Waiter, I'll leave the payment on the table!" (???)

A girl with silver hair bowed towards the waiter before going after the man. She is a elegant girl. Not just by how she conducts herself, but her atmosphere feels very different from an ordinary person. She is probably a noble. While thinking to myself, my eyes crossed paths with hers. After noticing my presence, her eyes grew wide with shock before instantly reverting back to normal. Behind her were two young men who are most likely their bodyguards. Just one look and you can tell that they are professionals at their job. However, that girl is familiar. I can't seem to recall where I last saw her.

"Chef, are there too many customers today?" (Youya)

"Normally we will recommend those kinds of customers to the second floor, however the second floor is completely booked today. They did receive a warning that it will be noisy having their meals on the first floor, but this is a risk we have to take if we want to do business in Rumberg." (chef)

Just like he said, the chef is calm. It seems like this happens often depending on the business. After that, we continued to chat for awhile.

"Youya, I was surprised. Earlier, that girl who left the shop was the Laluzulu Kingdom princess. The man she went after was probably the prime minister of the kingdom. We met them for a quest back then. It looks like they were travelling incognito. I wonder what is going on?" (Phil)

"Ah I remember. So she's that princess that we met while travelling together. To think that little princess has grown so big now." (Youya)

We were quite popular as a party back then. Although our party was based in a different town, we were recommended a quest from the Laluzulu Kingdom labeled as an emergency quest. It was a terrible quest where I thought I was seriously going to die.

"Youya, our next destination is the town of Greenwood right? Isn't that town part of the Laluzulu Kingdom?" (Til)

"That's the plan. Although it is hard for us to progress at that town, there is something that can only be obtained at that town." (Youya)

"Ahh. Are you still planning to get that? We didn't manage to get that the last

time we went right?" (Phil)

"Well we'll manage somehow." (Youya)

Back in the game, there was something called a *Magic Pet*. *Magic Pets* were extremely useful as they provided support magic to the party without taking up a slot in the party. The only town where they can be obtained is Greenwood. If it's possible, I would like to have one in the party.

"If that's the case, it'll be nice if you managed to get it." (Phil)

The highway that is blocked is also close to the town. The princess and the minister even came to Rumberg incognito. There is definitely something going on.

"We'll take care. However, let's leave that talk for later. Let's enjoy ourselves now. I want to properly enjoy my date with Phil." (Youya)

"It's embarrassing if you say it like that." (Phil)

Phil pushed her glasses up in embarrassment.

I glanced over to the two girls who were completely engrossed in the food that we ordered.

The date for our departure has been set.

After completing today's quest, our levels have increased and four days from now, we will be joining the caravan heading towards Greenwood. If we miss this caravan we will have to wait for two weeks for the next caravan. Considering the matter with Leonard, I don't plan to waste a single second. Thus, we will be boarding the caravan four days from now.

We will be parting ways with Phil for awhile. That is even more reason for me to enjoy our time together now.

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We finished our dinner and we left the store.

When we were leaving the store, "I wanted to stay more" was written all over

Phil's face.

Shall I grant her wish?

"Luna,Til. Can the two of you return to the inn first? I have something to talk about with Phil about our exploration tomorrow." (Youya)

"Okay." (Luna)

"Fufu. Such an obvious lie. Youya and big sis, do your best!" (Til)

"That girl. Just where did she learn about that kind of stuff.." (Phil)

"Haha, but this time I'm glad for that. Phil. I feel like heading over to your room now." (Youya)

"It can't be help. Since Youya is perverted." (Phil)

Phil linked arms with me happily in contrast with her words.

"Soon it'll be goodbye with Youya huh." (Phil)

"You plan on finishing the matters with the guild within a month right? You can just hold back until then." (Youya)

"I did say that, but it'll be a long and lonely month.. Youya. Us elves don't believe in monogamy but please hold back as much as possible okay?" (Phil)

"It's already taking my all to look after those children, I won't have the energy for it." (Youya)

Luna and Til are still children and immature as adventurers. It's taking all my time and energy for me to look after those two. I don't have the leeway to look for other women in the meantime.

"It's Luna-chan and Til that I'm most afraid of." (Phil)

"They are still children though? It's too early for them to think about love and a partner." (Youya)

"Let me let you in on something good. Listen here. Those girls will mature faster than you expect. Just like I did. Before I knew it, I wasn't viewing Youya as an older brother anymore." (Phil)

Listening to her example I felt my body become heavier. Even if that happened to Phil, it isn't confirmed that the same thing will happen to Luna or

Til right? I'm sure she's just worried because we'll be seperated for awhile.

"Phil." (Youya)

I grabbed Phil and leaned in for a kiss. A kiss with Phil is always sweet. Let's do more tonight to make her troubles go away. While thinking that, we headed towards her room.

Chapter 2: The old man heads towards Greenwood.

Following the dinner date at the restaurant, we spent the remaining days training and raising our levels in the dungeon until the day for us to board the caravan. We are currently level 22 and it will be difficult to raise our levels in the town of beginnings any further. We will have to head for another town if we want to continue raising our levels.

"Youya, Luna enjoyed this town. Leaving it feels a bit lonely." (Luna)

Luna looks reluctant to leave the town. Currently, we are in the caravan preparing to depart from Rumberg. There are many carriages lined up and large numbers of adventurers and merchants are moving about preparing for departure. Caravans are formed when a group of merchants spend a large sum of money to hire escorts while charging other carriages to travel together, forming a journey for a large group of people to travel safely and relatively cheaply between cities.

Disregarding towns that are close together, it is dangerous to travel large distances to a distant city without a caravan. Besides monsters, there are many bandits roaming around, especially bandits that have high-level staff within them.

"You properly told my big sis about our time of departure right?" (Til)

"Yeah I did." (Youya)

"That's cold of her. Not coming to see off her younger sister and lover." (Til)

"Well the working hours of a receptionist are harsh. It can't be helped."
(Youya)

I spent the night at Phil's place yesterday. Although she looked fine, she is definitely the one who is feeling the loneliest right now. She was crying when she left for work this morning. She was the one who wanted to stay in the town until the guild recovered, but her loneliness from being reluctant to part ways is

a separate issue.

"Luna, Til. It's a shame that we won't be able to say goodbye to Phil, but let's get on the carriage. It's about time to leave." (Youya)

"Alright." (Luna)

"Nothing we can do about it. Big sis was always bad at being honest." (Til)

Til had an astonished expression as she got into the carriage.

After a few moments, the carriage starts running.

It was at that moment.

A girl with beautiful golden hair and with pale white skin that started turning red.

It was Phil, dressed in her receptionist uniform who rushed over without even changing her clothes.

She screamed out.

"Truth is I really want to be with Youya forever. I don't want to separate from you. The guild right now is insufficient, but I will spend every second to push forward it's recovery so that I can meet you again even earlier! That's why please wait for me! Also, please remember to send me letters! I will also make sure to reply them. Absolutely will!" (Phil)

When we reunited, it felt like Phil had finally become an adult. Her demeanour, her choice of words and control of emotions have become more mature. However, the Phil right now feels much like the one I knew back then. The small Phil who always hid and followed behind me.

I let out a small laugh and looked out the window.

"I'll be waiting! You better catch up to us! Thank you for supporting us as a receptionist! Thanks to Phil we had a great start as adventurers. But from now, we'll be counting on you as a companion!" (Youya)

Note: it is written as *Nakama* 仲間 in the raws. They are still lovers but what Youya meant was as a party member in case anyone is mistaken about their relationship.

The carriage began to accelerate and reached a speed where Phil became unable to keep up. Luna and Til also stuck their head out the window to thank Phil.

"Also, Youya! I've always thought that it is unfair of you to always be drinking Til's drop! Please drink my drops as well!" (Phil)

Note: Oh gawd this sounds so wrong.

Phil threw over a small glass bottle containing *Drop of the World Tree*. It is a mystical liquid that can stop a human from aging one day by taking in a single drop every morning. It is a liquid that can only be produced by female elves.

"Thank you for making this! Phil. I'll be waiting!" (Youya)

Phil kept waving her hands until she disappeared in the distance.

And this was our departure from Rumberg.

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The trip to Greenwood is estimated to last about one week.

During the trip, we performed physical conditioning during our breaks while spending our time in the carriage by studying in a classroom-format. There are many things that Luna and Til have yet to learn as adventurers. It is important to experience things directly in battle but it is also important to expand your knowledge by studying in a classroom like this.

"Lets end today's lesson here." (Youya)

"Youya, today's lesson was fun." (Luna)

"Adventurers have to learn about a lot of different things don't they." (Til)

Luna seems to enjoy the lessons but Til looks exhausted from studying all day. Luna displayed amazing concentration due to her curiosity but Til looks uncomfortable being unable to move her body during the lessons. Therefore, it is more beneficial for her to register the information given in the lessons as if we were having a conversation rather than a lesson.

"I think I have taught essentially all the foundations of being an adventurer to the two of you. However, what do you think is the biggest shortcoming of our party? Let me know what the two of you think." (Youya)

After listening to my surprise quiz, the two of them looked at each other with desperate faces and began a discussion.

Til was the first to answer my question.

"Extremely strong gear! With stronger equipment our hunting efficiency will go up!" (Til)

"Having strong gear is definitely important. However, the weapons and equipment that we obtained from the store in Rumberg is already strong enough to be first-class." (Youya)

"Che. It's wrong then. I still don't know what it could be." (Til)

Til began to go into deep thought once more.

When I looked towards Luna, her fox ears began twitching and she gave a good answer.

"Our party members. Although we can have up to four members, we only have three." (Luna)

Although Luna behaves and thinks like a child, she has an excellent memory and talent.

"Correct. It's fine if we are a beginner party, but our party is already approaching the intermediate level. That is why when we arrive at Greenwood, I intend to look for a fourth member for our party. And hopefully it will be someone who can act as a healer. Having a healer in our party is the difference between living and dying. If we don't have a healer in our party, the moment any of us gets injured in the dungeon, we would have to fall back immediately." (Youya)

Most of the enemies that we have faced against have been enemies that were easily defeated, so our problems haven't really become an issue but from this point onward the absence of a healer will be noticeable. Since we will be facing powerful enemies in the future, the inability to fight drawn-out battles

will become an even larger problem.

"Hurray! Correct answer! Youya, praise me." (Luna)

I caught Luna's head and began patting her. Looking at this scene, Til shook her head calmly.

"I'm against it. Shouldn't our fourth member be my elder sister? We don't need a fourth." (Til)

I smiled wryly. Til is a kind sister who is constantly thinking of her elder sister.

"Don't worry about it. There is a certain item that exists which allows us to increase the number of party members by one. We will aim to get one in the future before Phil joins us. However, because both Phil and Til are *Spirit Archers*, a healer is still essential for our party. I'm Phil's lover, I am properly thinking about her." (Youya)

"Really? In that case, the next party member should be a man! That way Youya won't be able to cheat on my elder sister." (Til)

"No. The fourth member must be a woman." (Youya)

Mistakes are likely to occur when a party has an equal number of male and females in the dungeon. Furthermore, Luna and Til are beautiful girls who are also young and naive. It is highly likely that depending on the person's personality, they will force or convince them to do something bad.

I will absolutely not allow another man to join the party.

"Uwahh, Youya is making a scary face." (Til)

"Uhn. This is the first time seeing such a face." (Luna)

"Anyways. The last member will be a woman." (Youya)

That is the line that I draw. As long as Luna and Til are around, we will not have another male party member.. Is what I want to do but with this many restrictions it will be hard to find a fourth party member at Greenwood. Having a healer who is a woman conveniently waiting for us in Greenwood is impossible. However, we will never find one if we don't search for it. I will try my best to find one while we are in Greenwood.

I looked out the window at the scenery and took a deep breath.

I see, we have already arrived here.

I opened the window

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

"Look at the greenery!" (Til)

"Looks similar to the Elf village!" (Til)

The scenery was green all around. The road to Greenwood was made by cutting out a path in the forest. It is a town that is surrounded by a forest and all the dungeons are similar in that they are all integrated with vegetation as well.

"Greenwood's dungeons are filled with forests. Normally it will be hard to even walk, but there are even many places for monsters to hide. These two factors make it a very hard dungeon." (Youya)

"That is Luna's specialty!" (Luna)

"fufufu. I am an Elf you know. A forest is basically my garden!" (Til)

Looks like I didn't need to worry about the two of them. As expected of a fox and an elf. An opening in the forest appeared and beyond that opening, it appeared.

A town with a beautiful waterway system, and stone buildings that harmonize with nature appeared.

It was the town of green and water, Greenwood, the most beautiful town in the world.

"Youya, that town is beautiful." (Luna)

"Uhn. I like the view too. Although it isn't completely natural, the town has adopted a natural look. It's a wonderful city. I'm glad that we came here." (Til)

Til was pleased with the aesthetic of the town.

"Luna, Til. There is a reason why we are coming to Greenwood. Although it is a simple task for us to raise our levels, our main goal in the town is to obtain something." (Youya)

If our only goal was to raise our level, there are many other towns which has better dungeons for us to level. However, I chose Greenwood as there are other objectives which we have to complete.

"I'm curious. Tell me." (Luna)

"Uhn. I'm curious as well." (Til)

The two girls were staring at me with "I want to know" written all over their face. There isn't any reason for me to keep it from them any longer.

"It's to obtain a *Magic Pet* for our party. There are special trees in the dungeon here that are called a *God Tree*. Those trees are the only location where a magic egg can be obtained. In other words, it's the only place to obtain a *Magic Pet*. And this time we will definitely get the egg!" (Youya)

"Uhn. Luna wants a pet!" (Luna)

"We'll have to think of a name from now on!" (Til)

The two of them readily agreed with me without even considering that we have not gotten the egg yet. *Magic Pets* are indeed cute but they are also an important factor in our party's overall strength so I definitely want to get it. However, it is much harder than they think. Only one of the countless *God trees* in the dungeon will be spawning an egg and the spawn only happens once a year every January. There will only be one egg for countless number of adventurers who desire the same thing. Just by obtaining that one egg, as long as it hatches safely into a *Magic Pet*, it can be said that the party will effectively have an extra member which provides supportive magic without taking up a slot. This is the reason why even high-level adventurers participate in this once a year event.

In order to obtain the egg, we will have to obtain the egg before the rest of the competition. That is why my previous party gave up trying to obtain the egg. However, this time our chances of locating the egg will be almost guaranteed due to Luna's exploration skills and my knowledge of my past life. If we have these two factors, it won't be difficult to obtain the magic egg. We will definitely beat the competition and get the egg.

Chapter 3: Even the old man is angry

After passing the level 20 mark, we changed our base of operations from Rumberg to the beautiful town of Greenwood where the recommended level of dungeons are between level 20 and 30. Our plan is to remain here and raise our levels until we are level 30, however that isn't our main objective. The main objective is to obtain the egg which will hatch into a *Magic Pet*.

"The air feels great here." (Luna)

"Uhn. It has the same feeling as the elf village." (Til)

Luna and Til were in high spirits as they entered the town. I understand what they are feeling whenever you enter a foreign town, being unable to control your excitement when experiencing something new. The town has blended perfectly with nature, with waterways filled with clear water running throughout the town and spreading out into the fertile soil in the area.

"Has Youya travelled to this town in the past?" (Til)

"I didn't but I am familiar with the town." (Youya)

I visited this town as a player back when it was just a game, but I have never visited this town even once as an adventurer. Whenever an adventurer obtains a *Magic Pet* from one of the *God Trees* in the dungeon, word gets around very quickly. Back then we had planned to drop by Greenwood after completing the quest at the Laluzulu Kingdom, however there were far too many adventurers competing for the one egg that will spawn sometime during the month.

We couldn't estimate how long it would take us to obtain the egg and in the end, we decided to go to a town with better dungeons rather than Greenwood.

"If you are familiar with the town then it's fine. Youya, is there an inn with delicious food around here?" (Til)

"Yeah yeah it'll be great if we could find an inn with delicious food. It'll be quite miserable if their food wasn't good." (Luna)

That is what you are worried about?

I smiled bitterly.

"Don't worry about that. Phil recommended me a few places, so there is no worry about the accommodation." (Youya)

There are many adventurers from around the world that travel from town to town. More often than not, those adventurers would visit the guild in the town that they visited, and the people who have the most contact with these adventurers are the receptionists. It is easy for Phil to gain information about other towns being a popular receptionist. In addition, Phil is a good cook. She will definitely consider the food when choosing an inn. Even more so when Luna and Til are gluttons. If we stick to Phil's advice, we will definitely not be disappointed about the food.

Well if we consider the number of inns that are willing to take care of *Raptor*, the number of inns available becomes limited. Although there hasn't been many opportunities to ride *Raptor* recently, I just can't bear to let go of a precious buddy.

"Youya, let's go. My stomach is growling." (Luna)

"Me too. I want to eat a proper meal. I'm sick of hard bread with cheese and preserved meat." (Til)

"I'm hungry too. Although the journey with the caravan was safe, the meals were depressing. Since it's been a while, let's have a feast to enjoy ourselves." (Youya)

We headed towards the inn for three people.

It'll be nice if the inn has nice food.

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Based on the results, the meal at the inn was delicious.

Greenwood is surrounded by fertile soil and nature, the vegetables were

delicious as well.

Even Luna who typically only eats meat were saying that the vegetables are delicious. The meat here tasted normal, however when eaten with the vegetables, made the meat taste exceptionally good.

After placing our belongings in the inn and taking a break, we left the inn.

"Having this kind of luxurious adventure, I never would have expected it when I left the village." (Til)

"Was it difficult when you began adventuring Youya?" (Luna)

"Ah. When I became an adventurer, I didn't have money for anything, I couldn't afford any weapons not to mention accommodation." (Youya)

I was an orphan that grew up without knowing or meeting my birth parents. Until I was 12, I stayed in an orphanage. Once an orphan became an adult at the age of 12, they would have to leave the orphanage and find a way to survive on their own. Especially for orphans, since it is difficult for us to get a job in the first place, we had no choice but to become an adventurer.

"Youya, if you didn't have a weapon how did you defeat monsters? If you didn't go to an inn, where did you sleep?" (Luna)

"One way or another. In my case, when I started I used a stone as a weapon. You could throw it or attack them with it. It is surprisingly effective to attack their heads with a rock and it was a convenient weapon as well. Afterwards, when I was exploring a dungeon, I encountered an adventurer who had just died in an encounter and took his equipment and weapons which made hunting easier. For accommodation... Well there were several options. Usually I would sneak into the stables to hide from the weather or ask the church for help." (Youya)

Inns in these world were a luxury and was something that only most successful adventurers could afford. If a similar situation were to occur in Japan, it would be similar to travelling around in Japan staying in a hotel everyday. Having a place where it's safe with a warm and soft bed to sleep on, Luna and Til who had such things right from the start were blessed.

"I didn't know it was like that at all." (Luna)

"You wouldn't know about it unless I told you about it. In order to earn a profit, there are many ways to do it. Back then, it was simply not spending money on accommodations to earn a profit from hunting." (Youya)

In order to earn money, you would have to defeat monsters. To defeat monsters you will need weapons and equipment. To get equipment would require funding, in other words money. The cycle will never start if you had to start from the bottom. To climb out of poverty, I had to abandon the idea of living comfortably and collected money in order to obtain strong equipment. Having such a vicious environment, it is natural that many adventurers will die in the process.

"Youya, Luna is embarrassed. I had been enjoying myself and having fun without realising it. I will properly experience what everyone experiences. I will sleep in the stable instead of the inn!" (Luna)

"I'm glad that you feel that way. But letting a cute girl like you sleep in the stables at night will make me too anxious to sleep at night." (Youya)

Luna's face turned red.

"Til, Youya said that Luna was cute." (Luna)

"U~waa, cheating on my big sis you playboy." (Til)

"I didn't mean it that way, if Til were to say the same thing I would give the same reply." (Youya)

"Hurray. That's mistress number 2! Luna, let's do our best!" (Til)

Luna tilted her head. It seems like she doesn't quite understand what Til is talking about. Til is the kind of girl who would often joke about that kind of stuff but is the first one to escape when someone makes a move on her. If the situation permits, I should let her experience what's it like on the receiving end. It's fine if she continues to behave like this when the other party is me, but if she behaves like this towards other adventurers, the outcome may become irreversible.

Note: I am unsure about this part, so if anyone can confirm the translation please correct me.

この子は耳年増だがいざ攻められると逃げるタイプだ。

これ以上からかってくるなら、一度はほどほどに痛い目を見せたほうがいいだろう。

俺が相手ならいいが、他の冒険者に同じことをしたら取り返しがつかないことになりかねない。

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We finally arrived at the guild. As compared to Rumberg, there weren't as many adventurers in the guild but there were still quite a number of people who came for the magic egg. Not only people who wanted it for fighting power, but there were many people who wanted the egg for resale purposes. Frankly speaking, it is much easier to obtain the egg by waiting for someone to sell it on the auction as it fetches a high price.

However that wouldn't be interesting, it will be much more interesting if we tried our best to obtain the egg rather than waiting for the easy option.

"Luna,Til. I'm going to register our party at the counter, both of you head over to the bar to wait for me." (Youya)

There is also a bar in the guild that is perfect for killing time.

"Okay. We'll wait." (Luna)

"Finish it quickly and come back alright." (Til)

Although we aren't obliged to register as an official party, there are many merits to registering as an official party. Completed quests will be shown in the records, making it easier to recommend our party for quests. It is essentially required for us to register whenever we change our base of operations.

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I arrived at the receptionist desk. The receptionist lady was a woman who

looked slightly overweight with an unfriendly attitude and a monotonous tone. I had always been dealing with Phil as my receptionist so having this kind of treatment feels unsatisfactory.

"A *Magic Knight*.. ?" (Receptionist)

She had a look of disbelief similar to the other adventurers back when I chose to be a *Magic Knight*. It wasn't common for anybody to choose *Magic Knight* as their class in this world.

"Ah, but I have been doing a good job. This is a list of the quest I completed in Rumberg." (Youya)

The list was prepared by Phil when she was handling our quests. By going through the procedures, we would be able to bring along our achievements when travelling to a different town. It was a troublesome and time-consuming process, but it will make our lives easier in the future.

"I don't believe it. Achieving so much in this short amount of time, it's a terrifying pace." (Receptionist)

"It's the truth. It was signed by the guild." (Youya)

"Please excuse my behaviour. I will let you know when an emergency quest comes up." (Receptionist)

"If there is the opportunity, then I'll be the guild's strength." (Youya)

The guild's job is to increase the rate of completed quest to raise their own reputation. Although a receptionist's job is to guide adventurers as much as possible, it is also their job to allocate difficult quests to adventurers who are capable of completing them and increase the guild's overall achievements.

Well there are also exclusive adventurers like I was, so there is a limit to the quests that they can give to normal adventurers.

"Going straight to the point, are there any quests that can be completed by level 25 or below adventurers?" (Youya)

Let's have an explosive start for our first day at Greenwood. I'll like to keep our fighting spirits as high as possible until the hunt for the magic egg.

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There were quite a few decent quests available at the guild. Furthermore, the quests could be completed in the forest dungeon containing the *God Trees* making it convenient. Truth is, there is a place in the forest of *God Trees* where a hint can be obtained about which tree will be spawning the magic egg. If possible, I would like to head over there as soon as possible. The quest reward is also quite good. Although we have quite a bit saved up, our money is also being burnt quickly just due to the accommodation. I'll like to earn as much as we can even if it's just a little.

After completing the procedures, I headed towards the bar in the guild. In the bar, there was a scene about an invitation.

"You girls are cute and have a decent level, I will make a special case for you and let you into our party." (Guy no.1)

"You see, we were just in a predicament where we are having trouble having just the two of us in our party." (Guy no.2)

Luna and Til were being given an invitation to join a bunch of intermediate level adventurers in a group called Gala. Such scenes are common in the bar.

They said that they only had two people in their party, but it is most likely because the other two had died in the dungeon. They are most likely playing around with their words. However, there aren't any adventurers who would join another party just because their numbers fit coincidentally. There is nothing more dangerous than having incompetent party members.

"We have Youya in our party, so we decline." (Luna)

"Yeah yeah! Plus you uncles are looking at us with perverted eyes. It's scary you know." (Til)

The two of them strongly refused their invitation, however the two men were persistent. Their ulterior motives were written all over their faces. If they accepted their invitations, they are highly likely to be pinned down instantly the moment they are in an isolated area in the dungeon. Thanks to the nature of the occupation, there are many deplorable men like them. I could understand if

it was a beautiful and mature woman, but lusting after Luna and Til who were around 13 and 14 years old is revolting. Just when did adventurers become lolicons?

I should step in and prevent the situation from escalating.

"I'll have you two stop right there. These two are in my party." (Youya)
"Youya!" (Luna)

"You are slow!" (Til)

The two girls immediately hid behind my back. They were much more frightened than I thought. Although if it came to ability, the two of them could easily defeat the two of them. Even so, I guess there is the fear present when a girl is confronted by a man.

"Ah? Don't interrupt our flirting session old man." (Guy no.1?)

"So this old man is Youya? Get out of here old man. If you aren't here we have a perfect party of four. It's a good idea isn't it? Get out of the party old man."
(Guy no.2)

The two of them laughed heartily and reek of alcohol. I could just let them off with a warning, but if words won't get through to them. I'll have to resort to force.

"I will not be letting go of these kids. They are my precious companions. If you are adventurers, then I'm sure you understand that we won't let our friends go that easily." (Youya)

"We understand you old man!" (Guy no.1)

It's settled, I'll beat them into submission. I could easily dodge their punches but it's more convenient for me to beat them up if they were the ones who attacked first. I can take any abuse, whether physical or verbal towards myself, and laugh about it afterwards. This hasn't changed ever since I was born. However, they frightened Luna and Til, and that can't be forgiven. They will receive their just rewards.

When his fists approaches my cheek, I twist my neck reducing the impact from his fist and guiding his fist past my cheek. A solid impact could be heard. It

looked like a direct hit but there was almost no damage taken. With this, I have a legitimate excuse for defending myself. Now its time for punishment.

The moment I thought about counterattacking, the atmosphere in the bar became several degrees colder from blood lust. Someone's fist struck the man's solar plexus, blowing him away and knocking away several tables behind him into the wall. The man began coughing blood as his eyes turned white. It was a perfect hit and the ringing belonging to a critical hit could be heard. Following the source of the sound, I saw Luna clenching her fist. I hadn't taught Luna how to battle without a dagger yet so I was surprised that she could throw such a punch.

"You hurt Luna's Youya. Luna won't forgive you." (Luna)

"eek." (Guy no.2)

The other man lets out a pitiful scream while Luna's eyes were filled with blood lust. At this rate, she will seriously kill him. I let out a bitter smile and pat her head.

"Calm down. I'm fine. There's no reason for me to take that blow head on, I had properly deflected the blow." (Youya)

"Youya!" (Luna)

Luna jumped into my chest thinking that I was seriously injured from the guy's punch.

"Our Luna seems to have gone too far, but you guys were the ones who decided to pick a fight so we're even. However, if you're up to it, we could continue the fight." (Youya)

I started talking to the man's companion and it seems that he was extremely unsettled by the situation, but he seems to understand my words.

"Aaa,ah." (Guy no.2)

"There was a horrible cracking sound from your friend, be sure to take him to the hospital." (Youya)

After getting frightened by Luna, the man carried his friend who passed out and left the guild.

"Looks like we got involved with a bunch of weird men. Let's forget about it and head to the dungeon. We can still become much stronger." (Youya)

"Uhn. Leave it to me! Somehow it felt like I managed to do a critical with that blow." (Luna)

Luna was able to land a critical blow using her fists without any training. It looks like Luna has managed to learn the fundamentals of basic martial arts or something equivalent.\

"That is amazing. Let's enter the dungeon with Luna as the main attacker! Be sure to remember how that critical felt." (Youya)

"I'm super ready, let's go!" (Luna)

It was unfortunate that we got caught up in the situation earlier, however since Luna benefitted from that skirmish, it should be fine.

"Also, thanks for being angry for me." (Youya)

"Uhn. Of course. Luna likes Youya after all!" (Luna)

Luna proudly puffed up her chest and her fox tail was shaking vigorously from being praised.

Her attitude was so amusing I couldn't help but laugh. Putting the incident behind us, let's make our first hunt in Greenwood a successful one to remember. Then we can prepare for the real competition to obtain the egg and gain information about the egg's spawn.

Chapter 4: The old man enters the Forest of God Trees

Our first dungeon in the beautiful town of Greenwood is the dungeon where the Magic Egg can be obtained, the forest of *God Trees*.

There are two reasons why we came to this dungeon.

First would be to collect Pork (Average) for a quest that we accepted. Pork (Average) can be obtained by defeating the *Horned Boars* that can be commonly found in this forest.

Second, we have to look for any hints or information about the spawn location of the Magic Egg. Sometime this month, out of the numerous *God Trees* present in this forest, only one of them will spawn the Magic Egg. Back in the game era, we had to battle against a party of 5 non player characters (NPCs) in order to obtain the hint, but it was still possible to obtain the egg without a hint.

However, the scale this time is much different. There are at least 50 other parties competing for the egg, with over 200 opponents. We won't be able to guarantee our victory without having any advantage over that number of opponents, at least not without knowing which tree out of the hundreds that will spawn an egg. Especially when there are adventurers who have been here numerous times to obtain the egg. Those adventurers are likely able to grasp when the egg will spawn based on their past experiences. We could obtain information from them by eavesdropping on their conversations, however that information could be unreliable to throw off any other potential competitors that they are expecting to be listening.

Thus, it is more reliable to obtain information on our own. From the beginning, if you are capable enough, you will be able to obtain information about the spawn without leaking any information. In the location where you can obtain this information, the monsters provide a decent amount of experience points and have valuable drop items and equipment as well, making

it an extremely efficient place to train and hunt.

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"Youya, there are so many people here." (Luna)

"Ugh, at this rate there won't be any prey for us." (Til)

There were many people in the forest of *God Trees* who were frantically looking around for the Magic Egg. Only a handful of adventurers can estimate the day when the Magic Egg will spawn, however other clueless adventurers are desperately searching and investigating each *God Tree* hoping to find some signs that could lead them to the egg. In addition, many of these adventurers are hunting monsters while searching for the egg. As a result, the number monsters in the dungeon were rapidly dwindling. The quest was probably issued around this period knowing that drop items would be easily available due to the large number of adventurers hunting.

"It's alright. There is a place where a lot of monsters are still around." (Youya)

If you were a perfectly sane person, it is a place where you will never enter. Unless you are attempting suicide, that place is a perfect location to hunt monsters in the current season. It is also the place where it is possible to get information about the magic egg spawn. We would be able to raise our level, complete the quest while obtaining information about the egg. We would be able to kill three birds with one stone.

"Amazing, Youya. Let's hurry up and head there!" (Luna)

"That's right. We won't be able to make a decent hunt in this kind of place." (Til)

"Ah, you're right." (Youya)

I smiled bitterly at their responses. If the two of them knew what the entrance to the location was, the two of them would definitely be filled with terror.

At that moment, we could hear whispering among the other adventurers, and the chance for our hunt to start had appeared. The surrounding adventurers

began to scream.

"Uwaaaaaaaaaaa, It's here, the devourer of the forest."

"Run away!"

"It's a *God Tree*! Run to the *God Trees*! It's the only thing that it will not eat!"

The ground began to tremor as it appeared. A giant caterpillar with a body length of about 30 metres. It's main body is divided into around ten segments covered with a green-coloured shell resembling the larva of a citrus swallowtail butterfly. It's body was covered with a pattern resembling a large eye that looks poisonous and inflicts fear into anyone that looks into it.

It's legs aren't visible so it's uncertain how it is moving, but based on the vibrations of the ground, it is likely that there are multiple small legs carrying it's large body. However, what makes it even more terrifying is it's large mouth. Its mouth was capable of reaching from one *God Tree* to another, swallowing everything in its path. Whether it was the earth, monsters or mere stone, nothing was spared. It was the monster unique to the Forest of *God Trees*, the *Starfish Larvae*. It is a symbiote of the *God Trees* that devours everything around the *God Trees*.

Note: I don't understand it's name nor can I find out through the dictionary so I'm going with google translate on this one.

In this world, it was thought that nothing couldn't be defeated. There were twenty pairs of level 50 adventurers who attempted to defeat the *Starfish Larvae* and after a close battle, with only 5 survivors, they managed to defeat it. Normally, defeating powerful monsters would yield strong materials and amazing drop items. I can understand their sentiments of wanting to defeat the monster as it isn't easy to encounter this level of monster often. After they defeated the monster, apparently there were many drop items that could had fetched a high price. There were materials made of its outer shell and eye that could be used to make powerful equipment. In addition, there were rare magic swords and magic armors that were dropped. It isn't an understatement to say that the quality of drop items was very high.

However, the rewards for defeating the monster wasn't worth the effort to defeat it. The price for defeating the monster was the lives of 35 first-class

adventurers. There isn't any treasure that could be worth that sacrifice. Furthermore, the battle didn't end there.

After the *Starfish Larvae* was defeated, its green shell began turning red, its eyes shifted upwards, appearing to grow larger and more violent. As if it was enraged, the monster began rampaging throughout the dungeon for an entire week. The dungeon became uninhabitable until its rampage was over and no one could enter the dungeon. Surprisingly, at the end of the week it returned to the typical *Starfish Larvae* and it became possible to return to the forest of *God Trees*.

If the normal *Starfish Larvae* could drop such high-quality items, there is the possibility that the enraged *Starfish Larvae* would drop even better items. There are even rumors spreading that there are special benefits that can be obtained for the *Tower of Trials* by defeating the enraged *Starfish Larvae*. However, the rumor was never confirmed as no one was willing to test it. There were no adventurers insane enough to attempt to defeat the enraged *Starfish Larvae*.

Since I possessed the knowledge of the game in my previous life, I can remember clearly what were the rewards gained by defeating the enraged *Starfish Larvae*. The rewards were as amazing as the rumors put it out to be, however just like the first battle, the compensation for defeating the monster was massive as well. Back then, the entire party could easily be revived so there were no actual casualties. However, attempting it now would merely be suicide. It was common to revive and retry the battle multiple times until it was defeated. That was how powerful the enraged *Starfish Larvae* was.

It is a simple task to escape from the normal *Starfish Larvae*. So long as they aren't coerced into their enraged state, they have the characteristic of never harming the *God Trees*, making it easy for people to stick to the trees in order to escape from the monster.

"Uwaaa, it looks disgusting." (Til)

"Youya. Can't stop trembling.. It's too strong," (Luna)

Although their responses are slightly different, both of them feared the *Starfish Larvae* albeit for different reasons. That is troubling as it is the key for us to enter the hunting ground.

"Both of you follow closely behind me." (Youya)

"Youya, wait a moment. You are walking in the direction of the bug." (Luna)

"You'll get eaten!" (Til)

Although the two of them often followed my instructions silently, the two of them voiced out their opinions this time, telling me to stop.

"Of course I'll get eaten. The reason I came here was to be eaten by that thing. Truth is, it's stomach is the best hunting ground in this entire dungeon. Plus there are many treasures as well. I understand that both of you are scared, but if you don't want to enter then the two of you can head back to the inn."
(Youya)

I laughed as I stood in front of the insect. After a few moments, Luna came up to my side.

"Luna will always be with Youya. That is why Luna believes in Youya." (Luna)

Although she said some brave words, her tail was trembling to the maximum. I guess it's that terrifying for her.

"It can't be help. I'll come too. Because Youya said so, then even if I think it's impossible I'll follow you." (Til)

Til walked to my side. Although she laughed and appeared to be brave, both her voice and her legs were trembling.

"Both of you, thank you for believing in me. Tonight's dinner will be on me, so you two can order whatever you like." (Youya)

Normally the two of them would be jumping in joy to my words, however the two of them don't have the strength to do so right now. The tremors became stronger as the *Starfish Larvae* approached closer and closer until it was directly in front of us. Looking at it up close, a monster 30 metres in length is impressive. Luna and my right and Til on my left, I could feel their entire bodies trembling as they clung tightly onto my arms. Its mouth was open as it moved forward, eating everything in its path. It was large enough to be capable of swallowing the three of us whole. And finally, it ate us.

"uhn!? AAAAAAAAAA" (Luna)

"KYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA" (Til)

Luna and Til who were holding tightly onto me closed their eyes and began screaming as we got swallowed by the *Starfish Larvae*. And our surroundings faded to darkness.

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I opened my eyes and my surroundings were covered in darkness.

"Where is this place? Is this heaven? Youya, I can't see anything." (Luna)

"Uggg, are we dead? I wish I could had the courage to experience my first time before dying." (Til)

Luna and Til were clinging onto me while saying ridiculous things. I took out a light crystal from the hidden room out of my magic bag and tied it onto my forehead with a string. Unlike a normal torch, it doesn't run out. It was very bright and lit up quite a large area around us plus it was safe to touch. Back then, I thought that it would be very useful when traversing in dungeons underground and only took five of them. It wasn't possible to take the light crystals back in the game, but I'm glad that it was possible to be used this way so I'll show my appreciation.

"It isn't anything like heaven. This is the *Starfish Larvae's* stomach. It's stomach is actually in a different dimension. Take a look at our surroundings." (Youya)

With the light crystal illuminating our surroundings, we were inside a labyrinth with stone walls all around us. The road was about 5 metres wide and the end could not be seen. Although the *Starfish Larvae* is a large monster about 30 metres long, it is impossible for the labyrinth to fit within its body.

The entrance to the hidden dungeon was the mouth of the *Starfish Larvae*. As a matter of fact, the *Starfish Larvae* isn't considered a monster but a biological weapon created by God. Passing through its mouth transfers you to a different dimension. This fact wouldn't be discovered by any ordinary adventurer in the

first place. Anyway, there isn't any reason for anyone to risk their life and it was easy to avoid getting eaten by the *Starfish Larvae* by sticking onto the God Tree. If there was anything that is considered a trap in this dungeon, it would be getting eaten by the *Starfish Larvae* when it is enraged as you wouldn't be transported into this dungeon and will be sent directly to it's stomach instead.

Luna and Til looked around the surroundings illuminated by the light crystal.

"Uwa, a gigantic maze." (Luna)

"This is the place Youya is talking about right?" (Til)

"Youya, there are many signs of monsters around us. Goblins, wild boars and insects." (Luna)

"Any monsters that are eaten by him will also be sent to this dungeon. We will hunt the monsters here as he eats every monster in the dungeon." (Youya)

For adventurers in the forest of *God Trees*, it is a competition to see who will be able to hunt the most prey in a short amount of time. However, if you are able to enter this hidden dungeon, you will be able to hunt to your heart's content.

"But Youya, how are we supposed to get out of here?" (Luna)

"There are two ways. First is to use a return stone, although that is a waste of a return stone. Second is to conquer this labyrinth. At the end of the maze, there is a magical vortex that brings us to the exit of the dungeon." (Youya)

"In that case, there is only one answer! We will defeat the monsters here and get a ton of materials while searching for the exit!" (Til)

"That is so. Although we have the light crystal, the visibility in this area is still terrible so let's progress with caution." (Youya)

"Uhn. I understand!" (Luna)

"Fufufu. Don't underestimate the power of an elf's jade eyes! My jade eyes can see even in complete darkness!" (Til)

"Oh that's right. Phil was the same way as well. That is enviable" (Youya)

The jade eyes that have the ability to see long distances, night vision and clairvoyance that every adventurer envies.

"Let's hurry up and clear the labyrinth. There is a curse placed onto this maze where our bodies will steadily become heavier the longer we stay here. The curse will only activate after half a day and walking will become difficult after a day. Eventually, we won't be able to move and we will likely die after three days. This is the reason why the information present here is hidden from the public as many people often lose their lives before they managed to escape the maze." (Youya)

Their bodies froze up after listening to my warning.

Not only is it difficult for adventurers to discover that the entrance of the dungeon was the *Starfish Larvae's* mouth, but it is difficult for them to even escape the dungeon to let this information be known. Many adventurers who have entered this dungeon have not lived to tell the tale. A labyrinth within complete darkness with a complex maze to conquer. In the first place, it is difficult to even walk around in this darkness. Above that, there are many monsters present in this dungeon that are capable of detecting our location through sound and their sense of smell, making it difficult for normal adventurers to fight an unfavourable battle where they are robbed of their sight.

To sum everything up, people who have been "eaten" by the *Starfish Larvae* will find themselves teleported into complete darkness, while those who somehow have a light source with them will have a higher chance of surviving the dungeon. However, only those who are lucky enough to have the rare and expensive *Return Stone* will be able to live. Other than them, the others are likely to perish in this dungeon due to the curse. In our case, we came prepared knowing the mechanics of the dungeon and how to enter the dungeon. For us who know about the curse and environment of the dungeon, and are able to prepare for it, this dungeon will turn into a delicious dungeon with plenty of monsters for us to hunt. Aside from monsters, there are also many treasure chests as well as the gear from dead adventurers present, making it a very profitable dungeon. As a reward for clearing this difficult dungeon, there will always be a stone monument before the exit which provides information about where and when the egg will spawn.

"Luna, Til. There isn't a dungeon that gets any better than this! Let's enjoy the

hunt to the fullest and enjoy a feast tonight!" (Youya)

Now, let's raise our spirits and break through this difficult dungeon. Let's aim to cover enough distance before we become too immobile to exit. Otherwise, we'll have to use our *Return Stones*.

Chapter 5: The old man rescues the princess

After being eaten by the *Starfish Larvae*, we were teleported into a hidden dungeon and began to explore the labyrinth within the dungeon. The *Starfish Larvae* is a being that eats everything including monsters, the monsters that we encountered inside the dungeon were all monsters that was eaten by the *Starfish Larvae*. However, it wasn't all smooth sailing inside the dungeon. A unique trait of underground labyrinth type dungeons is that they do not have very good visibility. In addition there is a curse placed on the dungeon where your body will begin to become heavier after half a day, causing you to have difficulties in walking just after one day. And after three days, your life will be forfeit. Although it looks like the labyrinth is inside the body of the *Starfish Larvae*, the labyrinth is extremely huge, much larger than its actual body.

Even a first-rate party will take at least six hours to clear the dungeon. For our current party, we should be able to clear the dungeon within 10 hours, if there aren't any unexpected incidents.

Luna's fox ears began twitching and her movements changed.

"Youya, I can sense a monster at the turn ahead. Feels like a boar monster."
(Luna)

Looks like we found our prey right from the get go. It's time to hunt.

"Is the prey asleep? If it's asleep then Luna will go alone. Erase your presence and approach it cautiously without waking him up. Usually all boar-type monsters have a weak point between their brows." (Youya)

"Leave it to Luna. Luna will go now!" (Luna)

Luna began to run towards the target. Although she was running on the stone pavement in an enclosed area, I couldn't hear any sound at all. Her unique trait as a fox allows her to land softly on the ground while running, producing no sound at all. This was a demonstration of her talent at work Luna did not bring along a light crystal with her as she is able to detect the monster's location and

the surroundings with *Presence Detection*, akin to having a radar of the surroundings within her head. That is why she is able to locate the monster without a light source. It was also easier for her to land a surprise attack.

I heard a ringing sound unique to landing a critical hit and Luna came back. It seems that it was successful.

"Youya, the drop item is a meat. Pork (Average)" (Luna)

"Well done, it's an item that we need for our quest. Now, let's continue."
(Youya)

"Uhn. Luna will continue to assassin!" (Luna)

That is a good sign for our start. Let's continue on at this pace.

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From that point onwards, Luna and Til both played an active role to our success as they were not affected by the darkness in the labyrinth. For Luna who is able to sense her surroundings with *Presence Detection* and Til who possessed the jade eyes unique to elves, the dark surroundings was actually advantageous to them. Thanks to that, I didn't have a chance to participate at all.

"Youya,Til. A herd of boars are coming over here! We can't see them because it's dark but they are extremely close." (Luna)

"Ah. If it's a group of them my bow won't be that useful." (Til)

Til began chanting after Luna's warning was issued. A couple of seconds later, a herd of wild boars appeared in front of us. Til fired arrows at the herd while continuing her chant. Thanks to the special ability of the class exclusive to elves, she is able to fire arrows while simultaneously chanting a spell, allowing her to have twice the firepower of a standard class.

After several tens of seconds, Til completed her chant and casted the advanced magic *Heavenly Thunder*, the only area of attack spell that our party had. Numerous lightning bolts descended onto the herd, striking the entire herd

altogether.

""GAGUUUUU""

The electrified wild boars screamed as the lightning bolts struck. However, the monsters here were around level 25, it wasn't a level where they would be taken out by attack. Those that were damaged beforehand by Til's arrows collapsed, however those that were still alive were placed under paralysis from the lightning bolts. While they had their movements sealed, arrows flew towards them. However there were still many of them alive and it is impossible for us to handle all of them with just Til's arrows. Some of them who had their paralysis wear off began charging towards Til. Luna and I intercepted the charging boars.

"*Bash.*" (Youya)

"*Assassinate.*" (Luna)

Bash is a skill that doesn't have any special effects but it has a high attacking power with efficient fuel consumption while Luna released *Assassinate* which has a high attack power when landing a critical hit. Similarly, both of us landed attacks onto the weak point of the *Horned Boars* between it's eyebrows, releasing a ringing sound. After finishing off one boar, we quickly moved on to the next. Thanks to the damage taken from Til's ranged attacks, we were able to defeat each of them with a single blow. Shortly after, the entire herd was annihilated.

"We did it! We have plenty of meat!" (Luna)

"Fufufu. Youya, it's fine to praise me you know! After all I was almost able to defeat all of them by myself!" (Til)

With high spirits, Luna and Til ran towards the herd of *Horned Boars* to pick up the Pork (Average) dropped around everywhere, placing them inside their magic bags.

Looking at the ground in front of them, I felt cold sweat flowing down my back.

"Don't move!!" (Youya)

I shouted at the top of my lungs, however they were slow in reacting due to their excitement from the recent victory. If this goes on....

"Haah!" (Youya)

I pushed open the door and my body was covered in the white aura. I focused the white aura around my body onto my legs and stepped in using the high-speed movement skill *Ground Shrink*, grabbing their collars and throwing them behind me. Luna and Til landed on ground with a loud slam as I couldn't afford to spend any time to soften their landing.

After confirming their safety, I closed the door and the white aura dissipates. I can't afford to leave the door open for too long and risk losing my stamina here.

"Youya, it hurts." (Luna)

"Ugh, I think my butt is swollen." (Til)

The two of them stared at me grudgingly.

"I apologise, but I had no choice. Take a look." (Youya)

I picked up the body of a *Horned Boar* that was on the verge of death and threw it onto the floor ahead of us which had a slightly different colour.

The ground opened up and the dying boar fell through the hole. After awhile, the sound of fleshing being pierced could be heard. Luna and Til peeked into the pitfall. At the bottom of the pitfall, spears were lined up with the *Horned Boar* pierced between several spears.

"This pitfall was designed to work against adventurers. If the weight above the trap is too heavy or too light it won't activate. Earlier, the herd of boars were too heavy and the trap didn't activate, but under both of your weights the trap will definitely activate. The two of you should have the mentality that every labyrinth-type dungeons will have a trap." (Youya)

It is commonly known that labyrinth-type dungeons have traps that are targeted specifically at adventurers, however it seems that the two of them made the rookie mistake of advancing forward without caution due to their excitement. There weren't many traps present in the beginner dungeons at Rumberg, but there will be many more traps present in dungeons once you hit

the intermediate level.

Although, placing such a trap in a dungeon with low visibility is just bad taste. This is the reason why the survival rate of adventurers in the *Starfish Larvae* is so low.

"That was close. If we fell then Luna would had died." (Luna)

"Uwah. What is this? It's so scary." (Til)

Both of their faces turned blue and the ground in front of us rumbled before closing again.

"Youya, the battle earlier raised our levels and there are skill points. *Trap Detection* was also unlocked. I'm scared." (Luna)

"No, it's okay not to level it. It is definitely convenient to learn *Trap Detection*, however it is possible to notice traps in the dungeon just by looking at the surroundings. You should focus your points onto other skills. I'll teach you the method to find traps so that you do not rely on skills to detect traps." (Youya)

"I understand. Please teach Luna how to do it." (Luna)

For hidden treasure chests, there might not be any hints about their location, however for traps there is always a way to notice where they are. If it is only possible to detect traps by having the necessary exploration skills, then it would be impossible to clear dungeons safely without inviting a specialised class into the party. That would just be a horrible game design, and all game producers and players would know it. Therefore, it was made so that it was possible to clear dungeons even without exploration skills. The variety of exploration skills a *Thief* possesses is huge. If possible I would like to avoid wasting skill points onto skills that can be supplemented by experience. Example of skills that can't be supplemented are *Increased Drop rate* and *Summon Rate*.

Note: I am unsure about *Summon Rate* so I'll just leave it as that. If the skill comes up again I'll rethink its name.

As we progressed deeper into the labyrinth, I explained the different commonly used traps as well as the way to disable them to Luna and Til. Although...

"Why are the two of you clinging onto my back? You two are making it hard to move." (Youya)

"But it's scary to walk ahead of Youya!" (Til)

"Uhn. Youya continue walking forward. Luna doesn't know about the traps." (Luna)

The two of them seem to be significantly affected by the earlier incident.

"Only for today. However, if we come across a trap I will show you how to distinguish and disable them. Next time the two of you will be the ones identifying the traps." (Youya)

The two of them nodded.

Now then, let's continue to collect plenty of meat for today. Thanks to the herd of *Horned Boars*, we have gotten one step further as an adventurer.

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We continued to encounter multiple monsters as we ventured deeper into the labyrinth. We have had countless battles ever since we encountered the herd of *Horned Boars* as there were countless swarms of monsters in this labyrinth. To have this large number of monsters for us to hunt without encountering any other adventurer is a luxury that other adventurers may never experience.

Til shot an arrow towards the monster approaching us from the front, however the arrow was off-target. It was a first time for me to see Til miss an arrow. It is a bipedal monster that gives off an extremely unpleasant vibe, a *Puncher Bamboon*. Luna ran towards the front, releasing *Assassinate* as usual, piercing the *Puncher Bamboon's* stomach, however there wasn't any ringing sound released. Her attack was no different from an ordinary attack. The *Puncher Bamboon* didn't falter despite directly receiving Luna's attack and attacked Luna with a right hook on the side of her head, blowing her small body away.

"..." (Youya)

"These girls haven't had much experience being driven back by a monster. As expected when being mentally cornered they wouldn't last very long." (Youya)

I stepped forward towards the *Puncher Bamboon* and it threw a left jab in retaliation. I twisted my head, dodging the jab while slashing the tendon in it's arm. It screamed in pain after getting it's arm slashed. While it recoiled from our exchange, I closed the distance and released a thrust towards it's heart. The critical ring can be heard as the *Puncher Bamboon* collapses and turns into blue particles.

"Luna, Til. Are the two of you at your limit?" (Youya)

"Not yet. I can do it." (Luna)

"It was just a fluke. I will hit the next one." (Til)

Even though they are hiding it, they have clearly reached their limits. Asking for anymore than this is unreasonable. The near-death experience from the trap earlier must have activated the adrenaline in their body, causing their senses to be heightened from fear. Having their senses heightened will cause their fatigue to accumulate constantly without them noticing it, and that causes your legs to weaken even quicker. Although it's been a while since we've entered the labyrinth, we haven't arrived at the exit and since it's already been more than half a day, the curse has already kicked in.

Our bodies are feeling much heavier to the point that it doesn't feel like our own bodies. Receiving a one-two punch from the combination of fatigue and the curse, it is difficult for the two of them to exert their usual abilities.

"In that case, let's continue to push onwards towards the exit. Let's aim to reach the exit by half an hour." (Youya)

Lacking the energy to reply, the two of them nodded. This will be a good experience. For them to train both their spirits and bodies, it is necessary for them to push themselves beyond their limit. This whole time, they have been thriving under my lead and I wasn't able to let them experience any true hardships. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, let's utilize this opportunity as much as possible and explore as much as possible. Luna raised her face and shouts desperately.

"Youya, it's a super strong spider! It's coming close really quickly. Above. The ceiling!" (Luna)

Luna desperately sent a message despite her fatigue about a powerful spider. I have an idea of what monster that spider might be. In the forest of *God Trees*, there was a powerful spider whose favourite food was human flesh, the *Hunting Spider*. The threads it produces can not be cut by ordinary swords and anyone who touches it will be inflicted with paralysis.

When it is hungry, it would consume its defeated prey on the spot and when it isn't, it would wrap it's prey in it's paralyzing threads and carry it to it's nest to store it for another meal. It is a terrifying experience to be caught by it as you will be restrained by it's paralyzing threads, making it impossible to recover from the paralysis naturally, waiting to be devoured.

The forest of *God Trees* has a recommended level of 25, however the *Hunting Spider's* strength is equivalent to a monster at level 30. Many adventurers have been killed by this monster after underestimating its strength.

The next moment, It finally appeared.

If Luna hadn't warned us about its presence, I would not had noticed it. It was moving silently on the ceiling. Then, it stuck the thread from it's rear onto the ceiling. I actually wanted Luna and Til to experience a difficult battle like this but right now, I can't expect them to do such a thing. Relying on my intuition, I threw my sword towards it's threads without looking at it, severing its thread with my trusty enchanted longsword.

Having it's thread severed unexpectedly, the *Hunting Spider* landed on his head, leaving a large opening.

"*Napalm Strike.*" (Youya)

I aimed my glowing hand at it's head. We didn't have the leeway to prolong this battle. There is always the chance we may get defeated if we do not defeat it immediately. The weak point of the *Hunting Spider* is it's head and it is weak to the *Fire* element. It would definitely be killed if it received a super high power fire magic onto its weak point. The palm of my hand landed on its head, causing his head to blow up with flames. However, even if its head is gone, it's body will still be able to move for a short time. In order to prevent any accidents, I took

out my second blade, the black magical blade and pierced it's body before it finally stopped moving.

"Thank's to Luna's warning I managed to notice it on the ceiling. Thanks Luna." (Youya)

"Don't need to thank me. Luna could only notice it." (Luna)

The *Hunting Spider's* body disintegrates into blue particles. The items that were dropped are it's evil-looking eyes and it's thread, which are useful items that can be used in alchemy. And also..

"This isn't an item is it?" (Til)

There were cocoons left on the ground. The *Hunting Spider* was probably on it's way back to it's nest as it often wraps its prey on its back on the way to the nest. It is difficult to tell if the people were already caught by the spider before it got eaten by the *Starfish Larvae* or the people were caught while wandering around the labyrinth after getting eaten.

Regardless, I put on a pair of leather gloves so that I wouldn't be affected by the paralysis threads and cut open the cocoons. Two of the men inside the cocoons were already dead. Their skins were as black as charcoal probably due to the curse of the labyrinth taking effect. The hunting spider does not kill its prey who were caught in its cocoons, thus it's highly likely that the cause of death was the curse of the labyrinth. The two victims appear to be intermediate adventurers with decent equipment and items. I took their equipments gratefully and opened the last cocoon at gasped at the third victim.

"Is it, the princess..?" (Youya)

"Youya, she is extremely pretty." (Luna)

"Amazing, it's a beautiful lady. However, she looks a little bit black." (Til)

We were unexpectedly reunited with the silver-haired princess that we saw at the restaurant in Rumberg.

The princess of the Laluzulu Kingdom was also eaten by the *Starfish Larvae*. Why did a princess come all the way to the forest of *God Trees*? Wasn't she supposed to have an escort? How did she end up getting eaten by the *Starfish*

Larvae? There are still many questions left unanswered.

This incident reeks of conspiracy. Most likely, we will be caught up in a complicated situation if we rescue her. However, I'm not heartless enough to leave her in the dungeon just because of that. Besides, I made a promise to her back when I last saw her during the quest and I intend to keep it. I carried her with my body that became heavy from the curse.

"I can't let her die here. Let's carry her and get her out of here." (Youya)

During the recommended quest at the Laluzulu kingdom, I was asked to be her bodyguard. It was back then when I made the promise. I had forgotten about it, but now I remember. That is why I will save her. Her body is already turning black due to the curse. At this rate, she will lose her life in about three hours. We have until then to conquer this labyrinth.

"Luna, Til. Let's hurry. We're almost to the exit. Give it your all!" (Youya)

"Uhn. We'll try our best!" (Luna)

"Awawa, it's a bit difficult but I can still do a little more!" (Til)

Our aim is the exit. Worst case scenario we will have the three of them use the *Return Stones* to go back to the town except for me. While I was thinking about our options, I placed more strength into my legs to go forward

Chapter 6: The old man deciphers the secret of god trees

While carrying the princess of the Laluzulu Kingdom on my back, we managed to arrive at the exit of the labyrinth. As I was carrying the princess on my back, I wasn't able to defend myself effectively and had to leave the battles to Luna and Til who were already exhausted. However, the two of them were good girls who didn't mutter a single complaint. I decided that when we escape from this labyrinth, I'll be sure to reward them plentifully for their hard work. In the direction of the exit, a blue vortex could be seen. Luna and Til jumped in celebration with sparkling eyes and hugged each other. The blue vortex is a magical vortex that transports anyone who passes it to the entrance of the dungeon.

"Youya, there's the blue vortex. Now we can go home!" (Luna)

"It was really exhausting. In the first place, it was too difficult to move around in the maze. My body feels too heavy." (Til)

"I'm hungry. My whole body is sticky from sweat." (Luna)

"Un un. I can't wait to return to the inn to wash up, change my clothes and enjoy a nice fruit juice at the bar!" (Til)

"So long as we get out of here I'm happy. Youya, let's hurry up and leave!" (Luna)

The two girls' spirits seem to be lifted after arriving at the exit. They became light on their feet and the smiles return to their faces. It seems that I had more leeway than I thought. If I had known about it, I would have taken a different turn to increase the amount of time spent in the labyrinth intentionally. However ending the adventure like this is fine too, the two of them have already gotten plenty of experience in the labyrinth today.

"Has the princess woken up yet?" (Luna)

Understandably, the princess who was sleeping on my back hadn't woken up yet. Although we had fed her an antidote for the paralysis, she has suffered from starvation as well as the curse of the labyrinth for a long period of time. She also has a horrible smell from being encased in that cocoon all this time. However that can't be helped either. We'll have to return to the inn and clean her up afterwards. More than the smell she had, there was something else I was worry about.

Initially, I considered the possibility that the two adventurers who we found together with the princess were her bodyguards. However, the progression of the curse on their bodies didn't match. That meant that the timing they had entered the labyrinth were different. Those adventurers were definitely just normal adventurers who got caught in the labyrinth. It is more likely that the bodyguards might have abandoned the princess after the *Starfish Larvae* appeared, whether intentional or not. When this possibility came to my mind, the smell of trouble seems to become even thicker.

Luna and Til who were excited to return looked at me and repeatedly asked me to exit the labyrinth. Regrettably for them, we can't do that yet.

"Wait a moment. There is still something we have to do. Before we leave the labyrinth there should be a stone monument nearby. On that stone monument there will be a hint about where the magic egg will spawn.

"You mean this? It doesn't look like there's anything important on it." (Luna)

"Right? It looks like a normal star chart" (Til)

"Well, I kind of expected that it looks like that." (Youya)

I smiled bitterly as I put the princess on the ground, and took out a bunch of writing materials from my magic bag. Near the blue vortex, there is a stone monument about twice my height. On the monument, there are numerous stars drawn but only one star looked like a red jewel and shone brightly.

Even if a person somehow saw something valuable, if that person doesn't understand the value of the object, then it might as well not be valuable at all. Each of the stars on the monument actually represents a *God Tree* within the forest.

This chart displays the arrangement of the hundreds of *God Trees* inside the forest and only one star is accompanied by a red jewel. The red jewel represents the magic egg. However, with just this monument alone it is difficult to understand what the chart's actually displaying. In reality, there aren't many people who would take a look at the stone monument and immediately understand that the arrangement of the stars were the same as the arrangement of the *God Trees* and go "Wow! The egg-shaped red jewel represents the next magic egg where it would spawn!". Not many people would actually notice it.

Although it is currently physically impossible for someone to view the arrangement of the trees from above, it is possible to create an image of their arrangements by walking around and locating every *God tree* in the forest. Furthermore, even if an adventurer was capable enough to survive the labyrinth, between the fear of an unknown curse causing your body to become heavier and turning your skin black as time goes on and your spirit being worn out by travelling in darkness encountering monsters and traps, the moment the exit can be seen, it is highly unlikely for that person to consciously delay their departure to analyze a stone monument. That is why it's even more likely that only someone who noticed that the hint to the magic egg can be found by entering the labyrinth by getting eaten by the *Starfish Larvae*.

Coincidentally, this hint was discovered by the same person who found the hidden room which fixes your status rise to three points per level.

Before I let my mind wander off too far, I mustered up the last of my strength and tried my best to copy the star chart onto the notebook.

With this, we have the advantage of knowing where the egg will appear.

Next step is to determine when will the egg actually spawn. In the labyrinth, the stone monument isn't the only hint available. Next to the stone monument, a pendulum clock can be seen. However, it only has an hour hand which has stopped moving. It is also written on the clock, "When a new day comes, a new life will be born". It is simple enough to understand that the egg will spawn when this clock's hour hand reaches 12. For an oblivious adventurer, there is an obvious hint at the center of the clock where an egg is drawn as well as the sentence.

The clock has a secret function where the hour hand only moves once every midnight.

The moment the hour hand reaches 12, the magic egg will appear in the forest.

I took a memo of the hour hand position in order to estimate when the egg spawns by comparing the different positions of the hour hand. Together with the stone monument, we will be able to identify where and when the egg will appear.

"Yosh. Luna, Til. I'm done investigating the hints. With this, we've gotten one step closer to obtaining a *Magic Pet*." (Youya)

"Hurray!. Youya, Luna is already at her limit! Let's hurry up and leave!" (Luna)

"I also feel my body getting heavier every second! I feel like I'll die soon~" (Til)

"What are we going to do about that? We're coming back here tomorrow."
(Youya)

At that moment, the two of them had a face like it was the end of the world. It's regretful for them, but this labyrinth is the perfect spot for them to train right now. Plenty of monsters and the chance to learn about traps. If we took a different route from today, there will still be plenty of monsters and treasures for us to obtain.

In the first place, it is important for us to come back here once more in order to estimate when will the egg spawn.

"For now let's return to the town and rest up for tomorrow by enjoying a feast. Don't worry too much about returning to the labyrinth. Both of you have gained a lot of experience and it should be much easier for you guys to conquer the labyrinth tomorrow. " (Youya)

After mentioning the feast we'll be having tonight, the two of them looked revitalized. Then, the three of us entered the blue vortex, finally exiting the dungeon.

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"The air feels great~ My body feels light again." (Luna)

"I never thought I'll be this happy just walking outside!" (Til)

Luna and Til became energetic again after exiting the labyrinth.

The sun was already setting, apparently we had spent quite a long time inside the labyrinth.

"Luna, Til. Could you bring the girl back to our room at the inn? I'll head over to the guild to submit a report. Please help her to wash up and change her clothes since she giving off a bad smell." (Youya)

"Leave it to us!" (Luna)

"Once we're done we'll go for a feast! Don't forget!" (Til)

"I know. I wouldn't lie about that." (Youya)

Now then, let's quickly return to the guild to report our progression. Today we managed to reap a huge harvest. Thanks to that herd of *Horned Boars*, we finished the quest in one day although I thought it would had taken three days to complete. In addition, we also have the equipment that we picked up from dead adventurers in the labyrinth. Apparently there were more adventurers being eaten by the *Starfish Larvae* than I had thought, and most of them lost their lives inside the labyrinth. Adventurers who are unable to bring along a Magic Bag are highly unlikely to take the trouble to bring a light source along to a forest brightly lit like the forest of *God Trees*.

It is impossible to clear the labyrinth where visibility is basically zero with numerous monsters and traps. They would be saved if they had a *Return Stone*, however using such an expensive and rare item isn't a luxury that intermediate level adventurers would be able to afford.

I had thought about this back when it was just a game, but this world is incredibly hostile to live in. After confirming that there wasn't anyone following or eavesdropping on us, I head towards the guild after checking on the princess's condition and the talk with the girls.

"You two! It is unacceptable for us to lose the magic egg when we have

gotten such an important hint." (Youya)

"Roger that!" (Luna)

"Yes sir! As planned we will obtain the egg!" (Til)

They gave good replies. However, the meaning behind my sentence was slightly different from what they might think. It isn't that simple for us to just obtain the egg. Magic eggs are usually sold for a ridiculously high price on the market. If someone finds out that we have somehow obtained information about where the egg's potential location, there might be people who are willing to take hostages and resort to torture to obtain that information. Furthermore it is still tricky to obtain the egg even with the information. A human driven by greed is even more dangerous than a powerful monster.

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I am currently talking to the receptionist at the guild. As usual, I was talking alone with the receptionist in order to keep the secret from getting out. It wasn't a case of distrusting the girls, but they are careless about what topics are appropriate in the current situation.. The priority with the receptionist is the completion of quests and exchange of materials.

"Uhm. Isn't it the period before the weekly respawn where there aren't many monsters right?" (Receptionist)

"You're right." (Youya)

"You went hunting in the forest of *God Trees* where there are many adventurers hunting monsters while searching for any clues about the Magic Egg right?" (Receptionist)

"You're right again." (Youya)

"So how did you complete the meat collection quest a little under a day!? And also what is with the amount of materials that you are trying to exchange!?" (Receptionist)

"Everyone in the party tried their best and we got lucky." (Youya)

The receptionist was so surprised that she forgot to breathe. It isn't very unreasonable to think that we did our best and got lucky. The respawn occurs the day after so it's currently the worst time for us to go hunting as there aren't many monsters nor treasure left in the dungeon.

Normally, adventurers wouldn't be working around this time, however only the forest of *God Trees* which has the egg spawn is crowded. The limited number of prey had to be divided among the number of adventurers. Moving on to the material exchange, as expected of a professional, she handled the exchange extremely quickly, rewarding us with our cash and guild points. It will become easier for the receptionist to give us better quests if her opinion of us increases. It is actually nice to give her this much of an impact on the first day. Besides, the situation with our wallet recently has become even more dire. It'll be nice to promote our party ranking as soon as possible since we are already getting close to a promotion. Once we promote, our exchange rates will increase and the amount of benefits we have will also increase.

"How is the recruitment notice I requested going?" (Youya)

"There hasn't been a single application.. Because monks are popular, there aren't any that are usually available." (Receptionist)

Earlier today when we accepted the quest, I had also requested for a party recruitment. When a fee is paid to recruit party members, the notice will be placed on the guild's quest board. Also whenever a person who fits the criteria appear, the receptionist will also explicitly introduce the party to the person. It is already difficult to find an adventurer without a party, much less someone who fit the specific conditions. However, having a healer is a necessity for a party and I already knew it wouldn't be easy from the start.

"I know that it'll be difficult. I'll be patient until then." (Youya)

"That isn't' the only reason. There have also been adventurers who are interfering and spreading rumors about you, ruining your reputation." (Receptionist)

Could it be the two men who tried to forcefully recruit Luna and Til? Is this their way of retaliating against us? Such a troublesome bunch.

"So it's like that. I understand the situation now. I'll wait a little longer on the

recruitment. I'll be coming back tomorrow so I hope you will introduce us a good quest for tomorrow." (Youya)

"We will be waiting. The guild welcomes any capable adventurer."
(Receptionist)

Afterwards, I left the guild. Someone spreading rumors about us makes things difficult. It will probably be impossible for us to get a party member in this town now.

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On the way back to the inn, I bought several recovery potions while purchasing several light foodstuff for the princess. As her constitution isn't in the best of states, it would be better for her to eat food that is easy on the digestive system. While I was on the way back, I purchased food for one person.

"I wanted to find a fourth member before Phil joins us to strengthen our coordination but what should we do now? Since we're together should we just recruit that princess to our party?" (Youya)

I smiled bitterly as I thought of something impossible.

"That is a stupid idea. She's a princess. She can't be an adventurer. Although I never did expect to meet her again." (Youya)

I remembered the promise I made with the princess over ten years ago. During our nominated quest at the Laluzulu Kingdom, the knights had lost their lives one after another to the point that outsiders like us had to be hired to protect the royals. At that time, princess Lutra was only six years old. She was a shy girl, so shy that she was even afraid of us who were hired to be her bodyguards. Because of that, it was difficult for us to accomplish our job, so I made a promise to her.

"Are you afraid of me? Are you unable to trust me? It isn't unreasonable for you to do that since we're just savage adventurers.. However, we are also professionals. I promise you, that if you can't believe me just by my words, then

I will become Princess Lutra's personal Knight. On my knight's pride I promise that I will protect you." (Youya)

That day was the first time that Princess Lutra had opened up to me. Afterwards we mimicked the ceremony of the knight's oath. The six-year old Princess Lutra must have forgotten about such a promise since it's been years since that promise was even made. Just because of that promise, I carelessly got involved in whatever situation she was in and brought her back from the labyrinth. I am that girl's knight and it is natural for me to protect the princess. It was a stroke of luck that she was discovered by us in the labyrinth. Within the hundreds of thousand possibilities that could had occurred, there is none where I would abandon her in the labyrinth.

Now then, I'm looking forward to see how that crybaby princess has grown.

Chapter 7: The old man meets a holy knight, the “Crusader”

After completing my errands at the guild, I went on a small shopping spree before heading back to the inn.

"Youya, Welcome back!" (Luna)

"As told, we changed the princess's clothes and washed her body. Be thankful okay, it was hard work." (Til)

"Thanks, you two. Here's your reward." (Youya)

During the short shopping trip earlier, i had bought a bunch of fruits that resembled apples in my previous life. I threw those fruits towards the two girls and the two of them happily caught them.

It must have been really tough since the princess was encased in the cocoon for almost three days, she was unable to change her clothes and since she couldn't move, various stuff came out, staining her clothes. It wasn't just a hygiene issue. If the person had woken up in that state it would had been a terrible experience to be seen so Til did a good job. I couldn't be the one doing it since it'll be bad if she woke up and saw a male cleaning her up. Although the girl with silver hair was alive, her body was still very weak. After escaping the *Starfish Larvae*

, the blackening process caused by the curse began to slowly fade away. Her blackified skin was slowly reverting to its normal pale white. At this rate it should be about 2 hours before the curse completely disappears The pouch she was carrying also had several water bottles and preserved meals remaining, however after she was caught by the spider she was unable to even consume that. Starvation is one of the reasons why she is currently this fragile. Little by little, I poured the recovery potion into her mouth while Luna and Til were anxiously watching over the girl.

"She's very pretty." (Luna)

"Right? Although the two of us are pretty cute ourselves, she is on a different

level. Looks like my sister has a new competitor." (Til)

"Til, you shouldn't go around calling yourself cute." (Youya)

"But it's the truth right? There aren't many girls that look like me and Luna around you know." (Til)

I can't refute her point. Luna and Til are both cute girls in their own rights. Although I think it's better to be cute than beautiful though. The princess could be the very definition of the word "beautiful". She is probably around 16 to 18 years old right now. I knew that she would grow up to be a very pretty girl but I didn't expect her to look this beautiful.

"Luna, Til. This girl is in a precarious situation right now. It'll be bad to let anyone see her here so we will be waiting here until she wakes up. Since it's about time for dinner, here's some money. Both of you head over to the bar.. Actually, I'm afraid of leaving the two of you in the bar too. Both of you go get whatever you'll like from the restaurant in the inn as a reward for your hard work today." (Youya)

Although I'll like to have dinner together with them, someone has to be around when the princess wakes up. I have also thought about sending the princes to a hospital. However a situation when the princess of the Laluzulu Kingdom was eaten by the

Starfish Larvae

in Greenwood is far from normal. There is likely a conspiracy going on behind the scenes. It is unwise to bring the princess to the hospital since we don't know who might be an enemy. That's why after we got out of the dungeon, I hid my face with the hat and wrapped the princess in a cloth to hide our identities.

"No can do. If Youya isn't here then the food won't taste good." (Luna)

"Uhn uhn. Anyway since the bar opens late at night, it's fine for us to wait here. In the meantime let's have some snacks!. Jajan!. Here's some nuts that I picked up in the forest of

God Trees

! It was a popular snack back in the elve's village too." (Til)

"That's perfect. Til." (Luna)

"Enjoy~." (Til)

"It's delicious. Til is a reliable person." (Luna)

Luna and Til began to munch on some dubious-looking nuts. It's not good if I'm not there huh. They are good children that are wasted on someone like me.

"I understand. Then we're remain here together until this girl wakes up. Are the two of you tired? You should get some sleep." (Youya)

"Uhn. I'll sleep. After eating some nuts I feel sleepy." (Luna)

"This is our preparation to become night owls!" (Ti)

The two of them got into the bed together and fell asleep. It's nice that they are getting along well.

While Luna and Til fell asleep, I continued to read a book while sitting next to the sleeping princess, occasionally feeding her a recovery potion. When the body is in a poor condition, feeding too much of a potion may cause it to have an inverse effect, thus it's much more beneficial to feed it little by little instead.

Just like this, about two hours has passed. Then the princess's eyelids began to move.

"NOOOO. THE SPIDER. THE SPIDER AHHHHH." (Princess Lutra)

The princess started to scream uncontrollably, waking up Luna and Til. I grabbed the princess's shoulders firmly and looked straight into her eyes.

"Calm down. I defeated the *Hunting Spider*

and we're outside of the dungeon. You are safe now." (Youya)

"Outside? I was rescued?" (Princess Lutra)

With a half-trusting half dubious look, the princess began to scan her surroundings. After realising that we were inside a building, she heaved a sigh of relief.

"When we were inside the dungeon after being eaten by the

Starfish Larvae, we defeated a Hunting Spider

and found you inside a cocoon on it's back. Afterwards we left the dungeon and brought you to this inn in Greenwood." (Youya)

After realising she was safely within Greenwood, strength left the princess's body and she collapsed. In a state of shock, I hurriedly grabbed her body to support her.

"I'm glad that I was saved. I'm glad." (Princess Lutra)

After being in that dungeon for an extended period of time, she began to cry and I continued to hug her in silence. Embracing a girl without her consent is an invasion of privacy, however it is precisely at these sort of timings where she needs to have someone by her side to give her a sense of security. Although I tried to release her, she continued to stay in my arms and I gently patted her back. After she calmed down, we resetted the situation and faced each other. The princess opened her eyes.

"Uncle Youya.." (Princess Lutra)

"I didn't think that you would remember me. It's been a while, Princess Lutra." (Youya)

She was the 6 year old princess that I met while on a quest a decade ago. However, it seems that she still remembered my face vividly.

"After all, Uncle Youya is Lutra's knight right?" (Princess Lutra)

We hugged each other once more, this time with her face leaning onto my chest. Witnessing such a scene, only one person had a different reaction. Luna's ears began twitching and she ran towards me, pulling me away from Lutra while clinging onto me like a koala. Then, she said towards Lutra.

"Youya belongs to Luna." (Luna)

It was her usual childish reaction. Her statement being a threat towards Lutra, with her fluffy fox tail repeatedly slapping the bed.

"It's nice to see that some things will never change. Back when you came to Laluzulu, Phil had reacted in the exact same way towards me." (Princess Lutra)

"It seems that I was born under a weird star I guess." (Youya)

I am often being hugged by girls like this. Speaking of it, Phil did show this sort of childish reactions similar to Luna back when we first met Lutra. Seems that the two of them were both jealous of Lutra.

"Princess Lutra, Why were you in that sort of situation? Honestly, right now I am unsure of how I am supposed to think about you." (Youya)

Lutra began to recall, placing her hands on her chin.

"If it's Uncle Youya then it should be fine. To make it simple, I was set up by my elder brother. For the succession of the Laluzulu Kingdom, when there are multiple candidates, the successor is chosen in a tournament and since we are a kingdom of knights. Gender doesn't matter and I am a participant. He probably wanted to get rid of me." (Princess Lutra)

I have heard about that story before.

The kingdom of knights Laluzulu. Although it can't be noticed in Greenwood, it's name could easily be proven fact.

"I had to visit Rumberg for an event and decided to drop by Greenwood on my way home. Since it was the Magic egg season, I decided to try my luck while raising my level in the dungeon here and was recommended by the knights to head to the Forest of God Trees to raise my level. It was then when the

Starfish Larvae appeared. When I was hiding behind a *God Tree*

, the knight, Emil thrust me into its path in tears, apologising as I was eaten by the

Starfish Larvae." (Princess Lutra)

The capable looking Princess Lutra began to mumble. It seems that rather than hatred and anger, she felt more sympathy towards the knight Emil.

"Based on his reaction, that knight was probably being blackmailed by your siblings." (Youya)

"I agree. My mother was a mere commoner so among all the candidates, I have the weakest standing. If my siblings decided to use their power, not just that knight but many other knights will have no choice but to obey them. I was surprised by the

Starfish Larvae

's stomach. It was complete dark and I couldn't see anything, and tried to move around to find the exit. That was when I was captured by a monster and tried my best to escape, however I found myself being poisoned and unable to move. Eventually I lost consciousness and when I came to, I found myself here." (Princess Lutra)

I was surprised by her explanation. So was Luna and Til. Even though she was caught off guard by the labyrinth, she was still capable of calmly searching the labyrinth for an exit without losing her cool. Being capable of moving around without any light source and surviving attacks from monsters and traps for an entire day in completely darkness, that isn't possible without strength and a mind made of steel.

"The main problem has yet to come." (Youya)

"That's right. Since the knight was most likely being blackmailed with something, if I return to the castle then just like before my life will be targeted. Until I can solve the problem, everyone in the castle is my enemy." (Princess Lutra)

I would like to help Lutra, however her situation is currently not something I can solve. There is nothing else I can do.

"At this rate, my siblings will be notified of my death for sure. The current situation is a definite chance for me. Above all, I hope that my siblings will think that they accomplished their mission so that I can make full use of this chance." (Princess Lutra)

"This situation is a chance.. That is an impressive amount courage you have there." (Youya)

Princess Lutra's knight is going to report that she was eaten by the

Starfish Larvae

. Since she was most likely dead, there isn't any reason for them to investigate her death.

"Because of how I was eaten, there will be almost no doubt that I am currently dead. However I won't be able to return to the castle until the right time. Fortunately, the tournament between the princes and princesses has already been confirmed to take place on the third week of the water moon. Until then, I'll like to remain dead and return to the castle just before the tournament." (Princess Lutra)

"That is a good decision. There is nothing safer than being dead right now. Is it still possible for you to enter the tournament once the battle has already been decided?" (Youya)

Her decision making was decisive and her courage is second to none. This wouldn't be possible for a princess if she was merely pampered throughout her life. It seems that she has been through a lot in the castle.

"Uncle Youya, I have a request to ask of you. Could you let me join your party until the battle for succession takes place? I have to become stronger before the battle starts. It can't be done on my own. It is possible only if I rely on my reliable Uncle Youya." (Princess Lutra)

Her words were definitely the truth. Although she was capable enough to aim for the exit inside the labyrinth, she wasn't able to exit on her own. It is still impossible for ordinary adventurers.

"Princess Lutra. Personally I want to help, but I'm sure you understand the risks involved for us if we invite you to the party. What about you? What can you offer for us that can convince us to help you." (Youya)

It may seem harsh, but this is expected of an adventurer. If I was alone, I wouldn't hesitate to offer my help. However, there is also Luna and Til. I can't be selfish enough to drag them into this mess on my own selfishness. This is also for Princess Lutra's sake. You can't expect someone whom you just reunited with after a decade to help you in a complicated battle against an entire kingdom since you won't know how much the person has changed in that time.

"I am capable enough to offer my strength to the party. I have the exclusive class that is only available to the royals as well as my swordsmanship that was honed in the capital through tutoring by the knights in the castle. To raise my

levels I have also entered countless dungeons with the knights, I am confident in both my mental strength, critical thinking as well as physical capabilities. A

Crusader

that is capable of being both a healer and a shield for the party. Isn't that the class that is most suitable for your party right now?" (Princess Lutra)

The Holy Knight class *Crusader*

. It was another exclusive class that is only available to NPCs during an event in the game era, to the royal family of the

Laluzulu

Kingdom. In other words, it was the occupation of the founder of Laluzulu Kingdom, Princess Lutra's ancestor.

Crusaders

had their attack power reduced in exchange for the ability to cast recovery magic. Currently, I was serving both as the party's tank and the melee damage dealer. If we had a dedicated tank in the party, I would be able to focus on offense and our hunts would also become much easier. Our problem of being unable to defend ourselves against ranged and magic attacks will also be solved. Furthermore, Crusaders were capable of using the recovery magic

Heal

. They were all important problems in our party that we lacked.

"Sounds enticing however it isn't a must for our healer to be a crusader. It is also possible for us to find a monk to cover up my healing needs. Our party's shortcomings can indeed be covered up by having you in our party, but I do not see how that is worth the risk of turning the entire

Laluzulu

Kingdom into our enemies. Finding a simple monk would also suffice." (Youya)

"When I gain the right to succeed the throne, a reward will also be prepared for you. Not only that, I will appoint you as a special knight of the Laluzulu kingdom, with the appropriate emblem to indicate so." (Princess Lutra)

An official emblem of knighthood. There isn't any adventurer who doesn't understand what that signifies. It is the act of being bestowed a rare sword of which only five exists in the world.

"You sure about that? I will not elect to stay in the castle even if I am designated to be a sworn knight." (Youya)

"Of course it is. In the first place, you said it yourself ten years ago. That you would be my personal knight even if you are far away, you will definitely come to my rescue, just like what happened today. If that wasn't the case, then a miracle wouldn't had happen just like today. I beg you, you are the only knight that I have." (Princess Lutra)

She stared directly into my eyes, remembering not just my face but also the promise we made back then. I've always been weak to strong women. I had to honor my promises.

"If you bring up my promise just like this, there is no way that I can refuse can I? Fine, we'll accept you into our party, however I won't be treating you as Princess Lutra, but rather a fellow adventurer Lutra. Be warned that I'm a harsh teacher." (Youya)

"I wouldn't expect anything less from the "weakest undefeated knight" that won the tournament with an inadequate status, defeating countless swordsmen just from your own skill. The world isn't kind enough to people that they won't have to suffer. Especially because of my circumstances, I have to become stronger." (Princess Lutra)

Those were two traumas that I wanted to leave behind, just leave it behind please!

In the long history of adventurers, ten years ago there was a party that cleared impossible quests one after another, a party made of the strongest in their respective classes. However, because of that I was somehow given two nicknames and that was one of them. As expected of a world entirely driven by a chuuniby naming sense. Luna who was behind me had eyes that were shining brightly while repeatedly muttering "Weakest undefeatable swordsman".

Ugh, I can feel my mental wound opening up. It hurts

"Anyways, please take care of us from now on. We will be in each others' care Princess.. No. Adventurer Lutra." (Youya)

"Thank you, likewise please look after me from now on as just Lutra." (Lutra)

We firmly shook hands. I was beginning to give up looking for another party member at Greenwood, however it is a blessing that we managed to obtain another friend into our party like this. Furthermore, it was another Exclusive class "Crusader". As usual my luck is growing right after meeting Luna. A reunion with Phil, meeting Til and now having a Crusader who is Lutra joining my party.

Is this really just a coincidence? I have a feeling that somehow there was an otherworldly power working behind the scenes.

"Now then, since the difficult things have been settled and the princess is awake now. Let's go out and have a feast! The princess will be coming along with us!" (Til)

"Uhn. Seconded. Luna is hungry too." (Luna)

Luna and Til gave out a cheerful voice, blowing away the tense and heavy atmosphere. They are right though. There's no point worrying about something that is out of our control. For now let's celebrate the welcome of a new member.

Chapter 8: The old man revamps Princess Lutra

In a purely coincidental fashion, we reunited with a friend who was on her deathbed, the crusader Lutra.

I'm Hungry! Bar! Welcome celebration! Such cheers were repeated by the two children who were hungry. There wasn't anyone at the bar who didn't know Lutra's face, so several preparations had to be done before we could proceed with our meal.

"Lutra, thanks for showing me your status card. I've pretty much grasped everything." (Youya)

"If it's something like that it's fine. Since we will be in the same party from now on, it's important to understand each other's capabilities." (Lutra)

Lutra showed me her status card. As expected, in this world only royals were instructed on the best skills to take and avoided the needless and unwanted skills. Having a firm grasp on your class's information was important as skill points were a valuable resource.

In the game, Crusaders were only available for NPCs. Originally, her ancestors were NPCs that played an important role in an event for the game and she possessed that very same class, being one of their descendents.

I remember the details of that event clearly as it was one of the most difficult events I have ever attempted. In order to clear the event, you would have to utilize the abilities of the NPC in the event, princess Renoir who possessed the exact same bright silver hair as Lutra. I had asked Lutra about what happened to Renoir and whether she had heard about her, and she told me that she was a powerful hero that existed over two hundred years ago. Thinking about the situation calmly, it was frankly amazing. The world that I thought was just a game is actually connected to the current world. It'll be nice to search for traces of the game in the future as I have the feeling that I would like to figure something out by examining those hints. But for now, I have to do something about Lutra's current situation.

"I can't help but feel envious after taking a look at your status card. Not only

do you have an exclusive class but your status is amazing too." (Youya)

Lutra was level 25 and it seems like she was also blessed with her status, managing to gain three points every single time in physical strength, defense and magic power. Although Luna and Til were similar, Luna had always gotten three points in her strength and speed while Phil and Til both got three points in strength, speed and magic power. It seems that both special existences and those with exclusive classes possessed the tendency to get three points every level.

"My ancestor, the battle princess Runoir with bright silver hair also had a status similar to this. It was an interesting phenomenon. It turned out that women with silver hair who chose to become crusaders would turn out to have a better status than an average person." (Lutra)

This is definitely not a coincidence. If it wasn't a coincidence, then it could be that the requirement to become a crusader would be to have the same status gain as the battle princess Renoir. Regardless, it would mean that all crusaders had access to an exclusive class as well as a privileged status were remnants of a powerful character back in the game. Without a doubt having Lutra is like spotting a diamond in a bargain sale.

The crusader's specialty was their high defensive power and their access to defensive skills and recovery skills. It was an occupation that functioned a similar role to a tank and a healer. And similarly to other exclusive classes, there were things that a crusader couldn't do better than a warrior and a monk. They had lower attack power and lesser access to offensive skills while not having access to supportive-type magic that monks possessed.

However, it is still a powerful class with just minor downsides. With both defensive and recovery capabilities, the party's survivability in dungeons and fights would be either confirmed or even better. Furthermore our party has a magic knight who is capable of casting supportive-type magic. In terms of offensive capabilities there are the powerful spells I possessed from

Magic Customization, Assassinate

that Luna can use with a 100% critical rate as well as the

Spirit Archer

class that Til possessed which allows her to use her bow while chanting. Our offensive capability was far higher than a well-balanced party containing a monk. It was near impossible to get a combination any stronger than ours, although we have an amazing combination, we still possessed weaknesses.

Lutra was a princess of the Laluzulu Kingdom with her mother being a commoner and herself at risk of being assassinated. If her presence is exposed, there is a chance that we may be targeted by the entire royal family. Just from that consideration alone, I would have decline her request. However I couldn't break the promise I made with Lutra when she was small to become her knight and the lady herself has remembered.

"Slow! Youya, it's a feast! A feast!" (Luna)

"If you don't hurry up the bar is going to close!" (Til)

"It's almost done, please wait a moment." (Youya)

Luna and Til's patience were about to run out as they were hungry.

"Lutra, first please put this on your hair." (Youya)

Taking out a hairpin from my magic bag, I handed it over to Lutra. She received the hairpin and pinned it onto her hair, surprising Til and Luna. I brought Lutra to the mirror at the front of the room.

"It's amazing. My hair became black." (Lutra)

"It is a hair pin that has a special enchantment called the

Blessing of Darkness

. It's an enchantment that grants the user increased resistance to the darkness element, while causing the user's hair to change colour. We can't afford to walk around with a girl possessing the unique Laluzulu silver hair.. By changing your hair colour it is more difficult for anybody to discover your identity. A person's hair is an important factor in their identity." (Youya)

Lutra is famous for her silver hair similar to the battle princess Renoir. That fame can become an important weapon for us. By changing the colour of her hair, it is easy to pass her off as someone who resembles the famous princess Lutra.

Although it is quite a luxurious option to use an enchanted equipment with increases darkness properties as a disguise.

"It's true, although it was just my hair colour that changed, it looks like I'm a completely different person. However, it still feels inadequate. We have to change something else so that the impression would be even less likely." (Lutra)

Lutra took out a dagger from her bag we placed on the bedside and cut her hair. Her hair which extended to her waist was now shoulder length and tied it with a hair-tie. Like this, it wasn't just her hair colour that changed but her hairstyle had changed as well. The impression of Princess Lutra was completely gone.

"You definitely look different now that you cut your hair, but are you really fine with that? Weren't you always proud of having the same hairstyle as your ancestor Renoir." (Youya)

"I was definitely proud of my silver hair, however, what matters now is to succeed the throne. So long as that happens, I will cut my hair as many times as it takes." (Lutra)

Despite her strong words, there was a sense of sadness behind her expression. Her hair was a symbol of her pride from having the same hair as her ancestor, it was definitely a difficult choice for her to cut her hair. All because of a dream which she wants to achieve.

"That is a good resolve. With this, no one can recognise you as princess Lutra. Now then, should we change your name as well? As expected it is difficult for us to call you Lutra when we are outside." (Youya)

"I agree. A second identity would be needed. But it is difficult to think of a different name on my own. Could uncle Youya be the one to give me the new name? Maybe it would be easier for me if you were the one who came up with it." (Lutra)

A new name... Can't believe that I would have to name two people in this short span of time. For Luna's case, I gave her the same name as the pie that she liked. However, in Lutra's case nothing particularly comes to mind.

I took a glance over at the hair that Lutra had cut .

"How about Selene?" (Youya)

Lutra began to repeat Selene over and over.

"That's a nice name. Could you tell me what it stands for?" (Lutra)

While smiling, Lutra asked me.

"I know that you wanted to cut off any traces of being Lutra, but I thought that your silver hair was important to you. Since we dyed your hair black, I wanted to give you a name with the image of silver in mind. For me, silver represents the moon, that's why I chose Selene as it is the name for the goddess of the moon." (Youya)

Note: Selene is the name of the moon goddess in Greek mythology

"I'm surprised. Uncle Youya is surprisingly poetic and romantic. I really like it. Thank you, I'll cherish the name." (Selene)

Lutra.. I mean Selene smiled so brightly that I felt captivated by her. This can't do, I have to get myself together. In the future Selene will return to Lutra and inherit the throne. I will not lay my hands on her. Firstly, there is Phil and I am an old man. What am I going to do when I lay my hands on a teenage girl. In the first place I am her knight. I would be a failure of a knight to lay a hand on the princess. Til is also nearby, If I did anything strange Phil would definitely find out about it.

"Take good care of it. Also I want to say something. I'll be blunt, there is also the option of throwing away your identity as Lutra and live the rest of your life as Selene. In any case, Lutra died once in the forest of

God Trees.

Rather than the political life with conspiracies in the life of a royal, the adventurer life may turn out easier and more enjoyable than that." (Youya)

I didn't bring this up with the intention of tempting her into the adventuring life. I did this as an elder in life to let her make her own choices, about the possible paths in her life and to choose whatever she thinks would make her happy. It would be a shame if Selene returned to the royal palace just because

she was unable to consider any other possibilities.

"Uncle Youya is as kind as ever...However, I will be returning to the castle no matter what. I can't leave the Laluzulu Kingdom to my elder brothers. If that happens the kingdom will fall into chaos. The citizens aren't toys for the king to play with and I can't run away from my responsibilities just because I desired my own freedom." (Selene)

"It seems that I said something unnecessary. You will become a great queen." (Youya)

She chose to protect her people in exchange for her own freedom. Although she is just a teenage girl, she is a fine princess.

"There is another thing I have to correct you on. The winner of the tournament won't be the person to become the successor, but the person to select the successor. I have no intentions of becoming the queen of the kingdom. I may be a candidate to become the successor of the throne, but I have zero experience in being a ruler. I am merely good with my body. The one that is worthy of being the queen of the kingdom is my elder sister who is competent both in her personality and magical abilities. If I win the tournament, I plan to make my sister the successor of the kingdom and support her by her side. All this after making uncle Youya a knight of course." (Selene)

I widened my eyes. She was going so far to even willing to throw her life away to win the inheritance tournament and yet she will be handing the throne to another person. It seems that above all this girl is considering the country first and the people. I don't hate this kind of person. In fact, I feel even more compelled to support her. And even slightly greedier. If she isn't going to become the king, I wonder if it's possible to convince her sister to allow Lutra to continue adventuring with us after everything is over.

"I understand. For the time being it's time to eat! I've brought back lots of potions as well as nutritious foods to help you recover. It's the welcoming party for a new member. Let's enjoy tonight as much as possible, whatever you guys want!" (Youya)

"Luna was tired of waiting!" (Luna)

"Hurry let's go! Selene is the newbie here so be sure to listen to us carefully!"

(Til)

"Luna will also teach what she knows!" (Luna)

"Sure, please do so, my cute seniors." (Selene)

Watching the two children trying to behave as a senior made me laugh unknowingly.

Lutra turned Selene changed into her casual wear from her sleepwear and we headed towards the bar together. Truth be told, I'm also extremely excited. Let's make it an enjoyable welcoming party.

Chapter 9: The old man challenges Selene

After completing our preparations, we finally arrived at the bar.

We were recommended to this bar by the receptionist after I had asked for a place where we could enjoy a good meal as adventurers regardless of the price.

As it was my first time arriving in Greenwood outside of the game, I wasn't familiar with the place nor do I know about the places we should go. It is precisely at this moment where we should rely on someone familiar with the town such as the receptionist or the owner of the inn.

After arriving at the front door, I could tell that we had come to the right place. There were many adventurers of different races enjoying themselves in the bar. Having adventurers as your main customers is a rough situation as it is difficult to survive unless your performance is highly efficient for your cost to make up for possible damages in the property.

"Youya, there is the smell of good meat *slurpslurp*." (Luna)

"The smell of the vegetables here is great too. I'm familiar with plants so I can tell a fresh vegetable from a bad one." (Til)

"I do not frequent lively stores like this. My heart is pounding from excitement." (Selene)

Before we managed to place our orders, Luna, Til and Lutra.. I mean Selene seem to be looking forward to the food here.

When the waiter arrived, I asked for their recommendations. When entering a store for the first time, I tend to order their recommendations rather than pick out a dish I would like as I like to try out the store's most confident dish.

"Luna and Til prefer juice to alcohol?" (Selene)

"Uhn. Alcohol is bitter. Milk with honey is good." (Luna)

"Right? Juice is delicious you know! I am a believer of fruits!" (Til)

In this world, a child would be considered an adult once they reach the age of 13, thus both Luna and Til are able to drink alcohol, however the two of them

refused to drink as it was too bitter for them. Times like this made me miss the old days of having a drinking party late at night.

"How about you Selene?" (Youya)

"I would like to have wine." (Selene)

"The wine here won't be the same as the wine you drank in the past. It's much lighter and younger." (Youya)

Nobles typically drank wine that has been nurtured for a long period of time, however such luxurious goods aren't present in general shops like these. The wine served here is typically a young wine that was made in the year and its method of production isn't suitable for long term preservation.

"That is interesting. I'll have to get used to an adventurer's wine so I am definitely going to order it." (Selene)

"Got it. Excuse me miss. Can I have one milk with honey, grape juice, one ale.. Actually cancel the ale and give me 2 wine instead." (Youya)

I ordered a cup of milk, 2 jugs of wine and a grape juice. It is a nice thing to drink wine from time to time as well.

The drinks came fairly quickly in this store as the waiter immediately brought us our orders.

With sparkling eyes, Luna gulped down her warm milk with honey. I was always wondering if her love from milk was derived from her fox traits as she seems to love milk. Til said that the grape juice tasted decent while Selene was surprised to see the wine served in a jug, Nobles often drank wine from a glass but adventurers gulp wine down from jugs. Selene learnt by observing the surrounding adventurers and followed suit.

"Delicious, however is this really wine?" (Selene)

"Well at least I think so. That is the taste of an adventurer's wine." (Youya)

"I see. So this is the taste that uncle Youya and your friends often drink. It has no deep flavour to it, it tastes as if it was mixed with a bunch of different ingredients and the grape flavour is diluted. However, it's still good and easy to drink. I like it." (Selene)

Following her words, she tilted the mug and drank another mouthful. The wine drunk by adventurers often varies all the way from the grapes harvested to the method of manufacturing the wine. Nobles are picky with their wine and often only use delicious grapes from the trees. However, cheap wine for adventurers often only consist of using more and more grapes. Naturally, since it was made with inferior grapes in sweetness and quality, only inferior quality of wine can be made. However, it isn't edible the way it is as the sugar content and alcohol concentration was still low. Hence afterwards it was mixed with various ingredients such as honey, lemon juice, other grape wines and alcohol, increasing its volume while improving its taste. Thanks to that, the taste of the wine in each bar varies.

There are even several stores that merely add water to the mixture instead. However, the shop here was amazing with good tastes. The wine was well made, sweet with a strong acidity and the taste of hidden spices behind it. My body began to feel warm drinking the wine. After the drinks came the food.

"Youya look! It's a mountain of meat!" (Luna)

"Wowow, now this is what you call a dish!" (Til)

The recommended dishes came and the two girls became rowdy.

"It's a deep fried dish. This is rare to see. Fried dishes are extremely delicious." (Youya)

"It tastes amazing!" (Luna)

"It's delicious, however the oil may be a little too much. It's a little unbearable to eat." (Til)

The recommended main dish was thick roasted pork with a coating of sweet sauce. It could even be the meat that we delivered for the quest earlier today.

It's been awhile since I ate a fried food. The meat juices bursted inside of my mouth as it mixed with the sweet sauce, completely overwhelming the aftertaste of the wine. Afterwards I took a gulp of the wine and realised that it was a mixture of lemon juice, grape juice as well as several species that went surprisingly well with greasy dishes. The food here was magnificently compatible.

"Luna, Til. Juice is fine but how about trying some wine? This dish goes really well with their wine. Til mentioned that the excessive oil was bad but it's pretty refreshing to match the wine with the dish." (Youya)

"Alcohol is bitter!" (Luna)

"I don't understand the concept of turning sweet grapes into bitter drinks."
(Til)

"Well, just try it." (Youya)

Without their permission, I ordered two more jugs of wine. Even if the two of them refuse to drink it, I could drink them afterwards.

"If Youya says so.." (Luna)

"Only because you are selfish enough to make us drink it!" (Til)

The two of them took a jug of wine each.

"Sweet! Youya, Luna can drink sweet wine!" (Luna)

"This could actually be good.. With the meat, it's delicious!" (Til)

With huge and repeated gulps, the two girls quickly finished their wine and asked for seconds. The rate which they drank the wine at was also at a frightening pace. Although it was a cheap wine with low alcohol content, it's alcohol content was inflated by adding more alcohol directly into it so it has quite a relatively alcohol content. Let's be sure to moderate their drinking afterwards.

"So how is it Selene? The taste of an adventurer's meal." (Youya)

"Based on just the taste, I have eaten much better, however my heart is also going wild from excitement at the atmosphere." (Selene)

"That excitement is the essence of an adventurer's life. Be sure to enjoy it as much as you can." (Youya)

Selene smiled brightly as she stuffed her cheeks with meat. I was worried because she was a princess but it seems that being an adventurer suited her as well.

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After satisfying our stomachs, we began to talk about our future as adventurers. The two girls who naively drank wine continuously were overwhelmed by the alcohol and slept with a blissful face. Even a heavy drinker would collapse after chugging five large mugs continuously.

Lets be sure to stop them after two servings next time. However, thanks to this I can focus on the conversation with Selene.

"Selene's status, level and skills are both satisfactory. However, your equipment is inadequate. Let's go shopping tomorrow." (Youya)

Thanks to the death battle with the *Killer Ape*, the labyrinth in the *Starfish Larvae*

and the hunt for Shrimp meat back in Rumberg, My level was currently level 24 while Luna and Til were level 23. Selene who was level 25 was plenty strong enough. However, there is nothing we can do about her equipment.

"It's okay though? My sword, shield and armour are all first-class items." (Selene)

"There isn't any problem about their quality, however all of them have the Laluzulu crest. Furthermore the material is too good and the manufacturing method is too different. Just by looking, people would suspect that we are either thieves or a noble pretending to be an adventurer. So long as you are Selene, it is better not to use the equipment that Lutra used to use." (Youya)

Missing posters about Lutra had begun to spread around some large cities, but it hasn't been widespread in the Laluzulu kingdom. However, the Laluzulu royals do not appear in public often so there is little risk of being recognised as a princess just by looking at Selene's face.

Princess Lutra was famous for being born with shining silver hair for the first time in several generations, however right now her hair was a different colour.

And she was safely unrecognisable by others. However, it is dangerous to walk around with the Laluzulu crest on her equipment now.

"Do you have any spare equipment? What about your Magic Bag?" (Youya)

Magic bags were highly valued and very rarely appeared on the open market. However, it wasn't impossible for the royal family to be able to get it with their power. If a princess was going to be sent to a dungeon to raise her level to prepare for her inheritance ceremony, there is no way that they don't have a magic bag.

"It hurts me to say this but it was stolen by the knight." (Selene)

"For the goal of killing you, he did that to increase the possibility of you perishing inside the larvae huh. Either way we need to get you a new set of equipment. Give me a moment, I'll take a look at what items I can pass to you." (Youya)

There was a spare sword in the bag plus I was carrying my trusty sword with a self-restoration enchantment and a black magic blade on my back.

I could give her both my spare armour and my spare sword. However the problem was her shield. Since I rely mostly on my blade for defense, whenever I came across a nice shield I would immediately sell it away.

"I can hand over a sword and armor, however I don't have a shield. Alright, it's decided. We will get a shield for you tomorrow." (Youya)

"Sure, let's do that. Laluzulu's sword style relies on using a shield, furthermore most of the crusader's skill also rely on a shield." (Selene)

Wait a minute. Something feels off about what Selene just said. The sword style of Laluzulu relies on a shield?

Ahh I see. It's the very fact that they had incorporated a sword into their battle style.

"Hey Selene. Did you know that your ancestor, the battle princess Renoir did not use a sword?" (Youya)

That was it. Back in the game, the overpowered NPC Renoir didn't use a sword, and instead relied solely on her shield for combat. Although that was

possible only due to her unique shield. Probably, in the hundreds of years since she passed, her battle style must have been forgotten as it was passed from generation to generation. It's not surprising considering how there haven't been a single silver-haired crusader in the past few generations. It can't be help that she was mistaught in the art of being a crusader since she was the only one in several generations to become a crusader.

"You're lying. My ancestor Renoir boasted a strength equivalent to an army, that can't be possible by battling with just a shield." (Selene)

"The battle princess Renoir's shield was a shield that both blocks and pierces the enemy. In the first place, her shield was made for the purpose of piercing her enemies." (Youya)

"Where did you hear about this? Renoir's shield was passed down between the princesses with silver hair. Naturally now it belongs to me. It is a superb shield with high defensive capabilities, however for offensive the best I could do was just to hit you with it." (Selene)

Could it be that the main gimmick of the shield was forgotten too? As it was pointlessly flashy, a large number of players in the game wished to use Renoir's skill in the game and there was even a campaign to ask for a crusader class to be implemented. Just what in the world is the Laluzulu kingdom doing, wasting that shield's potential to be used as an ordinary shield.

I could try to recall the battle style of the battle princess Renoir and consider how I can reproduce it for Selene. If I managed to replicate it and she masters it, she will become a powerful force to be reckoned with. It is a special skill that was the complete opposite of my *Deflect*.

"Selene. I have read books about how the battle princess Renoir used to battle on the battlefield. I also know the secret within her shield. Tomorrow, when we get a new shield for you, let's try a sparring session. I'll use Renoir's shield and adopt her battle style in the battle which is definitely the ideal battle style for a crusader. It will definitely be a good reference point for you." (Youya)

"Even if it's you uncle youya, I am unable to believe your words because the Laluzulu battle style was created by that very princess Renoir. It isn't a style that battles using solely a shield. If there is such a fictional book then it was merely a delusional one." (Selene)

"You'll know the answer once we fight tomorrow. It'll be a good way to test your abilities as well." (Youya)

Selene's pride was hurt as she showed a hateful look. On the contrast, I am looking forward to our sparring session tomorrow. Having the opportunity to fight using Renoir's shield that was adored in the game, there is no way i couldn't be excited about it.

Battle princess Renoir was a crusader who had a unique battlestyle that depended purely on her own strength. She protected and attack with her life on the line with a shield. Right now I am just a magic knight and I won't be able to demonstrate the style's true power by replicating it. However, I should be able to perform enough to demonstrate to Selene the power of her shield-style.

Until tomorrow, I will be imagining and practicing with the shield for our battle tomorrow, and teach Selene the true battle style of a crusader.

Chapter 10: The old man replicates the battle princess Renoir's battle style

(Note: Update at the end of the chapter.)

After returning from the bar yesterday, I borrowed Selene's shield before returning to bed with a sweaty body. The next morning felt great as I had only drank moderately last night, however in contrast to me...

"Luna's head.. Luna's head is going to break~~." (Luna)

"Ugh. As expected alcohol is a no-go. Juice is still the best." (Til)

The two children were whining in bed as they had drank too much wine yesterday. The result of drinking five large jugs of wine gave the two of them a magnificent hangover. In their current state there is no chance for us to enter the dungeon. Well in the first place, there was the need to arrange equipment for Selene while adjusting our party's movements as a four-man squad. As a result, we will be postponing the

Starfish Larvae's labyrinth exploration to tomorrow instead.

"The two of you stay in bed for today." (Youya)

"Uhn. It's regrettable but Luna will stay in bed." (Luna)

"Going out like this is impossible~." (Til)

Truth is if they were to drink an antidote potion, it would treat the hangover as it was basically a weak alcohol poisoning, it is something commonly done by adventurers. Adventurers would often drink an antidote after drinking before heading over to a dungeon. However, let's have them enjoy the hangover to remind them not to overdrink again.

"Selene. You can change your clothes in the other room. Then, list the essentials that you need. Currently we only have the clothes that I bought for you the other day so clothing is a definite. Don't worry about the money since we still have lots in reserve." (Youya)

"Then I'll take your word for it. I especially would like a change of

underwear.." (Selene)

"I don't know what to do about that even if you tell me." (Youya)

I smiled bitterly. Why do young girls come so close to me like this being unprotected. Although I just woke up, my joints were already beginning to hurt. It's probably time for us to change rooms. Originally our room only had two beds. Luna and Til used one bed while I slept in the other, however I gave my bed up for Selene. Since it will be difficult to sleep on the sofa everyday, I'll talk to the innkeeper about a room change afterwards.

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Selene and I separated from the two children who were suffering from a hangover and walked around the town. Although the town wasn't as large as Rumberg, the shops were much more vibrant and had a larger variety. This is most likely thanks to the large number of adventurers who visit the town during the

Magic Egg

season. There are many accessories and equipments with excellent functionalities for intermediate adventurers in the city. Halfway through our trip, I began acting separately from Selene as the party leader to replenish our expendable items such as potions and preserved meals whereas Selene went on to purchase her essentials. I had thought about following her on her shopping trip but it would be embarrassing to follow her as she was buying basically all her essentials including her underwear. Although I handed over a large sum of money to her, I am secretly hoping that her sense of money wasn't over the top as she was still a princess

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After replenishing our consumables, I waited for Selene at a big tree in the

middle of an open square.

"The price was much more reasonable than I thought." (Youya)

The replenishment of consumables was cheaper than I thought. I had expected the prices to be higher due to it being magic egg season but on the contrary the price was cheaper than the other cities. The quality of the potions were good and the preserved meals weren't that bad either. After awhile, Selene appeared as she came running towards me.

"Sorry for making you wait, Uncle Youya." (Selene)

"Don't worry about it, I just arrived a few moments ago. Did you finish your shopping trip safely?" (Youya)

"I did. I'll return the change." (Selene)

"I'm glad your trip went well. Keep the rest of the money. It'll be better for you to have some money if we are ever seperated." (Youya)

It seems that her sense of money was much better than I thought. I was expected her budget to be spent completely on clothes. I had heard beforehand about what she was going to purchase but I'm glad that she managed to spend well within her budget.

"Then I'll do as you say and keep them with me. It's finally time to buy my armour. I've never gotten the chance to choose my own equipment my heart is pounding from excitement. Truthfully I wanted uncle Youya to choose both my equipment and my name." (Selene)

"Then for that reason, let's take a look at your equipment together." (Youya)

As expected Selene showed an embarrassed look as she held my hand. This reminded me of our time together ten years ago after my promise to become her knight, she was always embarrassed around me. I felt a little emotional after witnessing her small hands grow this large.

"I am also looking forward to our sparring session later today. I will definitely not lose. I won't give in when Renoir's style has been tarnish." (Selene)

She is surprisingly unwilling to give in. Unwillingness to be defeated is a necessary trait of an adventurer, however I can't stay silent at this either.

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The two of us entered a store to purchase the basic equipments necessary for Selene. The basic equipment for a crusader was a one-handed sword, a shield, armour and a helmet if necessary. Yesterday I equipped my spare one-handed sword and armour and tested them. The sword was comfortable enough for me to use without discomfort. Similarly for the spare equipment, it was a flexible armour with anti-blade properties and has excellent properties against fire and ice still felt comfortable to put on. Since shields were sold everywhere, I came here as the store looked to have high-quality equipments. In the meantime, if there were any good equipment being sold in the meantime I would buy them as a spare. Since we have plenty of savings after all.

"Uncle Youya prefers leather armour to metal armour even after all this time. Even now you are looking enthusiastic. Me and the knights often only wore metal armours." (Selene)

"The skins of monsters and dragons more often than not are more durable and provide more protection than metal armours. Plus they are light and easy to move about in. Since I live and die by my blade, my sword is my lifeline and there aren't any armour that can completely protect you from a sword. In the first place, if you were to wear heavy metal armour it would be difficult to go on adventures isn't it? We would probably have to walk continuously for countless days and tens of hundreds of kilometers. You would collapse before you even got to fight any monsters." (Youya)

After listening to my words, Selene placed her hand on her chin and went into deep thought.

"After your explanation now it makes sense. It would be fine if it was a half a day hunt or at best a full day, however if you were a competent adventurer you would be spending most of your time in the dungeon. In that case it would be difficult to wear metal armour." (Selene)

Unless you were a beginner, adventurers whose lives depend on their adventuring activities would never use metal armour.

Your armour which was supposed to act as a safety net would become your biggest enemy. Even if you were to travel with light metal armours, only the vital areas would be protected by the armour and exposing other areas of your body. However there are still exceptions to this. There are super lightweight metal armours that exist with incredible durability. That metal was dubbed the "Steel of God" and it was the metal used to craft Renoir's shield. The armour that Leonard was wearing is also made from the same steel. It was probably the armour he got from the

Tower of Trials.

"I've seen many good equipments in my time but there are also many impressive equipments here. Shall we take a look at their shields?" (Youya)

"Yes. Let's do that uncle Youya." (Selene)

Selene walked over to the section where numerous shields are lined up. Although they are often generalised as a shield, there are many different types of shields. Such as a large two-handed sword or a one-handed shield. Besides their sizes, there are also lantern shields with blades or spikes attached to them.

Selene's attention was completely focused on one shield among the line of shields. It was a round shield with a buckler in the center. The legendary Renoir's shield was also a buckler, so it's wasn't surprising that her attention was caught by it.

"I think that either one of these two shields are good. Which shield is better?" (Selene)

Although the two shields looked the same, the left shield was made of mithril while the right was slightly larger and made of adamantite.

"It seems so. I would prefer the left although the right shield seems better in terms of hardness. Mithril has a higher defense against magic and it's lighter, making it easier to handle." (Youya)

"I agree. Then I'll take the left one. Although isn't it really expensive to use mithril? Is it really okay to spend this much money?" (Selene)

"It's alright. There is a need for such a shield and the amount can be

recovered easily from your contribution to the party." (Youya)

The shield costs about the same as Luna's dagger and Til's bow added together. However, it is a shield which we will be betting our lives on, I have no intention to skim out on this.

"I will definitely be sure to return your kindness with my work." (Selene)

Selene brought the shield to the shopkeeper as I paid him the amount. The store owner smiled and said.

"Both of you seem to be excellent adventurers. Our shop is capable of applying magic coatings onto the shield, would you be interested in one?" (Shopkeeper)

"Hou. You're able to apply magical coatings. Please do so." (Youya)

Magic coatings was a type of coating that raised the equipment's defense against magic by apply magic power and binding a thin layer of metal over the shield. However, since the plating wears off after receiving several magic attacks, it is necessary for us to periodically restore the coating. However it is still a useful process since it gives the user several chances to defend themselves against magic attacks.

"Roger that." (Storekeeper)

"Is it possible for you to apply the coating to another equipment other than the shield that we just bought?" (Youya)

"I don't mind, however it'll be fifty extra per equipment." (Storekeeper)

I had an idea after the storekeeper mentioned the coating. If it was a magic coating, would it be possible to cover the Laluzulu emblem on the shield?

"Have you heard about the rumors that the Laluzulu Kingdom's princess, Princess Lutra was eaten by the Starfish Larvae?" (Youya)

We heard the rumors float around in the bar yesterday during our dinner It was normal for a national incident such as this to have rumors float around, however it feels too early for the rumors to be spreading. There is the possibility of someone spreading her death deliberately.

"I have heard about that rumor." (Storekeeper)

"Truth is, we picked up a shield that most likely belongs to her in the forest of *God Trees*

and it would be troubling to use it with the rumors spreading around."
(Youya)

"Well of course you would be." (Storekeeper)

"Could you apply a coating onto the shield as we can't use it with the emblem on the shield?" (Youya)

From the storekeeper's point of view, this excuse would be expected. If we were discovered with the shield, it would be likely that the kingdom would ask us to return the shield, furthermore the store owner would also be deprived of a potential business deal.

"I don't mind. Show me the shield." (Storekeeper)

I took out the shield from my magic bag and handed it over to the storekeeper.

"Hmm it's a good shield. Just wait a moment and the shields will be ready in about two hours." (Storekeeper)

The storekeeper went to the back and prepared a receipt for us in advance and went to the workshop that was within the store. While we were alone, Selene opened her mouth.

"Uncle Youya.. Why did you do that?" (Selene)

"If there is a magic coating then there is the possibility of using your shield while hiding it's materials and the crest. Like this, the mythril shield that you chose will be even more important as you'll have to keep your shield once the coating wears off. No one would suspect anything if you took out a different mythril shield after one becomes worn out." (Youya)

"But doesn't this mean that the storekeeper now knows my shield is in your possession?" (Selene)

"Don't worry. First-rate craftsmen do not talk about personal information of their customers. I can tell that shopkeeper is a top-tier craftsmen." (Youya)

You can tell a first-rate craftsmen just by looking. It should be safe for us to trust this shopkeeper.

"Ah so thats the case. I'm surprised at the development but I'm also glad I will be able to use a shield i am familiar with. Is it possible to coat the sword as well?" (Selene)

"If you try to coat a sword its sharpness will decrease and it will become blunt." (Youya)

"Well that would definitely be difficult." (Selene)

This is precisely the reason why it is a coating technique that can only be done on a shield. It is also possible to do it on an armour however it is much more costly. Plus my spare armour would have a better performance anyway we need not force ourselves to get a new set of armour.

Now I'm looking forward to our completed shields.

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After bring the purchased items back to the inn, Me and Selene were completely equipped standing in the courtyard. It was time for our sparring session.

"Are you seriously going to battle me with just a shield?" (Selene)

"Ah. Just like how the legendary battle princess Renoir did, I have shield on my right arm and a free left hand." (Youya)

For this battle, I am borrowing Selene's shield which was passed down from the legendary Renoir herself.

It was originally a silver shield made from the "Steel from god" however thanks to the coating it looks much more metallic. Its shape was just slightly larger and thicker than a standard round buckler. However, it's true potential lies in the holes several centimeters in diameter at the bottom of the shield. Just as I remembered it in the game.

I poured some mana into the shield to test my theory and the shield responded as I imagined. I borrowed the shield from Selene yesterday to practice the shield-style of battle as well as how to channel mana in many different ways.

For equipments that require mana to function, each of them has a unique gimmick which has to be performed properly in order to activate their abilities. As I have encountered several different magic swords, I've managed to pick up the correct way to channel mana as well as how to do them appropriately for different magical items.

"I don't know what or how uncle Youya plans to defeat me using Renoir's supposedly true battle style, but I will strongly utilize the sword of the Laluzulu kingdom that has been drilled into me since I was a child. This is the true battle style used by the legendary hero." (Selene)

Selene was holding a shield in her left hand and a wooden sword on her right. After several preparations, the battle has finally begun. The rules for this battle was simple. The first one to land a blow on their opponent is the victor. For me, that would be to pierce her using the buckler, however my buckler has a short range as compared to her sword. I was at an extreme disadvantage.. If the battle princess Renoir's shield was a normal shield that is.

"Now then, come at me anytime. Or is Selene just all talk and afraid of attacking on her own?" (Youya)

"Your intentions are as clear as day. However I will still bite it nonetheless." (Selene)

Since my opponent has a wooden sword, I can't just recklessly charge into her range. I closed the distance slowly while carefully observing her movements to watch for her attack's preliminary movement and prevent it with my shield. A capable fighter using a sword and a shield will most likely use their shield to create an opening while countering using their sword to attack. A buckler was small for a shield, however in exchange it's handling and ease of usage increased thanks to it's small size.

Now then, since the match wouldn't be exciting if we were just waiting around like this, I increased the pace of the match, rushing and quickly entering

within range of Selene, throwing her tempo off. While her stance was thrown off by the sudden change in pace, she slashed with her sword.

Using the buckler and its roundness, I passed the blow to the side. Compared to a sword, the buckler was much closer to my body and slightly larger, making it easier for me to deflect her blows. The buckler might unexpectedly suit me.

I properly deflected Selene's attack using the buckler. The battle princess Renoir used her buckler in her dominant hand, making it easier for her to maneuver and increase her charging power while at the same time increasing her defense by having a shield on her dominant hand.

I carefully observed Selene's sword.

It appears that she was avoiding releasing a heavy blow in order to preserve her balance and form. As a result it allows her to release strong and accuracy blows, piling up sharp attacks one after another. It was interesting and at the same time a powerful way of utilizing a sword.

"Uncle Youya, your defense is as amazing as usual. However, it isn't a method of attacking in the slightest." (Selene)

I replied Selene as I deflected another slash.

"That's because I haven't gotten into it yet. I just wanted to understand your fighting style while observing your capabilities. There are still things I have yet to show you. 7 times. Do you know what this number represents?" (Youya)

"What is it?" (Selene)

"The number of times I could have killed you in this round." (Youya)

Selene took a deep breath as she launched another flurry of attacks. This time, the openings she had were gone and her attacks became much heavier. I knew about it from the start, that her swordsmanship was likely a little below a top-class swordsman. It is easily understood from how she was raised and how long she has been training. However, her spirit was still far from a top-class swordsman. Equally important to your techniques, your spirit was something that hard to be honed as well.

Now then, I'm pretty much done with grasping Selene's sword style. It's time

to finish this match. Shields were always meant for receiving attacks, however it is also possible to use them for launching attacks.

"Let's do this!" (Youya)

It was a chance for me to counter by opening a gap with force. I used my buckler in a swift manner and swept her sword with a backfist, knocking it away with the back of the buckler. Selene dug her foot into the ground and launched herself backwards trying to open up a distance between us. However it backfired and instead opened a large opening for me. Utilizing

God's Strength

to increase my speed to a godlike level, I lunged towards Selene. Twisting my waist, I transferred the energy to my shoulder then to my arm, aiming to strike Selene's forehead with my buckler. Before the buckler collided, I immediately activated the hidden function of Renoir's shield. As my arm stretched towards Selene's forehead, a roar could be heard from the shield as a thick pile spike made of

Steel of God

appeared and stuck out from the bottom of the shield at the speed of sound.

This is the special gimmick within the battle princess

Renoir's

shield, the shield that was used for both defense and offense. The tip of the spike, with the double acceleration from

God's Speed

as well as their release of the spikes close to sound, stopped right before impaling Selene's forehead, with the tip of the spike slightly splitting the skin on her forehead. A gust of wind blew as blood flowed down her forehead and her beautiful hair danced in the wind.

It was the end of the match.

Selene lost all strength in her legs as she fell to the ground from the shock of the spike.

"Ah.ahh.ahhh. It's not blown off. My head's still here. I'm properly alive."
(Selene)

She was in shock to the point that the blood drained from her face and her facial expression was completely frozen. She clearly did not expect that a spike launching at the speed of sound would not strike her between her eyebrows, knowing that if the blow had connected, her head would have been blown off.

"This is Renoir's original style of battle. Overwhelming her opponents with her speed and power, breaking down their defense before feeding them to her spikes. She also wore a gauntlet on her left hand, however let's leave that for another day. Having spikes in a shield is quite a convenient thing. Just like this, when receiving a heavy blow, you can pierce the ground with the spikes and firmly root yourself to the ground. Once you learn to place your entire body's strength into this form, you can stop an opponent several times your own weight. If I were to teach you, Selene you would be able to use this in no time."
(Youya)

The spikes were extremely useful both for offense and defensive. It's a pity that this gimmick was lost to the kingdom's history. I will be sure to teach Selene how to utilize her magic power in order to activate the shield of Renoir in its original manner.

Selene seemed to receive a shock far larger than I imagined as she continued to stay on the ground without moving. After a brief moment, the sound of water flowing could be heard as a pool of water formed around Selene who was in a girl's sitting position. It seems that stopping the spikes right before her forehead was much more frightening than I thought.

"Well, uhm. I was expecting to give you a shock but I didn't think it would have that much of an effect. Let's return to the inn. I'll prepare hot water for you." (Youya)

Colour returned to Selene's face as her expression changes and her face became reddish.

"UWAHH I WAS SEEN BY UNCLE YOUYA UWAHHH" (Selene)

Selene began to cry uncontrollably as she was embarrassed from being seen wetting herself. It seems that I overdid it. What should I do? I pinched my

cheeks as I was troubled about what to do. Let's return to the inn for a change of clothes. It's a good thing that she bought a change of underwear earlier this afternoon.

Chapter 11: The old man trains with Luna and Selene

Yesterday, I had a conversation with Selene about how her ancestor, the heroic princess Renoir used to battle with a single shield. However she was unconvinced and as a result we decided to have a mock battle between the two of us. However, I had pulled the rope too tight in our battle. Although I managed to stop the spike in time, Selene had the impression that she was struck by a high-speed spike through her head when in reality, only a small chunk of skin on her forehead was grazed. As a result of the shock, she accidentally wet herself in the courtyard.

The material used to produce the spikes from the shield was a special liquid made of

Steel of God

. It's shape and hardness could be altered by passing magical power through it. That is how a thick and long spike larger than the buckler itself can be produced.

Currently, we were in our room at the inn while Selene was changing her clothes in the back room.

She had suffered damage to her pride earlier both as a knight and as a girl by losing not only the simulated match but also peeing in shock at the end. I was pondering on how should I approach the situation while taking care of our swords in the room. Without noticing it, the futon in front of me began to wiggle.

"Youya, Luna is finally energetic again! Never drinking alcohol again." (Luna)

It was Luna. I learnt that it was easy to understand Luna's physical condition just by looking at her tail. This morning while she was suffering from the hangover, the fur on her tail had shrunk but now the tail returned to its usual fumofumo shape with much larger volume, indicating that she was feeling better once again.

"I'm glad you have recovered. How is Til's condition?" (Youya)

"I don't feel fine but it's better. My head still hurts. I can't believe Youya and my elder sister are drinking such poisons so often." (Til)

"That is because you both drank too much. It's much better if you drank in moderation. It was fun when you are drinking, wasn't it." (Youya)

Luna and Til began to recall what happened last night.

"Uhn. Just as Youya said. Luna felt *pokapoka* while she was drinking, it was fun." (Luna)

"Now then you mention it, you're right. That could have been my first time feeling such a way. Luna, Next time let's be sure to stop at 3 cups!" (Til)

"That sounds good but the world began spinning on the fourth cup. It would be fun if we just drank three cups. But having the world go *gulugulu* and *gaaa-aaa* was super fun too. If it didn't hurt this much the next day I would do it again!" (Luna)

The two of them seemed to be enlightened about drinking alcohol, although they may be getting a little too excited. The next time we have a drinking party, it'll be fun if the two of them could get used to drinking alcohol. However if the two of them overdo it again I can always just bar them from drinking again.

The door opened and Selene returned from the back room. It looks like she finished cleaning her body and changed her clothes. It was a good thing that we had bought a change of clothes before the sparring match

. Although she wasn't wearing anything fancy, her fashion sense was good.

"Uncle Youya, I accidentally showed you an embarrassing act." (Selene)

Her face started turning red. As expected it seems to be difficult for her to adjust in such a short amount of time.

"Don't worry about it. Honestly, that kind of stuff happens often when you are going out on adventures." (Youya)

"Is it supposed to be comforting that we will be embarrassed often." (Selene)

From incontinence to vomiting and other harsher things like drowning in

dungeons, there are many other worse things that can occur in a dungeon. Before meeting Phil and Leonard, I had experienced numerous such incidents to the point that I can say that I have experienced hell. There was an incident where a party of adventurers I was in had dived into an underground-type dungeon for several days, and in the midst of the chaos inside the dungeon, one of the men had attacked another woman in our party. Another man who was in love with the woman fought the other man to protect her, however the girl in her frenzied state mistakenly attacked and murdered the man who fought to protect her, tried to run away before getting caught in a trap and dying in front of the entire party. The man who had initially assaulted the woman was also in love with the woman, and as a result of his grief, he voluntarily charged into a monster and lost his life. As a result, I was left alone in the depths of the dungeon, prepared to die for several days.

The dungeon was at a level where a party of four would be able to barely get by by working together, at the time I didn't think that I would have made it out alive on my own. However it was at that moment that I came across another party, and pay them in exchange for allowing me to accompany them all the way back to the surface.

Compared to those days, these sort of incidents actually felt pleasant instead. It was also because of this that I do not plan on accepting any other men into the party other than myself.

In a desperate situation it is easy for a person to throw away any sense of rationality. I've seen that happen so many times that I actually think it would be better to have a larger number of one gender rather than a gender equal party.

I have also heard about how sexual activities help the party to alleviate their stress in a dungeon but that sort of stuff is still too early for Luna and the girls. Until my eyes turn black I will absolutely never let that happen.

"Well I won't allow such an incident to happen when we are exploring in the dungeon, however be sure to keep your spirit under control during a sparring match and strengthen your mental strength. Carve what happened in our sparring match into your mind and remember it. After all, we even went out of the way to apply coating onto your shield. I hope that you will eventually be able to use Renoir's shield effectively." (Youya)

Even now, Selene is growing one step at a time. She was above an average adventurer as a combat resource due to her status as well as her exclusive class. However i do not plan on forcing her to adopt Renoir's style of battle but I do hope that somehow she will be able to incorporate Renoir's spike into her fighting style as it's a shame to let the spikes go to waste. I'll be trying my best to help her in the meantime. Even if she were to use the spikes in public, no one would notice that it was a feature from the shield of Renoir since even Selene who was princess Lutra herself didn't know about it.

"That's so.. I will be sure to make use of that spike. Youya, it's a shameful request but even with your explanation, I am unable to understand how to utilize the spike. Is it possible to go over the spike once more afterwards?"
(Selene)

"If it's something like that then I won't mind. Let's practice together." (Youya)

In any case, I am glad that her mind wasn't broken by the result. The end of the battle could easily be at a level of fear for her own life. It will probably be impossible for her to have another sparring match with me but it should be fine if its on the level of a training. Luna who felt energetic after recovering from her hangover came over and sat on top of my lap.

"Luna, what do you plan to do?" (Youya)

"It's unfair to only talk to Selene. Luna wants to talk with Youya." (Luna)

"Sure. What do you want to talk about?" (Youya)

"Uhm. You see.. Yesterday Luna couldn't do a sparring match. Now that Luna has recovered, Luna wants to do 2 matches!" (Luna)

"I understand. Then Luna can go ahead and change your clothes, Once you're ready we will begin." (Youya)

"Uhn. Today Luna will finally win! It's frustrating not to win once Youya starts attacking." (Luna)

Luna's sparring match was a daily routine for us. We will ending the training today with two mock battles. Previously it was a one-sided offense by Luna

whose goal was to land an attack on me. However she has improved so much to the point that it became difficult for me to keep up, thus I changed the rule allowing me to counterattack if there was an obvious opening for me. But that just merely increased her motivation to win the sparring matches. Luna was still a genius who was growing at a tremendous rate.

"Luna, when I asked you to change your clothes I meant that you could head to the back room to change." (Youya)

"Bothersome. Luna wants to hurry up and train." (Luna)

Luna began changing her clothes on the spot. Nothing I say will change her mind so I gave up trying to convince her. Selene asked Luna.

"Luna, aren't you afraid of the match? His one blow from our match. It was so powerful and quick.. The only thing I could see was my impending death."
(Selene)

"Youya's sword is amazing! Just the sword is scary but wooden swords aren't scary. If Luna gets hit by his wooden sword then Luna may die. But Youya is amazing after all. Luna believes that Youya would never harm her. Is Selene afraid?" (Luna)

Luna looked at Selene with innocent eyes.

"... A little." (Selene)

"Then you can just tell Youya that you don't want to train with him anymore. Although it's weird you don't want to train with him although you trust him."
(Luna)

Luna's words were both harsh and strange however that was just how she felt towards Selene. Luna finished changing her clothes and picked up her wooden sword before wagging her tail.

"Youya. Luna is ready!" (Luna)

I crossed my arm and picked up my wooden sword. Right now, I can't think of anything to say to Selene although I couldn't bear to see her in this state. I'll be sure to follow up with her once I come back. I stood up and headed towards the

courtyard.

"Wait a moment!" (Selene)

Selene shouted with a loud voice.

"I'm coming as well. I would like to watch Luna's training as well as your mock battle." (Selene)

"I don't mind." (Youya)

"Luna too." (Luna)

With this, I headed over to the courtyard for a second time today.

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For Luna's training, we had to select another type of slash for her to practice as she had just recently mastered both the thrust and the Yokonagi. In addition to her repetition training, we had just added another slash, the Kesagiri. It was a slash that began from the person's upper body, heading downwards. Since it was assisted by gravity, it was a powerful blow that was easy to learn with high power.

On the other hand, it required different muscles from the thrust and the yokonagi, so it should take some time before Luna completely masters the slash.

Even so, she is a natural with the blade. She improves tremendously day by day. She will most likely take three more days to master the kesagiri slash. To help her training progress even by a second, I performed several demonstrations and explanations until she got the hang of it.

Selene watched this scene from the start to the end.

"Youya, the lesson finally ended! Time for the match!" (Luna)

Luna said with an energetic voice as she loved our simulated battles. It is definitely much more fun to train when you are able to feel yourself improving everyday.

"As usual, today you'll be trying to land one hit." (Youya)

"Will try my best!" (Luna)

Luna quickly got into her stance. Just by looking at her stance, I could see her growth. There wasn't any openings however it was easy for her to transition into an attack. It was the stance that she came up with in order to defeat me in an actual battle. I flipped a coin into the air.

It was our bell as the battle starts the moment the coin lands on the ground. Now then, I wonder how will Luna fare today.

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With this, the second match has ended. Luna who gave her all for both matches was exhausted and fell to the ground.

"Ug.. Luna didn't land a single hit today and got hit so many times too." (Luna)

"You were close to landing a hit today. Out of your twenty chances you nearly got me in ten of them." (Youya)

Whenever Luna showed an opening, I would immediately counterattack with an attack of my own. It was to prevent Luna from launching reckless attacks and think about defending herself in the midst of her attacks. This would eventually resulting in nullifying her opponent's' attacks as she will be able to react even when an opening is shown.

"It's frustrating that Luna's attacks can't reach. Youya has no openings. Luna tries to open an opening by attacking but that opens an opening for Luna."
(Luna)

"That is the correct train of thought, but it's much harder to execute than it is to come up with it. Learn to come up with the combinations of attacks required mid battle and you will improve." (Youya)

Recently, Luna has begun to mix in feints with her attacks. However, I made sure to counterattack when she made several naive feints lest they become a habit.

"Tomorrow Luna will do her best!" (Luna)

Luna had the sixth sense of a genius, however her greatest strength came from being a graceful loser. She doesn't just try to apply what she learnt during her training, but think of the next step on her own and try to improve on her own. There are very little people in the world who would be willing to do this on their own. I have trained many people up to now, and once a swordsman becomes afraid of advancing on their own, they will become passive. As a result, their growth halts to a standstill and repeat the same mistakes without improving or learning from them.

A mind that is critical of failure while active in learning from them. That was the secret to Luna's growth.

"Selene you've been watching Luna's training the entire time. Did anything come to mind?" (Youya)

Selene had watched Luna's training with serious eyes, especially glued onto Luna.

"... I feel ashamed of myself. Even though a young girl such as her is trying her best, I'm sitting over here cowering in fear. I was naive and overconfident and I won't become any stronger like this. Furthermore I've understood what her words meant. It is strange for me to trust uncle Youya but not in a sparring match. Even with a wooden sword, uncle Youya's attacks were sharp and powerful. However, it didn't matter how many times she got hit. It was as if she was absorbing your techniques and making them her own. Even if she is still a small girl, she is strong." (Selene)

Looking over at Luna, her face became reddish as she was weak to praises.

"Uncle Youya, once more I hope you will continue to train me. Of course with mock battles included. It's confirmed after watching this girl's battle. Uncle Youya will definitely be able to make me become stronger. And I have made another resolution. I will definitely pick up the battle princess Renoir's style with the shield, and become stronger as a crusader." (Selene)

"Is that really alright? You'll be throwing away everything you learnt your entire life." (Youya)

"I won't throw them away. The sword will always be a part of my battles. Even if the technique changes, the foundation is still the same. I am sure that I will cower once more, but at that time I will definitely overcome it so please be sure to guide me then." (Selene)

I let out a slight smile as Luna's hard work seem to have resonated with Selene. That will be a precious experience for Selene.

"I understand. I'll properly beat the hidden power of Renoir's shield into you. Tomorrow we will have another mock battle. Can you do it?" (Youya)

"I can. I'll be sure to prepare a change of underwear for tomorrow." (Selene)

I was surprised to see Selene crack a joke and smiled wryly. That was how Selene's special training began. Today we will focus on her training for tomorrow's mock battle. As long as there is the courage to stand up, the fear will one day be overcome.

"Ughh. Luna and Youya's time will be reduced, but Luna will endure it as a senior." (Luna)

Luna said some interesting things in a strange manner. Me and Selene started to laugh.

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The next day, we entered the dungeon of *God Trees*

. The monsters and treasures have respawned and the number of adventurers were higher than ever.

Yesterday, Selene had devoted her training to using the spikes as well as the foundations of being the front line of the party. She will be showing the results of her training in our adventure today. Our party's overall strength will definitely increase with a tank as well as a healer if we fully utilize her power.

Let's try our best to wield the power of our four-men party together.

Chapter 12: The old man fights with a new party

Today our main objective was to go on an adventure in the labyrinth within the *Starfish Larvae*.

It is our first adventure as a party of four consisting of the Crusader Selene, the Thief Luna, the Spirit Archer Til and me, the Magic Knight Youya. With the addition of a tank cum healer Selene, our party's safety net has become much safer and stable than before.

Luna and Till were energetic as usual and Selene was ready to leave, dressed in my spare dragon skin armour with Renoir's shield on her dominant right hand and a gauntlet on her left. She also had a spare sword hanging on her waist.

It was an indication of her conscious effort to pick up Renoir's battle style. The sword on her waist was not her main weapon but rather a spare for the absolute worst scenario. In this world, there was a weird interaction when a person was capable of wielding two different weapons on one arm. Only the first item would contribute to the user's status. In Selene's case, it was the gauntlet. Whenever the user switches their equipment in a dungeon, the user's status would remain the same although they were using a different weapon. Hence, even if Selene swapped out her gauntlet with a sword, her status wouldn't have a rise in attack power.

"Everyone our goal today is to enter the *Starfish Larvae* once more." (Youya)

Since it was the day after respawn day, we didn't have any difficulty in hunting monsters in the forest of

God Trees

. However, it is necessary for us to enter the labyrinth at least once to determine how much the hand of the pendulum clock has moved in this period of time. This would allow us to estimate when the egg will spawn in the forest.

"Uhn. Luna is confident. Since the last time Youya has taught Luna a lot of things about traps and stuff." (Luna)

"Today we will be sure to complete the dungeon before our bodies become

heavy again!" (Til)

The last time we entered the labyrinth, the two of them were completely overwhelmed by the sheer number of traps and it's curse. By the time we had arrived at the exit, the two of them were exhausted and were in a terrible state. This time they looked much more confident about conquering the labyrinth. Feeling relaxed and being confident is a good thing, however if the tension from the labyrinth was diminished and they were to get caught in another trap, there wouldn't be a reason for us to laugh anymore. I can only hope that they would concentrate when we are in the dungeon.

"Are you okay Selene?" (Youya)

"I'm fine. There isn't any problem, I'm just a little intimidated." (Selene)

"Understood. Don't push yourself." (Youya)

Previously Selene was betrayed by her bodyguard and shoved into the

Starfish Larvae

's path, accidentally entering the labyrinth and went through a frightening experience.

While we were hunting monsters in the forest of *God Trees*, our target, the *Starfish Larvae*

appeared in the distance. To avoid being eaten, the surrounding adventurers began to disperse and search for the closest

God Tree

. Soon after, the adventurers around us were completely gone and we began to walk towards the

Starfish Larvae

. The massive creature began increasing in size as it's green outer shell with a pattern resembling an eye became more and more visible. It's mouth devouring everything in its path. The fear it appeared to instill was bone chilling and so intimidating that only someone who knew about the labyrinth would stand in its path. Luna and Til began clinging onto my arms while Selene pressed her face against my back. This was the case if you were extremely frightened to the

point that you aren't able to move, but looking at it is actually a beautiful pattern.

The *Starfish Larvae*

was finally approaching us as our surroundings was blocked by the sight of its mouth.

"It could actually be this fear that is preventing any rumors about the *Starfish Larvae*

and the labyrinth in it's stomach. For anyone else to even attempt this would mean suicide and the person who mentioned the labyrinth would be delusional." (Youya)

While we were swallowed by the *Starfish Larvae*, I muttered to myself.

Not just that but the people who miraculously got eaten and survived the labyrinth would recommend everyone to run away to prevent getting eaten. It was impossible to think otherwise. It is impossible to attempt entering the labyrinth unless it was a game where you would be able to put your life on the line to verify it. Furthermore if someone were to attempt to get eaten while the *Starfish Larvae*

was enraged, the person would only have death waiting for them.

Now then, the labyrinth in the *Starfish Larvae*

. I hope we will be able to exit quickly this time.

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I opened my eyes. The three girls were still grabbing me tightly.

"Ladies? It's already over, we've entered the labyrinth. Could you three please let go of me? I can't prepare the light crystal like this." (Youya)

"Uhn. Understood. It was scary." (Luna)

"Fuu.. It's as bad for your heart as ever." (Til)

"I concur... Even if we know what's coming, it still takes a lot of courage to stand in the

Starfish Larvae's path." (Selene)

After everyone let go of me, I took out the light crystal from the hidden room, revealing our surroundings and the labyrinth.

"Luna and Selene, both of you take a light crystal. Til, I'm sure you don't need one?" (Youya)

"Of course since I have these jade eyes of mine." (Til)

I was envious of Til's special jade eyes. Even in pitch darkness she is capable of looking at the surroundings. I tied the light crystal to both Luna and Selene's heads.

"There are even items that are as convenient as this.. Even without mana it is capable of shining continuously." (Selene)

"It is a pretty rare magic tool. If you lose it we don't have a replacement for it nor can we replenish our stock so please take good care of it." (Youya)

Selene nodded her head with a determined look.

Although it is possible to replenish our light crystals by heading to the level reset room, but it would be impossible for us to reset our levels if we depleted the light crystals in the room as it was required to activate the level reset function. In fact, I had even left light crystals in the event that there are other adventurers who discover the room.

After our conversation, we got into our party formation. Luna was at the head with her exploration skills. Right behind her was Selene while Til was all the way at the back while I am in the middle. This way, it would be easier for me to react and deal with any trouble that comes to us, whether it was the front or the back.

"Luna, look at the ground directly in front of you. There is a trap two steps ahead of you. A colour difference in the ground is the characteristic of a pitfall trap." (Youya)

"Now that you mentioned it, it looks obvious. However, isn't there a chance

that the ground happened to look different?" (Luna)

"Whenever the colour of the ground changes to indicate a pitfall trap, the area of the ground would have an unnatural change in colour similar to a square area. It is unlikely that this sort of colour change would happen naturally." (Youya)

"Ah. That's true. It's easy to understand." (Luna)

I explained the method to distinguish a pitfall trap in the ground. Although it was possible for her to learn the skill

Trap Detection

, but as demonstrated it is possible to detect a trap based on experience and knowledge. I would prefer to use her skill points on something else.

"Luna, did you level up the skill I told you about yesterday?" (Youya)

"Uhn. I levelled *Increased Drop Rate* to level 2, the maximum I can." (Luna)

"That's good enough, it'll help us tremendously." (Youya)

Increased Drop Rate

functioned exactly as it's name implies. With each level, the drop rate of an item is increased by 0.2 times. Once you raise it to level 10, an item's drop rate would increase to 3 times it's original drop rate.

Basically tripling our harvest. There isn't any reason to argue against taking this skill. It was a skill that everyone wished to have, however the prerequisites for taking this skill is quite a troublesome task. It can't be learnt unless the total skill points placed into the exploration tree is 20. In Luna's case, she had 10 points into

Presence Detection, 5 into *Lockpick* and 5 into *Treasure Sense*.

Luna's current level was level 23 and her total number of skill points were 27 from leveling up 22 times and her initial 5 points. She was only able to get 2 points into

Increased Drop Rate

as 20 points were focused onto the exploration tree and 5 points was placed into

Assassinate.

In the case of an ordinary Thief, they had two skills that they had to learn in order to become a reliable fighting force. One skill to increase their chances of inflicting an abnormal status as well as a skill to increase their attack multiplier whenever their target has a status abnormality. As they required multiple skills just to participate in a battle, they did not have the leeway to place 20 points into the exploration tree, hence the skill wouldn't even appear in their skill tree at all.

Speaking of which, there was no definitive proof about the prerequisites for the skill in this world Furthermore even if someone discovered the skill, they wouldn't tell anyone about it. Adventurers wouldn't easily reveal their skills especially something as valuable as this.

"From now on, you will put skill points in

Increased Drop Rate

until it is level 10. It will completely change how efficient our hunts will be from now on." (Youya)

"Let's do it! Let's earn lots of experience to level up. With Youya around it won't be long." (Luna)

I smiled bitterly at Luna's response.

Normally it would be hard to raise our level beyond level 20. The experience required for us to level after level 20 increases dramatically, causing the majority of adventurers around the world to be about mid twenties. Furthermore the monsters in this level will become more ferocious and difficult to hunt.. Thanks to the large competition and difficulty of the monsters, it becomes much harder to raise our level. However, in that regard, we have a dungeon such as the labyrinth in the

Starfish Larvae

that makes it much easier for us to find monsters. Without the labyrinth,

raising our levels at this point would become much harder.

"As we discussed yesterday, I'll have Selene act as our party's shield. It is a difficult role. Put your spirit into it." (Youya)

"Leave it to me. Being the party's shield is the best job for a crusader. I'll show you that I can do it." (Selene)

Selene gave a reliable response. With this, our party continued into the labyrinth with Luna guiding us.

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Since we were travelling on a different route from the last time, the number of monsters present here was plenty as they hadn't been thinned out at all. We quickly encountered our first group of monsters.

Twenty metres ahead of the straight path stood a small group of *Horned Boars*

. It was a monster that greatly resembled a boar which we also hunted for our Pork

(*Average*

) collection quest. Back then there was an entire herd, however this time there were only four of them sleeping soundly.

If it was just four of them, we could annihilate them with magic and arrows from Til before they could notice us, However, in order to let Selene act as our shield, we decided to attack them front on.

It was our first fight together with Selene. I couldn't look forward to having our first battle in a situation where we could be wiped out due to our tank being inexperienced. First we had to have a battle where it would be safe for Selene to fail.

Selene walked forward towards the monsters, however she had not noticed that the

Horned Boars were soundly asleep.

"*War Cry*" (Selene)

Selene activated her skill as a high pitched shrill echoed throughout the path. It was a skill that caused a foe to focus their aggression onto themselves.

Warriors and Magic Knights were both capable of casting

War Cry

, however whenever a crusader activates that skill, it gains a bonus effect where the monster would have an increased aggression towards them and a longer duration..

The *Horned Boars*

woke up and rushed straight towards Selene who held up her buckler in response. No matter how high your defensive stats were as a shield, with this large of a distance and their large body, anyone receiving 4 charging

Horned Boars

would definitely be blown off, especially with a buckler.

Normally that is.

Selene poured her magic power into the shield and activated the special function of Renoir's shield. Yesterday, I taught her about the special liquid hidden within the shield. A variation of the

Steel of God

that was in a liquid state which could be solidified by pouring mana into it, producing a spike larger and longer than the buckler capable of piercing into the earth, rooting the shield into the ground..

This was the method that the battle princess *Renoir*

resorted for defense. By firmly rooting yourself to the ground, you enable yourself to directly receive an opponent's charge. Selene dropped her hips and leans her entire body's weight onto the shield before activating another skill.

"*Fortress*" (Selene)

(the kanji for the skill directly translates to castle wall but I'm using fortress

since it seems more fitting and mainstream.)

The shield began to illuminate as the light stretched out several metres to both sides originating from the center of the shield. It was the special skill exclusive to crusaders that increased the effective range of the shield, your own weight, muscular strength, defense and magic defense, making it possible to defend against multiple enemies. Although its effects only lasted twenty seconds, this skill makes it possible to be a tank far superior to a warrior or a magic knight.

It is a skill with a maximum level of 10, however it was a skill that was the very definition of a crusader. Having no intentions about running and acting as a shield for the party.

In the next moment, a heavy crash could be heard as the four

Horned Boars

crashed against the shield and the light. The shock received by the light was transmitted to the shield as Selene gritted her teeth enduring the shock. The ground was gouged out as Selene was pushed back but her shield remains sturdy without any signs of losing her balance. After several seconds, the *Horned Boars'* rush was completely halted.

Luna and I rushed towards the boars at the left and right of Selene while the

Horned Boar

directly in front of Selene was shot by a barrage of arrows. After watching it's companions being killed, the last

Horned Boar

tried to escape, exposing its back to Selene. Selene retracted the spikes and readies her shield. As I demonstrated in the mock battle yesterday, Selene took a deep breath and lowered her waist and before extending her arm, the spike protrudes from the shield at the speed of sound. With the double acceleration from the arm and the spike. It was the move that I used to defeat her during our bout last night, however there was just one crucial difference between her attack and mine. For crusaders, this blow could be strengthened even further.

"Shield Bash!" (Selene)

Shield Bash

was the crusader's only attack skill. Its unique characteristic was dealing damage based on its user's defensive strength instead of attack power and had an excellent power multiplier as well. Her defensive power which was raised by

Fortress

replaced her attacking power. A large gong resonated throughout the path as the spike penetrates the

Horned Boar

. It possessed so much kinetic energy that the insides of the monster was thrown out of its body and all over the pathway.

"So much power.. I'm surprised." (Selene)

More than the observers, the one who executed the attack was more surprised than us. This was the reason why the battle princess

Renoir

abandoned the idea of using a sword. Rather than using a sword and a shield, using a gauntlet and a shield would raise her defense power even further, increasing the power of

Shield Bash

. Her favourite strategy was to defend against an attack with her shield before killing him in a single hit with

Shield Bash

. This strategy had several merits to it. Her gauntlet had the effect of increasing the user's magic power. If her magic power was increased, her recovery spells would become better as well. However, a gauntlet capable of raising the user's magic power was rare. The gauntlet Selene was wearing is just a simple durable gauntlet. In order to make use of the crusader's special characteristic, using a shield and a gauntlet was the optimal loadout rather than using a sword. Yesterday, after listening to my explanation and after several

discussions, Selene decided to adopt Renoir's style of fighting.

"Selene, that was a good showing of a shield. The last move was good but catching their rush was good as well." (Youya)

"It's so easy to assassinate enemies if they are not moving! Thank you Selene."
(Luna)

"Maa. I'm capable of hitting fast moving targets regardless. But it's nice to shoot with confidence once in a while." (Til)

We can feel relieved knowing that we have a shield capable of attracting and holding enemies. With this, we can focus on launching attacks more than ever and our hunting efficiency will improve.

"Having friends is a nice thing. I've been having a lot more fun than usual. Now, let's hurry on ahead. I still need more training in order to practice this style." (Selene)

Selene's breathe became harsher with excitement. Although she looked much more mature than Luna, on the inside she wasn't that much different from Luna and Til. If she had a fox tail like Luna did, the tail would inflate and be waving back and forth. Nonetheless, she was still a reliable child.

Let's continue to work hard for the party from now on.

Chapter 13: The old man obtains a rare item drop

With the addition of an excellent tank, our second adventure in the labyrinth was going so smoothly that it was incomparable to our first attempt.

[*Shield Bash!*] (Selene)

Selene's spike penetrates through a giant caterpillar with a green shell. Although it shared similar characteristics with the *Starfish Larvae*, it wasn't as large and was only about five metres in length at most. The pattern on its back was capable of intimidating it's enemies and depicted eyes similar to a swallowtail larvae. It had two eyes that looked like jewels. It's name was the *Terrafish Larvae*

Note I have no clue what the name is so I just came up with one myself. If anyone could confirm, its name is 地食蟲

It was a rare existence that can only be found in the labyrinth of the *Starfish Larvae* with a small spawn chance. Unlike the *Starfish Larvae* there wasn't a second enraged phase that occurs once you defeat it, so we could defeat it with confidence. However,, it was still essentially a miniature version of the *Starfish Larvae* that is quite powerful. Selene activated *Fortress* and directly received the creature's charge despite it's massive weight and speed. However, even after it's movement came to a halt, Til's barrage of arrows and Luna's *Assassinate* couldn't damage it due to it's hard outer shell protecting it and it's vital points. Afterwards, we finally managed to defeat it by breaking an opening in its outer shell by using *Napalm Strike* and dealing the finish blow with Selene's spiked *Shield Bash*. After having it's flesh completely gouged inside out, it's body turned into blue particles and a red jewel drops onto the ground. It was the *Terrafish Larvae's* eye.

[Youya. It's a weird item drop] (Luna)

[U~wah. It's a beautiful jewel isn't it.] (Til)

[It is but once you remember that it was the eye of that giant caterpillar, you don't even feel like picking it up.] (Selene)

The name of the jewel is *Insect Ruby*.

(Note: Again, I'm winging the name. Kanji is 蟲紅玉ちゅうこうぎよく)

[What are you talking about. *Insect Rubies* can be used when creating equipments to enhance their magic power. It is an item that every magic caster and monk wants to obtain. It's also effective for crusaders. Let's make a custom-made gauntlet for Selene using this.] (Youya)

When using a ruby jewel as material to create an equipment, an equipment with special properties can be created. Especially materials with high potentials such as increasing magic power are expensive and rare to obtain. As one would expect from a rare monster of a rare dungeon.

The *Insect Ruby* was a rare item with about a 5% drop rate. It seems that the Luna's newly obtained skill has already started to show its effects.

[Isn't it better to sell this kind of expensive items and divide the money among ourselves? If it's just me reaping the benefits I will feel guilty.] (Selene)

Selene mentioned without any intention of reaping the benefits for herself.

[How did you come to the conclusion that we should sell it? It is a rare monster item drop you know. We could possibly never come across another one just like it ever again. There is no way that we can sell such a valuable item. Furthermore the stronger *Selene* gets the stronger our party becomes. It doesn't feel greedy at all for you to make use of the jewel.] (Youya)

[Uhn. Luna thinks so too. If Selene wasn't here it would had been hard for us to get it in the first place.] (Luna)

[Me too. I was completely shocked you know. The huge bug suddenly appeared and charged towards us. Even though I fired my bow and my spells. It was too fast and I wouldn't had made it in time.] (Til)

[As they mentioned, it would have been bad if we didn't have Selene as our tank and shield.] (Youya)

As the narrow path stretched out as far as we could see, it had suddenly

appeared in front of us and began charging towards us. Since it was a huge caterpillar 5 metres long and is large in width as well, we had no room to escape in this narrow path. With a monster chasing us at a speed of about 70 kilometers an hour, it is impossible for us to escape. It was akin to living a nightmare. In such a situation, I am completely inadequate as a tank. It was a situation where I didn't have any room to use my *Deflect* and my abilities to their potential. Thankfully for us, we had an unmovable wall in Selene that was capable of receiving the monster's charge as a level 25 crusader. We are currently safe and alive currently because of her. Otherwise, in the face of that monster's charge, I would have no choice but to go all out and activate both my *God's Strength* and open the door to survive that encounter, exhausting myself before we managed to arrive at the exit.

[Selene, you did great managing to use *Shield Bash* after receiving that charge.] (Youya)

[I was reckless. Until the end of the battle I couldn't feel the pain in my arms.] (Selene)

Even though she was specialized in defense, as expected receiving that charge cause a large amount of damage onto her arm, if it was just slighter faster or stronger then she would had probably been unable to stop that charge. Selene began healing her arm with *Heal*. Luckily for us she was capable of casting recovery magic. With this, even if we were to get damaged during our battles we will be able to continue fighting. Originally, if we were to crack our dominant arm's bones or our legs, that person would automatically be out of the battle. After finishing her spell, Selene opened her mouth to cover her embarrassment.

[It's nice to know that people can rely on me as well. All this time I had been raising my level with a babysitter, the high-levelled knights that were in charge of protecting me would often be the ones battling the monsters. Doing my own battles feels nice for a change.] (Selene)

As I reached my hand out to Selene, Selene gripped my hand and we shook hands.

[Luna will do it too!] (Luna)

[Ah I'm part of the party too. Everyone in the party has to do it!] (Til)

The four of us placed our hands together as we did a celebration cheer. It was somewhat embarrassing but it didn't feel that bad. We continued to carry this momentum all the way to the exit of the labyrinth.

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[Arrived at the exit! Nano.] (Luna)

[Today's trip didn't take very long did it.] (Til)

The two girls held each others hands and began a victory dance. It was strangely cute to watch.

[This feels like a dungeon that you can easily clear together with your friends if you knew what you were doing. Initially when entering for the first time, you would feel intimidated at the atmosphere and how dark it is. No matter how much you proceeded in the dungeon, it was scary to think that you might not even be heading in the right direction. But now that we know where the exit is, it is much more enjoyable.] (Selene)

Selene arrived at the correct conclusion about the labyrinth. Selene new battle style was being sharpened with each battle and monster we encountered and I am certain that her power will be essential for our party in the future. It is impossible not to have fun when we are having this sort of adventurers in a party. That pleasure is something that I am fairly familiar with.

[Now then, I still have a job to do. Selene, Luna, Til. Reflect on our battles today and what we should do in the future to better improve our coordination. I'll listen to the results of your discussion later.] (Youya)

I could just outright inform them about my opinions on the battles earlier today, but that would be too easy. I would rather have them be more self-aware of their mistakes and strengths plus it'll be more fun to help each other improve that way. Above all, our party would truly become a true party by communicating like this. Just like this, the scene of three beautiful girls talking to each other became much livelier than before.

Suddenly I felt like I am glad that I decided to invite Selene into our party. However, Phil was going to catch up with us in a month. It could be even more exciting with five people in our party. By then we will have to somehow obtain that item that increases our party's maximum number of members.

[Before that, I have to a job to do.] (Youya)

I took a note of the hour hand's current position before comparing it with the note I made two days ago. With this, I can roughly estimate when the magic egg will spawn.

[Everyone. I managed to find out when the egg will spawn. It will spawn at midnight five days from now. And the star chart hasn't change the last time we came here which means that we know exactly where it will spawn too.] (Youya)

The three girls who had their discussion interrupted turned their gazes towards me.

[Hehh. You can really use this star chart and the clock to determine the location and time of the magic egg's spawn.] (Til)

[Youya is an Esper.] (Luna)

[Luna, Til. I'm pretty sure that I have explained how they work the last time we were here..] (Youya)

I answered with a slight nuance. Since It was the first time Selene had seen this, I decided to explain once more how the star chart and the clock's mechanism worked.

[So it's this sort of interesting concept. I didn't know that there was such a secret to obtaining the Magic Egg.. Using this you could obtain as many eggs you wanted.] (Selene)

[That sounds about right. Although, if you have more than one *Magic Pet* in the party, the pets will go into a fight with each other and more often than not the weaker pets would escape until only the strongest one remains. In that regard, we only need to get one egg. Neither do we plan on staying in Greenwood forever.] (Youya)

Theoretically, with this secret we could hog the magic eggs all to ourselves

and sell the excess eggs to the auction house, securing our income for the rest of our lives. It was one of the goals for every adventurer to secure a living, however it wasn't an enjoyable method. I want to be at the top and enter dungeons that are much more difficult than this.

[That side of you is why I like Uncle Youya.] (Selene)

[Luna agrees! Luna doesn't want the same dungeon forever.] (Luna)

[Uhn uhn. We will become the most successful party in the world so we can't be held down to just one dungeon. Wherever there are strong monsters, we will go.] (Til)

I was happy at their responses and started to laugh as everyone looked towards the ceiling. For normal parties, there wasn't a single person who wasn't look for stability and safety. Well, although having the monopoly of the magic eggs sounds like a safe source of income, that isn't actually the case. Eventually, someone will catch on about the situation and you will be targeted by other adventurers for your life and information.

[Yosh. Let's go home. We now know which tree and the date and time for the egg's spawn. Afterwards it'll just be to secure the egg. With this much of an advantage it will be disgraceful if we didn't secure the egg.] (Youya)

[Leave it to Luna! Climbing trees is Luna's specialty. Even if someone happens to eye the same tree as us, Luna will get the egg faster than anyone else.] (Luna)

[I'm looking forward to it. Luna is the quickest and lightest on her feet among all of us here.] (Youya)

Speaking of which, foxes were always good at climbing trees. Looking at her ears, it looks like she was proud of her tree-climbing skills.

[In that case, if someone happens to be there then I'll fire an arrow coated in paralysis poison towards them.] (Til)

[Stop that. There's a chance the person will actually die from the arrow. Supposedly the guy is part of a larger clan then they will definitely perform a witch hunt for us.] (Youya)

[It was just a joke. I'm not serious about shooting them with an arrow.] (Til)

Til turned her head and puffed her cheeks.

She was definitely serious about shooting that arrow.

[Now then, let's hurry up and return. We have to eat dinner soon then it will be time for Luna and Selene's training.] (Youya)

[Uhn. Do your best.] (Til)

[Thank you for troubling you again uncle Youya.] (Selene)

Aside from entering the dungeons, I was also preoccupied with grooming my two disciples.

I have my schedule completely occupied. We have five days until the egg spawns. Let's continue to raise our level while training the two of them thoroughly. If we continue to exploit the labyrinth within the *Starfish Larvae* without competition, it is possible for us to reach level 30 in a month when it would normally take three years. If that happens, we will be able to travel to another town with a *Magic Pet*.

Chapter 14: The old man aims to truly becomes the Strongest

Our second adventure inside the labyrinth of the *Starfish Larvae* had just finished. With this we finally managed to identify when and where the next *Magic Egg* will spawn. Having this information was an absolute advantage for us over all the other adventurers who had zero information about the spawn. After returning from the labyrinth, we had a conversation about how we should spend our time until then. The consensus was to continue raising our level and train until it was time to obtain the egg five days from now. This is all for us to become the strongest party, plus Selene had to become stronger however little for her inheritance ceremony.

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Currently it is the fifth day after we confirmed the spawn of the magic egg. The egg will be spawning at midnight tonight in the forest of *God Trees*. After spending five days in the labyrinth of the *Starfish Larvae*, my level became 26, Luna and Til was level 25 while Selene was level 27. It was an incredibly fast pace as we were able to continue hunting monsters without worrying about competing with other adventurers. There will not be another dungeon quite like this in the future. The first trip to the labyrinth was a rough one, however the subsequent trips were much easier as the girls were starting to become comfortable hunting in that dungeon. In addition we also had Selene who served as our tank in the hunts. The preparation we had to do for the *Magic Egg* was incredibly time consuming as well. Yesterday I spent the day investigating the area indicated by the star chart in the labyrinth to prepare ourselves for the spawn. Today too we will not be adventuring in the afternoon but rather after a light training session, we will be looking around the city to

recover our physical strength and prepare ourselves for the *Magic Egg* competition.

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[It's my victory today once again.] (Youya)

[Uwwuu. Today I was unable to do it again. It's frustrating.] (Luna)

Luna collapsed into a kowtow position as her fox ears fell down onto her face. Our usual sparring session after training ended with my victory once again.

[Youya, why did you decide to wrap your usual wooden sword in a cloth today?] (Luna)

Luna glanced over at the conspicuous change for my wooden sword. Until now I had used a bare wooden sword for our sparring sessions but today I had covered the blade of the sword in a cloth.

[It's because Luna has improved a lot the past few days. Until now I always had room to hold back, however it's becoming much harder to hold back now. I am not willing to risk accidentally landing a serious blow onto you without taking any precautions.] (Youya)

Until now, I always had confidence in our mock battles that I wouldn't be hit nor would I accidentally land a heavy blow onto Luna. However, her growth over the last few days has been remarkably faster than before to the point that I didn't have the confidence I had before. I would like to avoid taking the battles as seriously as possible however little by little I have no choice but to do so, thus I decided to put the cloth on to prevent hurting Luna.

[Until now Luna has been losing so Luna hadn't noticed it. Luna is happy~.] (Luna)

Luna stood up with her tail wagging back and forth. Her drooping fox ears were also revitalized as they were standing sharply on her head.

[You are definitely become stronger. At a pace far quicker than any of the disciples I have taught until now. Here. It's a reward.] (Youya)

I smile widely as I took out a bamboo tube containing a cold drink from my magic bag and pressed it against Luna's cheeks. Then Luna took the bamboo tube with a bright smile and drank its contents. Seriously, this girl is a genius at what she does but she is still a child on the inside. Then, I looked over to my other disciple.

[Don't forget to drink a stamina recovery potion.] (Youya)

[Eeekk. Please let me go. At this rate I won't be able to survive for our adventure tonight.] (Selene)

Selene was completely exhausted and had almost no stamina left. Since she had made a request to drill the entire Renoir's shield-style into her, I had given her a intense training regimen for the past few days. Everytime she got an injury or a bruise, she would heal it using her own recovery magic. Afterwards, her mana and fatigue were recovered using recovery potions.

To use recovery potions to assist with a person's training was a luxury, however time wasn't on Selene's side as her inheritance ceremony is occuring two and a half months from now. We only have one month for her to fully grasp Renoir's shield-style and develop her own style from there. Selene took a sip of a recovery potion.

[Once you are done drinking the potion, you can drink this. It's banana milk. It's the perfect drink for helping your body recover.] (Youya)

It doesn't matter how much a person's status increases, their stamina was still something that had to be trained. It is impossible to become the strongest just by raising your level, and every adventurer knew that.

For Til, although she is constantly cracking jokes, she was properly performing her own training every day. Using a bow requires both stamina and physical strength. Without either, it would be impossible to have the incredible precision she had for hours on our adventures with just talent alone. She was properly doing what she had to do, that was why I could trust her.

[Thank you. It helps alot. It's delicious.] (Selene)

There was the scene of Selene completely immersed in drinking the white fluids down her throat.

Now then, the training for the two disciples has finally ended. Now was the time for my own training. Even though I was training the two of them, I also had things to gain from their training. However, this didn't excuse me from performing my own training.

I wholeheartedly focused my senses into swinging the sword to let my body recognise the sensation of swinging the blade. I went through all the basic nine slashes, finishing each slashes with maximum accuracy and as perfectly as possible. With the first swing, I recognize the shift in my body when performing each slash. Second is to perform large adjustments onto the swing. Third to perform finer adjustments onto each swings. Fourth to confirm the result of adjustments and the fifth to engrave the motion into my body. Once I complete the tuning, then the rest of my body will automatically adjust to the changes.

Slight moments of hesitations, small misalignments in the angles and the stagnation of kinetic energy in the muscles. Everything must corrected and aren't allowed at all. This was my sword that I have used for several decades. Everything must be optimized to match the image in my mind back to the level I had with my original status. After the tuning was completed, it was time to finish the day with a final check.

[Nee, Youya. Youya is strong, and yet after our training Youya is always swinging your sword with vigor everyday. Why?] (Luna)

[I noticed that too. If you were a swordsman of his caliber I don't see why you'll have to do that.] (Selene)

I smiled bitterly at their responses.

[You're mistaken. This is necessary for me. Truthfully, I can feel my techniques collapsing and failing everyday.] (Youya)

The two of them had looks of dismay on their faces. I see, I must have not talked about this before.

[While staying weak, I arrived at the maximum level of 50. In that state, I polished my swordsmanship to compensate for my weakness. As a result, after my level was reset, my status rose much higher than it was before. It is incomparable to what it was before. Even with the status correction from being a Magic Knight rather than a Warrior. My current power and speed is much

higher than it was before.] (Youya)

Warriors overall had better status corrections as compared to Magic Knights and obtained better attack power, defensive power and speed. However, even with the differences in status corrections, I had already reached a similar status when I was level 22, and now my stats have overtaken my previous status.

[With my current status and body, I'm relishing in the fact that my sword strikes harder and faster than before. However, it is a fact that the difference in strength and speed is causing the delicate balance I had between my techniques and my status to crumble. It is for that reason that I am trying to repair the balance in my mind everyday and adjust my techniques to my current status. Otherwise I would have to throw away everything I have learnt to compensate for my weakness and that is something I am not willing to do. I do not want to lose the sword that I have spent decades honing.] (Youya)

I began the final check as I closed my eyes and imagined a imaginary enemy. Utilizing the nine different slashes that have been fine tuned earlier, I imagined and performed the nine slashes in a combination that could be considered as the most effective that i could perform. An elegant blade capable of utilizing all nine slashes in quick succession. If there was the slightest error in any of the slashes, the nine successive slashes would crumble in power and speed. As the sword flows from one side to another, prevent the energy from stagnating as per the image created earlier before delivering the final thrust with the strength of the entire body.

Yosh. That was a satisfactory ending. I thought as I exhaled deeply.

With this, the final check was complete and the tuning was complete. Truth be told there is no reason to perform this check on a daily basis. It is enough to just perform this whenever there was a small change in my status. However if it was performed with a huge difference, the difficulty in tuning would increase dramatically. To a swordsman, the most important thing was to do your due diligence everyday.

[Youya's sword is beautiful as usual.] (Luna)

[I agree. It was exactly as I heard. As expected of the weakest strongest knight.] (Selene)

(I don't remember what is the exact nickname for Youya. It'll be checked when posting the chapter on the site)

The Weakest Strongest knight.. Huh. It was a title I received after I won a competition that consisted of many powerful knights and received the championship title. Not only is it an embarrassing name but there was another reason why I did not like the name.

[It's a shame for Selene, but that nickname isn't suitable for me anymore.]
(Youya)

[Why is that so? It's a fact that you achieved victory in a tournament to decide the strongest knight. Uncle Youya who was given special permission to participate in the tournament certainly defeated the elite knights who were participating in the tournament and won fair and square. Hence the name was fitting for you who was inferior in every aspect and yet still won the tournament with your overwhelming skill.] (Selene)

I shake my head in response as she was misunderstanding my intentions.

[The reason that I attained victory in that tournament was because of the rules. In that tournament we had to battle using wooden swords and the moment someone lands a clean blow onto their opponent's vital spot, then it would be the end of the battle. However, in an actual battle those knights could easily receive ten of my attacks and disregard their own defense to focus purely on attacking me. On the other hand, if I were to receive even a single blow it would be over. Now do you know how advantageous that tournament was to me in a battle between swordsman? It was impossible for me to defeat any of the top knights in that tournament.] (Youya)

Having speed and strength in that tournament was advantageous due to the rules, however there was no competition between the individuals' attack power and defensive powers. It was because of those rules that I was saved and managed to win. It is disgraceful but I had only realised that I obtained the victory then only because I was saved by the rules and not of my own strength. After that, I was ashamed of my own conceit and decided that I would become a first-rate swordsman and would become stronger.

[That may be true but it doesn't change the fact that you were the one who

won the tournament.] (Selene)

[I will admit that, however I won't accept the title of being the strongest. I feel guilty towards the knights who were clearly far stronger than I was. I'll only say this once but I do not plan to give up being the strongest. I have the bonuses from the level reset and the strength that I obtained from struggling with the weakest status possible. I will continue moving forward using both of them as my weapons.] (Youya)

Surely, that was my current motivation to seek strength. Now that it came to this, it is a good time to reveal my wish to her.

[Selene. I am asking you as the person who is also Princess Lutra. Should you win the inheritance tournament, please let me attend that tournament once more. This time, I will win with my own strength and truly become the strongest knight. I will definitely win as Princess Lutra's knight and dedicate this victory to you. It is because of this that I wish to ask you.] (Youya)

This is something I had to do to redeem the pride of the knights from my weak victory and abandon the false title of being the strongest that I obtained. It is my apology to the knights for falsely snatching away the title of the strongest, and also a test for me to move forward.

Selene's face turned red and looked straight at me in a rigid manner.

[How about it? Selene.] (Youya)

She regained her composure after I called her name.

[Uhm. Ah. It's nothing much.. I promise that once everything is over we will host another competition to decide the strongest knight.] (Selene)

[Thank you.] (Youya)

Selene seemed to receive a shock as she turned her face.

She was behaving weirdly.

[Now then. Since we're having a break lets go shopping together. We can't afford to not go sightseeing when we're in such a beautiful place. Let's enjoy ourselves until the day is over.] (Youya)

[That sounds great! Luna wants to eat all the delicious food in the city!] (Luna)

It seems that Selene's mind hasn't returned to her body yet. Looking at the surroundings, it seems that Til was done. Let's head over and meet up with her before our sightseeing trip.

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In the shopping district, we began taste testing several kinds of foods at different stores. Selene had finally returned to the usual Selene once we began to eat. However, rather than having a heavy meal at one store, we were buying and sharing several smaller meals from one store at a time before moving on to the next, sampling as much delicious food there was possible. Rather than just walking around the town sightseeing, we could enjoy the trip much more this way.

[Meat mochi is delicious. Luna wants to eat it tomorrow too.] (Luna)

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Among all of the dishes that we ate, Luna's favourite was a meat dish, ribs wrapped within glutinous rice and steamed, having a sweet and salty taste. The combination of the salty meat wrapped with sweet glutinous rice produced a delicious juice that was quite marvelous.

[I think that this is good too. It's fun to stretch the bun and the sour and sweet cream inside is good too.] (Til)

Til's favourite was a dish similar to rice cakes. And was one of Greenwood's specialities, made from the local produce. By grounding up glutinous rice to make rice cakes, they added tropical fruits such as mangoes into the cream which was wrapped within the rice cake. It felt extremely refreshing to be able to enjoy the taste of the different fruits within the cream. Many of the foods here were made using glutinous rice and rice cakes, which makes it seem like glutinous rice seems to be a specialty for Greenwood.

[Selene, which was your favourite dish?] (Youya)

[Let's see. My favourite was from the third shop we visited, the freshwater fish skewers. It feels strange to me that it's taste came from merely seasoning it

with salt.] (Selene)

[Ah so it's that dish. That was certainly delicious. It looks like it was caught from the river nearby, It's freshness was on a whole different scale.]

Mountainous foods such as animals and mushrooms, fresh crops from fertile fields were delicious but ingredients from a beautiful river were on a similar level. Greenwood is a nice place and the food here is wonderful too. My stomach is so bloated that it was pushing against my armour. We also entered several stores hoping to make use of the rare drop, the *Insect Ruby* from the dungeon however, the results were disappointing to say the least. None of them were capable of producing a gauntlet enhanced by the item.

[It's a shame.] (Selene)

[Yeah. Even though we managed to obtain something this rare. But let's just focus on enjoying ourselves for the rest of the day. Let's postpone making your gauntlet in another city.] (Youya)

The smiths in this city were not capable of making a gauntlet enhanced with the ruby. In that case, we will focus on utilizing the ruby in the next city. Fortunately, the next city that we will be visiting once we are level 30 is a smithing city, the City of Flames

[Alright, let's reset our minds and enjoy ourselves in the city. Recover our strength and ensure we are in perfect physical condition for the race to obtain the *Magic Egg*.] (Youya)

[Luna will do her best! Do her best to eat more food!] (Luna)

[I want to visit another weapons store. I have to purchase several spare threads for my bow.] (Til)

[I want to visit an accessory shop. Recently I've been perspiring a lot and the ribbon's colour has become dull.] (Selene)

Everyone had an idea of how they wanted to spend their time in the town. It makes me happy that the girls are enjoying themselves in the town.

In the end, we enjoyed our time exploring the city in Greenwood until the late evening before finish a light dinner while enduring the urge to drink any

alcohol. Then, we finally departed for the forest of *God Trees*. Let's continue to ride this momentum and obtain the magic egg.

Chapter 15: The old man gets his hands on the Magic Egg

It was finally time to enter the forest of *God Trees* as the time rapidly approached midnight. The forest was extremely large and it takes about an hour for us to reach the designated *God Tree* from the entrance. However we were entered the forest around 10:30 pm with 30 minutes buffer time. This way, even if we were to encounter any unexpected incidents we would still be able to make it.

[Youya. There are so many people. Although there were many of them, there are more people than usual.] (Luna)

[Well. There are many people who do not know when the egg will appear. However they are aware that it will be spawning sometime this month. Give and take 5 days, depending on the latest known date when the egg was seen, adventurers will gather in the forest, regardless of night or day.] (Youya)

The moment the *Magic Egg* appears, the surrounding area will be illuminated with light. If you are in the forest the moment it spawns, you will be able to identify which day the egg will appear every year. There are many people who do know about this and they are often the ones who put the egg on the auction house. Which means that the flock of adventurers who are trying to enter the forest are all veteran competitors in this race for the egg. And after someone obtains the egg, everyone else will turn into a pillager, hoping to snatch the egg for themselves. In that sense, the difficult part of the entire event is not to locate the egg, but to safely escape with it.

[Uwaa. Camping for a week. Everyone here is determined in their own way. What kind of strange dance are those people doing? And that song, what is that?] (Til)

[There are many different kinds of superstitions that come from this event. They believe that if you performed the dance, the *Magic Egg* would appear in

front of you. Only people with bad taste would spread this kind of rumors.]
(Youya)

Of course, it is false. However the amazing part about this sort of superstition is that it is impossible to call it a fraud. Regardless of whether you perform the dance, the probability of the egg appearing before you is still one in a hundred. So long as it is possible, then you can get away with calling it a ritual.

[Im astonished. We definitely have to try harder now.] (Til)

By the way, there is a reason why none of the girls have brought up anything about where and which *God Tree* would spawn the egg as I've banned the topic for tonight. The moment someone utters anything relating to the egg, they would be banned from eating any meals in the bar. It is clear as day to anyone about what these girls live for. However this may be a needless precaution as anyone eavesdropping would be skeptical about our information as it is a common strategy used to deceive people by spreading false information. Plus the deeper in the forest we go, the lesser number of adventurers around. There are also hundreds of trees in this vast forest dungeon making it difficult for every tree to be covered by adventurers.

[Youya. It's weird. We've run this deep into the forest but there are no monsters at all.] (Luna)

[That's because they've all been hunted. Between the *Starfish Larvae* and the adventurers, for the past three days they have been hunted continuously after they were respawned.] (Youya)

[Hee.. So that's the case. If only there was a monster similar to the giant crab we fought back then that could spawn monsters indefinitely.] (Til)

[That is an exception. That sort of monsters are rare and hard to find.] (Youya)

Monsters who are capable of altering their surroundings such as the *Hermit Crab* was very rare. At the very least, none of them exist in any dungeon within Greenwood. If there was such a monster that existed in any other towns suitable for us, then it would definitely be our next destination. Thanks to its troublesome passive skill it would make our lives much easier. However such a thing didn't exist. And the number of dungeons suitable for adventurers level 30 or more aren't plentiful. It'll be difficult for us to find the luxury of having an

entire dungeon to ourselves.

[Youya, a little further.] (Luna)

Luna has a good memory. So long as we have visited the place once, she would remember the entire route that we took. Since we took the same route back yesterday, we were able to precisely estimate the amount of time required to arrive.

[There are also several adventurers around us.] (Luna)

The worst case scenario would be if there were any adventurers who marked and decided to camp at the correct *God Tree*. However, the tree wasn't in this area. It'll be fine so long as the adventurers are present only in this area.

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Finally, we arrived at the *God Tree* indicated by the star chart. I was making sure that we weren't being followed on our way here, however that effort was redundant. Although that was a relief, one of my fears had come true. There were adventurers who had marked the *God Tree* we were heading to. They had come here.

[All of you get lost! This place is marked as the *Wolfgang's* territory!]
(Adventurer)

There was a pair of two adventurers. Although there were over 30 *God Trees* in the immediate vicinity, they seem to be adamant about marking the area as their territory.

[We understand. We'll back away from here.] (Youya)

Although it was possible for us to start a dispute here, creating noise here would attract other adventurers in the area. That would be bad so let's behave maturely here.

[Wait a minute.. Isn't it that pimp old man?] (Adventurer no.2)

[Seriously? Then, that beastgirl—] (Adventurer no.1)

[Did you call for Luna?] (Luna)

[Eeeek.] (Adventurers)

It was at that moment Luna showed her head from behind me. It was the pair of adventurers who were trying to hit on Luna and Til back in the guild. It's no surprise that they were afraid of her. After all they must have received quite a trauma from her attack.

[We aren't backing down from here! If we do, our boss will absolutely slaughter us! You are definitely not getting close to the trees here!]
(Adventurers)

Based on their responses they must belong to the lower echelon of their clan. It seems that *Wolfgang* wasn't the name of their party but rather a clan that they had joined. However it doesn't appear to be the compassionate sort of group but more of a dictatorship sort of group.

[We understand. We'll go somewhere else so stop looking at us like that.]
(Youya)

We were definitely not going to get into a quarrel but it'll be troublesome if they were to call their friends here. We decided to turn back as they stared at us move away from the location.

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Although we said that we would change location, we did not plan on giving up the *Magic egg*. After turning the corner we hid behind the trees close to the target *God Tree*.

[Our luck was bad. Their intuition was right on the mark.] (Youya)

[Muu. Luna could always blow them away with the same punch.] (Luna)

[There are situations where force is necessary however if it isn't needed then we don't have to resort to it. Luna, I'll tell you the plan. Be sure to listen to it carefully.] (Youya)

I took out a pocket watch from my pockets. This is an expensive watch made by a dwarf using special metals that accurately shows the time that isn't affected by large shocks and impacts.

[10 seconds before midnight, you will rush towards the *God Tree* at your full speed. At your max speed, there is no way for the two of them to stop you.] (Youya)

[Leave it to Luna! If it's that then Luna will do her best.] (Luna)

Luna possessed a lightweight body with overwhelming speed. Not only that, the two of them will stiffen with fear if they saw Luna rushing at them.

[Til will be the backup. You said that maneuvering in the forest was your specialty previously. Then you will approach the tree to a distance closer than the two of them without being noticed. If they somehow managed to stop Luna, Til will be the one to close the gap and secure the egg.] (Youya)

If the two of them somehow manage to stop Luna in her tracks, then that would mean that their attention was completely focused on Luna. That will provide Til more than enough time to secure the egg.

[Leave it to me! To me the forest is my friend.] (Til)

Til looks dependable. The two girls in question began preparing for the plan. Til erased her presence and blended into the darkness, slowly approaching the target. In the meantime, Luna began to prepare for her dash.

[Uncle Youya. What should I do?] (Selene)

[The two of us will be preparing to rush out if the two of them are in danger from anything.] (Youya)

[I'm afraid.] (Selene)

[Don't worry about it. If it's the current Selene then you are plenty strong.] (Youya)

In the first place, Selene who had the foundations with a sword and a shield drilled into her was already strong. That Selene who had underwent special training has become much stronger as compared to before. It was unnecessary for her to be worried about people on their level.

[It's not that. It's obvious that the two of them haven't undergone any proper training, I don't know if they were capable of defending themselves. I don't have any confidence that they would live after suffering an attack with a spike.]
(Selene)

[... Spikes are prohibited.] (Youya)

It is true that it'll be difficult not to harm them if she was to use the spike. She could easily pierce a hole into their bodies or break their bones.

Now then, what will happen.

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It was 30 seconds until midnight. Luna was currently wearing a pair of sunglasses. It was a piece of special equipment that can only be obtained from the labyrinth. It would be dangerous if we did not equip this equipment before the egg spawns. As soon as the time turns to midnight, the mechanism of the spawn will activate. However, Luna and Til will be moving before then.

Team remaining until midnight is 20 seconds

Luna began a forward-bent posture and pours her energy into her legs. It was finally approaching 10 seconds before midnight.

[3.. 2.. 1.. Let's go!] (Luna)

Luna rushed out, reaching her top speed in three steps. The adventurers who were caught off guard were staring at Luna with a dumbfounded look.

Time remaining 7 seconds.

While retaining their dumbfounded looks, the two of them rushed to stop Luna. Luna lightly tapped the first person.

Time remaining 5 seconds.

Luna jumped over the second person with a flashy jump, somersaulting in the air before landing on the ground. After regaining her bearings she immediately accelerates. The adventurers tried to catch up but they couldn't even come

close to Luna's speed. Her running figure with her fox tail hovering behind her gives of a majestic setting.

Time remaining 2 seconds

Luna arrives right in front of the tree.

Time remaining 0 seconds.

Midnight finally arrived.

It was an explosion of light capable of illuminating the entire forest. It was because of this that I had Luna and Til equip sunglasses. If someone were to look directly into the source of light their eyes would be thoroughly cooked.

By the way, I told Selene to close her eyes while I was wearing my spare sunglasses. In the middle of the light, Luna's feet touched the tree trunk as she began to run vertically upwards the tree, directly towards the largest tree branch which held the *Magic Egg*, grabbed the egg and jumped. She landed on the ground, killing the impact using her flexible body, heavily reducing the shock sent to the egg and returned to our current position.

The light finally died down as the adventurers looked around their surroundings trying to look for Luna, however she had already disappeared. Til who was going to be Luna's reinforcement also came back.

[Youya look! It's a huge egg!] (Luna)

Luna held out the *Magic Egg* with a look of satisfaction on her face. It was an egg slightly larger than an ostrich egg with a unique glowing emblem imbedded into the shell. I immediately took the egg and put it into my *Magic Bag*.

[You did great Luna.] (Youya)

[Uhn. Did her best!] (Luna)

Luna hugged me as she rubbed her face onto my chest and her tail swung happily. She was as cute as usual.

[Everyone, shall we return?] (Youya)

[Uhn. Those people are annoying.] (Luna)

[Right? Plus I have errands to do.] (Til)

[Once we return I would like to drink to celebrate. We couldn't drink at dinner earlier.] (Selene)

[Let's do that. Tonight looks like a good night to stay up.] (Youya)

We laughed along in celebration and hurried home. On our way home we passed by multiple groups of adventurers on the way. They were most likely adventurers who were aware that the light was the signal that the egg has appeared. They were probably going to search for the person who had the egg in their possession.

It's a shame to waste their efforts but I do not plan to advise them against it. It wouldn't be fun to be assaulted and lose the egg in the process. I finally got the *Magic Egg* that I have been wishing for. Let's be sure to take care of it well. With the existence of a *Magic Pet* our party will start to make more progress.

Chapter 16: The old man's victory and his first wife

We finally managed to beat the competition and successfully obtained the *Magic Egg*.

However, not everything went as smooth as we expected it to. Unluckily enough, we got involved with the men who were trying to recruit Luna and Til into their party. The two of them seem to belong to a clan called *Wolfgang*. Let's be sure to talk with the receptionist afterwards about what kind of clan the *Wolfgang* is. There is a high chance that they will be a threat to us in the future. Until then, the more information we can gather about them the better.

Even though I was thinking about that, it was late at night. It was impossible for us to talk to the receptionist so long as the guild is closed. More than that, I had something else I had to do.

[For our success in securing the egg. To everyone. Cheers!] (Youya)

[Cheers!] (Luna & Til & Selene)

We bumped our mugs. After returning from the forest, we returned directly to our room in the inn. Although it was an occasion that we should celebrate at the bar, celebrating our success for the *Magic Egg* in a bar.. I would rather pull my eyes out. Furthermore we would be exposing ourselves to *Wolfgang*. With these reasons, we returned to the inn. The food and drinks that we were currently eating were foodstuff that we purchased during the day. The food that we liked was secured in the *Magic Bag* before we left for the dungeon.

I was currently drinking my favourite ale, Selene was drinking wine while the two girls who had sour expressions the last time they drank alcohol were enjoying milk and grape juice instead. Although I had talked to them about drinking alcohol moderately, the two of them still seem to be wary about drinking alcohol. It was a pity since I was looking forward to a drinking party with Til and Luna.

[Uncle Youya. I was surprised. That it was so easy to get your hands on the *Magic Egg*.] (Selene)

[It wasn't that easy. We had to survive entering the labyrinth at least twice while be capable of deciphering the star chart and the pendulum clock at the end. Both of them are difficult tasks] (Youya)

[That is true.. However that star chart. Normally I don't think you would be able to notice it.] (Selene)

[It comes with experience. I have seen similar things in my travels.] (Youya)

It doesn't seem appropriate for me to tell her that it was a memory from my previous life. It should be fine to hide this fact form her.

Selene looked into my eyes with longing eyes.

It isn't that I don't know what she is thinking. However it isn't mutual. She has likely noticed it from her own observations however if she still decides to follow me, then I will respect her decision. In order to divert the conversation, I brought the attention onto the MVP who managed to grow a beard made of milk.

[Luna. You did great today. It was a brilliant showing.] (Youya)

[Naturally. Luna's tree climbing skill is the best in the world.] (Luna)

Luna had a look of satisfaction on her face but thanks to her milk beard it could not be seen.

[Ah. I could had done my part well too. Youya, next time make a strategy that I can play a part too okay.] (Til)

[I'll consider it. However the plans I make are only for the people who are the most suitable for the situation.] (Youya)

The right place for the right person.

It is the party leader's role to give out instructions for the situation based on the strengths of each and everyone of the party members. In Til's case, her bow will have many opportunities in the future. In a short while she will definitely be the most useful person in our party.

[Uncle Youya, could I please take a look at the *Magic Egg*?] (Selene)

[Of course.] (Youya)

I took the *Magic Egg* from my bag and handed it over to Selene who received it. Luna and Til who were intrigued by the eggs were also looking over.

[Youya. The egg is alive.] (Luna)

[Uhn. There are sounds coming out of it. What kind of creature will be born from this egg?] (Til)

[In the first place how are we going to get the egg to hatch?] (Selene)

The girls did various actions such as caressing the egg, sniffing it and poking it. However, getting the egg to hatch is a fairly high hurdle to cross. The *Magic Egg* is definitely sturdy, however it will still be broken if it were to receive the full brunt from a monster's attack. Plus carrying it around for everyone to see would basically be begging for someone to steal it .

[Hee. This is troublesome. Since the egg weighs about 2 kilograms it'll be difficult for us to carry it on our backpack all the time.] (Til)

[We only have to maintain physical contact with the egg for about 200 hours. It'll be better if we just held it while we were sleeping since it'll be safer than carrying it around in public. In any case, we won't be able to perform the second method in Greenwood.. There is no hurry to hatch the egg.] (Youya)

I plan for us to leave Greenwood when we reach level 30 which should take us at least three weeks. Assuming our total sleeping time is 8 hours everyday, we will accumulate a total of 168 hours by the time we reach level 30. Furthermore the time required to move to the next town is about 5 days, which adds another 40 hours to our timer. It's a coincidence but our hatching work will end the moment we arrive at the next town.

[Youya, what's the second method?] (Luna)

[After warming the egg, you will place the egg into a hot spring mixed with spiritual energy for thirty minutes. If you do that then the *Magic Pet* would be born immediately. Our destination after Greenwood will be the City of Forges, The number one smithing town on the continent, Flaregard. It is also famous for

it's hot springs heated by the nearby volcano.] (Youya)

(Note: Should I change the title of the city to *The city of forges* since its a blacksmithing city.)

Flaregard. The world's number one blacksmithing city. There are two secrets as to why it is number one. First would be the dwarfs whose favourite things were fire and iron. The second would be the *Sacred Flame* which has never been extinguished ever since the world was born. The *Sacred Flame* is the flame from god which was capable of melting everything, even Orichalcum which was known to be incapable of being smelted in any furnace. It is because of this flame's existence that it came to be known as the world's number one blacksmithing city. Due to the *Sacred Flame* there are many different magical metals that can only be processed at that city. Furthermore due to the influence of the flame and the nearby volcano, the spas in the area were full of hot springs.

[Youya. What is a hot spring? Luna doesn't know.] (Luna)

[It is a pond with lots of hot water. Once you enter it, your whole body will feel good. Especially the hot springs in Flaregard. It is something that you definitely have to try once in your entire life.] (Youya)

[Want to go! Luna, loves feeling good! Especially together with Youya!] (Luna)

Entering the hot springs isn't just that. There is a secret property held within their hot springs which was their springs filled with spiritual power. Just by soaking your body in the water, your entire body can be rejuvenated, your fatigue can be washed away and any illnesses can be cured. It also has the property of speeding up a person's recovery from any injury.]

[If you look forward to going then you should work hard for the sake of reaching Flaregard earlier. Besides hatching the egg, you should do your best to raise your level as well. That way we can depart earlier.] (Selene)

[That's right. Tomorrow we will do our best too.] (Til)

Selene and Til were both fired up as well.

Truth is, that isn't the only reason why I targeted Flaregard as our next destination. There are also hidden elements that are present over there. Similar

to the *Magic Egg* only being available in Greenwood, it is a place that I definitely have to go. That is why I chose it as our destination after we reach level 30.

[That is right. We definitely must become the strongest and raise our level to 30 as soon as possible and leave Greenwood. Next is to decide who will be the one to take care of the egg. It is impossible for me to do so as the sofa is too small. If I were to go to sleep with the egg then it would definitely fall onto the ground before the morning.] (Youya)

Since Selene joined our party I was moved from the bed to the sofa. One bed was for Luna and Til and the other for Selene. I had already requested the innkeeper for a room with three beds, however we had to wait for the current user of the room to leave before we could move in. Until then, I will continue to sleep on the sofa. After finding out that I was sleeping on the sofa, the girls had offered to let me sleep together with them, however I refused both sides.

Luna and Til were both fundamentally kids. It isn't good for their education to grow up experiencing sleeping with a member of the opposite gender. On the other hand Selene was a princess. When thinking of her future, it'll be bad if it was known that she had slept with another man even if I wasn't willing to lay a hand on her.

[Luna wants to take care of the egg!] (Luna)

[Me too! Me too!] (Til)

Luna and Til both raised their hands.

[That's great. Then the two of you will take care of the egg. Speaking of which, I have not mentioned anything about what kind of creature will hatch from the egg. The egg consumes the magic power of the person taking care of it to develop. Naturally it will follow the heart of the person as well. Depending on the magic power they consumed, the creature that hatches will follow suit. Which means that what hatches from that egg, depends on you two.] (Youya)

During the game era, after analyzing the different interactions and conversations between NPCs and players, the hidden parameter which determined the monster was confirmed to be the user's race.

(Note: This paragraph was vague, at least on my understanding of the words, about the parameter discovered in the game so I decided to add some context.)

After understanding how the mechanics of the egg worked, it is possible to target a specific pet to hatch from the egg, however it is difficult to accurately influence the hatching. However, if I were to choose one I would choose the dragon the size of a kitten, a *Faerie Dragon*.

Faerie Dragons were capable of casting recovery magic, provide protective buffs to the party and is resilient itself. If we weren't lucky enough to get that, I just wish to have something that the girls would like. Regardless of what comes out, if it was grown using the heart and magic powers of Luna and Til, I am sure that a good pet will hatch from the egg.

[Luna will do her best!] (Luna)

[I will try my best too. It feels as if it is our child.] (Til)

The two girl's motherly instincts were stimulated as the two of the sandwiched the egg between them. Luna's ear began twitching, going *pikopiko*. It is a gesture that Luna does whenever something comes to her mind.

[Til. You were right. If it's our child..] (Luna)

It looked as if the two of them were communicating through their ear movements as both their ears went *pikopiko* one after another.

[Ah! That is a good observation! You are smart.] (Til)

Til let out a devilish smile as she came to a conclusion. I have a bad feeling about letting this conversation go on.

[Well that's that. We'll leave it to the two of you to take good care of the egg.] (Youya)

[We understand!] (Til)

[Leave it to us!] (Luna)

Their responses were filled with energy. Selene has been squirming quite a bit since earlier, it seems that she might have something to say.

[What's wrong? Selene.] (Youya)

It'll be bad not to give her the opportunity to speak up before ending the conversation.

[I feel like I would like to sleep with the egg too. I wonder if it's possible to lend me the egg from time to time.] (Selene)

Luna and Til stared at Selene's face.

And..

[Uhn. It's okay!] (Luna)

[You're extremely reserved aren't you. It was expected from the start.] (Til)

The two of them replied instantly. The two of them were good kids. There was no chance that they would reject her request.

[Thank you. I'm glad that you think so. Everyone, let's take good care of the egg together.] (Selene)

Now then, I wonder what kind of monster would hatch from an egg taken care by the three of them. It is interesting to wonder about that. In the game there wasn't any eggs that were being nurtured collaboratively, there might even be a magic pet that I didn't know of. Although, that might be me imagining too much.

[Now then, the talk about the egg is over. Let's return to the celebration. It's late to be celebrating tonight but let's make it a grand celebration!] (Youya)

[OUHH!] (Luna & Til & Selene)

Afterwards, the atmosphere heated up as everyone laughed and drank to the fullest.

In the midst of our celebration, I began thinking of Phil who we left behind in Rumberg. Tonight I will be writing a letter to her before going to bed to keep her updated our progress. Me, Til and Luna were all doing well, plus we even managed to find a new companion for our party.

However, that made finding the item even more important. The item that could increase our party's limit to five. Even if we failed to do so, I want to meet up with Phil as soon as possible. There were many things that I wished to talk about with her. While such thoughts continuously passed through my mind, I

continued to gulp more ale down my throat.

Tomorrow, let's continue to become even stronger than before. Right now we have already obtained the magic egg. We can now focus wholeheartedly to raising our level as quickly as possible. Let's just say that I have a little trick up my sleeve for tomorrow.

Chapter 17: The old man seriously blows him away

I opened my eyes.

In the end, we continued the celebration until it was extremely late at night and afterwards I continued to write a letter for Phil, resulting in lost time for sleep.

Between Greenwood and Rumberg, there is a delivery service carried out by trained bird-type monsters, by using that service my letter should arrive at Greenwood by tomorrow.

Somehow the futon feels much warmer than usual.

When I fully opened my eyes, there was the sight of a cute girl sleeping in front of me. It was Luna who was sleeping soundly. It is amazing how she somehow managed to find space to sleep on this small sofa while I was asleep.

Ever since we arrived at Greenwood, I was relieved that Luna's habit of entering my bed had finally disappeared, I wonder what kind of wind will be blowing our way this time. Even more amazing, is the fact that somehow the *Magic Egg* was sandwiched between the two of us. With this, I think I can understand what Luna was thinking.

[Seriously.. This girl.] (Youya)

I smiled bitterly at this girl's sneaky tricks. I began rubbing Luna's ears as they had an interesting feeling to it, like a *kunyu* sensation to it. It is surprisingly really fun.

Luna began to become restless as she opens her eyes.

[Good morning Youya.] (Luna)

For the time being, let's flick her forehead.

[Ouch. Youya is cruel.] (Luna)

[I'm not cruel. I told you not to sleep on the sofa did I not? It'll be

uncomfortable if we had to sleep together in such a small place.] (Youya)

Even though I have been sleeping alone, I haven't been sleeping very comfortably. Luna who deliberately tried to squeeze herself into a small gap must be feeling even more tired.

[Uhn. But it was important. Luna wants to sleep with the egg together with Youya.] (Luna)

[Is it okay to tell me the reason?] (Youya)

[If Luna and Til slept with the egg, then it would be Luna and Til's child. But if Youya slept with the egg together with Luna and Til then it would also be Youya's child. Luna wants Youya's child.] (Luna)

That was the case. I couldn't be angry at that.

[Then are you satisfied now? Next time do not come onto the sofa again.] (Youya)

[Uhn. Luna won't come onto the sofa with the egg again.] (Luna)

Wait, something feels strange about what she just said. Suddenly, I felt a presence behind me.

[Luna, you did great! Tomorrow will be my turn!] (Til)

It was Til who was laughing with a strange laugh. Behind her was another person.

[That's wonderful isn't it? If you weren't against it then I would like to do it too.] (Selene)

It was...

[I'm an old man but I'm also a healthy man. Aren't you afraid about sleeping together with a male?] (Youya)

I have to warn them although they are being extremely careless.

[Ahahahaha. You would never lay a hand on any of us you know.] (Til)

[That's right. Even Luna and Til who may be young but they are certainly beautiful girls. Even with this much favor from them, we can rest assured that you would never do anything strange to us. On the other hand, even if you did

to me..] (Selene)

Luna and Til who were listening to Selene's words to the end had a shocked face.

[Just kidding. It's a joke. That's just how relaxed we are.] (Selene)

Luna and Til began to walk off as they began sneaking somewhere.

[Luna, what do you think?] (Til)

[It is dangerous. Youya is in danger.] (Luna)

[I have to send a report to my sister.] (Til)

[Luna is neutral.] (Luna) [

[Ahh that's bad. Now that it comes to this, we have to bring Youya into our bed once he is asleep to protect him.] (Til)

[If thats the case then Luna will cooperate.] (Luna)

Whether they are seriously trying to hide it or not, their intentions are clear even though their voices were not completely audible. Selene face became red as the two children continued to tease her. Nonetheless, it was a perfect tease in every sense.

It is nice to be trusted to this extent however it isn't good for them to lower their guard this much to a male. It could be a good thing for me to show them how ferocious a man can be before they have to experience any man outside.

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After that, we talked about various things.

Somehow, it was decided that I would sleep in Luna and Til's bed with the egg tonight and tomorrow in Selene's bed. Til was saying that it was unfair for Luna to be the only one to sleep together with me and the egg. Somehow unbeknownst to me Til had thought that way. Although I had refused that notion I eventually relented to their pleading. It was a strange request although there was a legitimate reason this time. Next time I'll be sure to be firm on my

stand.

[Youya, what dungeon will we be entering this time?] (Luna)

[If we were to search for the *Starfish Larvae* there is a chance for us to run into those people from *Wolfgang* again. Plus the monsters in the labyrinth are definitely becoming lesser. This time we will be entering a different dungeon.] (Youya)

Although many monsters were being eaten by the *Starfish Larvae* everyday, we had already been hunting in the labyrinth for more than five days. The number of monsters were evidently beginning to diminish. Due to this, we will be entering a different dungeon. The name of our destination is the *Wailing Forest* with a recommended level of 28. It is the most difficult dungeon available in *Greenwood*.

[Heh. I'm getting excited. Although the labyrinth is nice, I'm quickly getting bored of it.] (Til)

[The next dungeon will also have plenty of monsters. However, the monsters there can't be defeated using the traditional methods easily. It is an extremely difficult place to fight monsters. However we will be hunting them down and raising our levels as quickly as possible.] (Youya)

For the *Wailing Forest*, although it was the most difficult dungeon available in *Greenwood*, there were many adventurers above the recommended level who came here looking to obtain the *Magic Egg*. Because of that, the monsters who weren't usually being hunted were also being hunted. Those monsters weren't the average run of the mill monsters that could be hunted.

[Uncle Youya, that sounds intriguing. Fighting a powerful opponent makes my heart beat with excitement.] (Selene)

[I feel the same way. However don't get too excited. The monsters in the labyrinth were definitely not average by any means. However the monsters we will be facing aren't ordinary monsters in the slightest. It is something similar to a boss. It is a special monster that can only exist as the only one of its kind. It is a totally different level from the monsters we have been hunting.] (Youya)

Bosses. There are three features that distinguishes them from normal

monsters.

First would be that they are a unique monster that would never spawn another until it was killed.

Although it will respawn every week during the respawn day, it will definitely appear in the spot where it is supposed to be. And it will never leave that location.

Second would be their overwhelming strength. For this boss, the four of us together would barely be able to defeat it.

Thirdly, bosses have a dedicated list of item drops that can appear according to their rank in addition to the normal drops that can appear. Furthermore the drop rates for rare item drops will increase as the boss's rank increases. At the boss's current rank, it is possible to obtain the item which allows us to increase the number of party members to five. It's drop rate right now is 30%. With Luna's *Increased Drop rate* at level 4, the drop rate rises to 1.8times the original number to 54%. With that high of a drop rate, there is a good chance for us to obtain the item if we challenge the boss today and next week after it respawns. If we were unable to obtain this item then it is likely that we wouldn't be able to head over to the new town.

[Is everyone ready?] (Youya)

[Uhn. Always ready!] (Luna)

[Today is a super ready day too.] (Til)

[Shall we leave?] (Selene)

Thus we finally left. However before we leave for the dungeon, first we have to confirm whether there are any quests for us to accept in the dungeon.

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I was facing the usual receptionist in the guild.

[Just to confirm. You're heading over to the *Wailing Forest* right? You do

know that the recommended level for that dungeon is 28?] (Receptionist)

[I understand that. However I am already level 26. Furthermore we already have a balanced four-men party.] (Youya)

[No matter how I look at this, there is something wrong with your party's progress. How is your level increasing this quickly?] (Receptionist)

[Maximum effort, strategy and hunting efficiently.] (Youya)

Level 20 to 30 would take at least a year if the party has been hunting diligently. However even then it is considered an extremely fast pace. An average adventurer would usually take at least 3 years to break the level 30 barrier. It is often the case that adventurers would never be able to exit the level 20 range once they enter. However in our case, it is even more unusual to increase our levels by three in just 10 days.

[So are there any quests available?] (Youya)

[Yes there are. Let's see.. If you encounter the monster that inhabits the river in the *Grieving River*, then you can look for *Eel Meat (Average)*. It is a very tasty and popular item however the monster rarely appears on the surface of the river and prefers to stick to the bottom of the river, making it difficult to obtain the item and the supply for the meat is low. The item can be sold on the market at a very high price.] (Receptionist)

[I understand. I would like to accept that quest.] (Youya)

If we were to utilize some items and Til's bow then we should be able to complete the quest. Eel is also one of my favourite foods. Especially eel wine stew. Let's be sure to leave some of them to bring to the bar for us to enjoy a good meal. As a matter of fact, I was considering whether to hunt the eel to raise our levels. Adventurers do not often hunt monsters who reside in the water.. Or rather, most adventurers can't hunt monsters that live underwater. At least not in the traditional way. Thanks to that, there is a high possibility that the monsters underwater would remain untouched.

The fact that we somehow managed to obtain an eel collection quest is an added bonus that just confirmed what we will be hunting in the dungeon.

[I'm expecting great things from your party. Youya-san's party has a 100%

success rate until now, and that has helped the guild a great deal.]

(Receptionist)

[You can expect us to complete the quest this time as well. However if there are other adventurers who are hunting the same prey as us then you can expect to wait until the next respawn for the quest.] (Youya)

[You don't have to worry about any competition since eel meat hasn't been circulating at the market for awhile.] (Receptionist)

If that's the case then I'm relieved. Rather than the rarity of the monsters themselves, there are also cases where the monsters themselves have been hunted and their materials have been sold to the guild. The guild often settles the matters about their quests after going through the standard material exchange with the adventurers, causing situations where adventurers unknowingly sell drop items that could otherwise be used to complete quests. That was a sign of a bad work ethic by the adventurer and it will be better to confirm the existence of such quests before anything. Even the guild wishes to increase the completion rate of their quests.

[With this the procedures for the quest has been completed. Now, there is something that I wish to ask of you. Do you know the name *Wolfgang*? We have gotten into some trouble with them and I am trying to gather information about them.] (Youya)

[That.. is definitely a problem. They are quite infamous in the area for causing trouble. Truth is most of us are of the consensus that they should have their adventurer privileges revoked however for some reason the higher ups seem to be pressured against it.] (Receptionist)

The guild was pressured? If that was the case then there should be someone powerful preventing the guild from taking any action. Probably a famous merchant or a noble. It seems that many things are happening behind the scenes

[That much information is enough. Thank you for the help.] (Youya)

[I am sorry that I couldn't be much help to you.] (Receptionist)

[That isn't the case. I am glad that I am able to rely on the guild when I am in

trouble. There are also trashy guilds that perform dirty deeds without reforming. I am glad that this guild hasn't lost its path.] (Youya)

I resolved myself with the intention of answering violence with violence. If they were the kind of people that came at you straight on with brute force, then they aren't the kind of people who would accept a peaceful resolution. If we were to get mixed up with them, then I'll be sure to repay the favor.

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When I was searching the the girls to rendezvous before heading to the dungeon, they were already caught up in an incident with four men. Out of the four men, two of them were the same men who tried to solicit Til and Luna into their party.

[So it's you people who dared to enter the *Wolfgang's* territory and steal our *Magic Egg*.]

A man with horrible facial features and a skinhead began throwing toxic words around. Looking at him, his age should be approaching 30. This time, crossing paths with them was within our expectations. They were likely expecting us to come to the guild sooner or later as it was our livelihood and waited for us to exit the guild so as to not cause any trouble in the guild. As evidence of the skinhead's superior level, I am unable to see his level.

[Steal? There isn't such a rule. We merely found and secured the *Magic Egg*. Don't go around throwing false accusations onto us.] (Youya)

I shrugged my shoulders as I threw a casual reply. The blood vessels on the skinhead's head began to pop out.

[Listen carefully old man. I will destroy you right here and now and have you return the egg to me. However that isn't enough to repay the debt you owe us. You will be paying us for reparations for a total amount of one million gil! Plus the women behind you will be joining our clan. I will make full use of their abilities. I'm sure we will be able to get plenty of customers with them. They are wasted on an old man like you. I will be sure to make use of them to the fullest.]

(Skinhead)

The skinhead began to scan the girls with his perverted eyes. Luna and Til hid behind my back while Selene glared back towards him.

[It seems that you are confident in your abilities.] (Selene)

[My level is 40. Far superior than any of you. You aren't even in the same caliber as me.] (Skinhead)

Boasting about his level, I know firsthand how vain that can be. Levels are merely a measurement of experience points. What is important is the person's status and his skills. That is something I came to understand painfully.

[If that's the case then let's decide it with a battle. I'll comply with your request. And bet the egg, all our money and the girls as you wished. However, if you lose the battle then I want all of you to get out of *Greenwood* and never come back again.] (Youya)

It doesn't feel pleasant to treat Luna and the girls as a trophy but even if we got them to back off from this incident then the disgusting eyes they would be subject to will never end. It would be better if we could decide everything in black and white right here and now.

[Old man. You may want to look good in front of the girls but it's impossible. Your level doesn't even come close to 30. Hahahahaha. However since the great me is kind. I'll agree with this reckless old man's duel.] (Skinhead)

The skinhead agreed with my battle terms. At that moment, a sharp sound rang inside my head. Similar to the game, in this world when two parties decide to have a duel, a *Duel* will be established and both parties will be forced to fulfill the agreements that have been decided beforehand.

[The battle starts the moment the coin falls to the ground.] (Youya)

The victor for a *Duel* is decided when a person surrenders, dies or gets knocked unconscious. There are many cases where the person loses their life.

[The great me is feeling generous today. Because I won't torture you, and I'll be killing you.] (Skinhead)

I flipped the coin into the air. A spinning coin flew through the air.

That instant, the skinhead came at me with a fiery charge, drawing his sword and throwing out a thrust. The battle had formally started the moment the *Duel* was accepted. Using the coin as a signal for the battle was merely something done for convenience. The moment my consciousness was focused on the coin, the skinhead threw a surprise attack. The skinhead is surprisingly knowledgeable about the *Duel*. However, that is the same for me.

[Honestly.. This guy. His character just doesn't change for the better.] (Youya)

I am well informed about the kind of dirty tricks people with bad characters would perform. I pretended to focus my attention onto the coin while staying aware of the skinhead's actions.

I lowered my body slightly. The skinhead who performed a large attack was careless and full of openings. I straightened my arm the same time the skinhead's thrust cut through the air. With the added momentum of the enemy's charge, I launched a cross as a counter.

[*God's Strength.*] (Youya)

The instant my fist collided onto his face, using my customized magic spell to drastically increase my strength while reducing the effective time of the spell to several seconds. If I were to cast the spell the instant he acted, I wouldn't be able to finish the chant in time. Having faith in his actions, I preemptively casted the spell and began the chant before flipping the coin.

The fist which had its power increased tenfold thrown in a counter against his charge blew the skinhead away. His body landed and bounced off the ground, continuing to bounce four times. All the bones in his body were likely broken as his body was convulsing. It was painful just looking at his pitiful state as all of his limbs were bent in impossible angles.

In the worst case scenario, even if I didn't hold back he could have died. Looks like his level wasn't just for show. There was the appropriate defensive force to back up his level.

[This *Duel* ends in my victory. You guys are that guy's friends aren't you? Are you going to bring him to a healer? Or would you like to continue in his stead?]
(Youya)

I turned to face the remaining three men and the two men who were involved in the previous incident looked like they were about to flee at any time.

[Heee. This old man.. Is more dangerous than a wild monster. Oh. We aren't part of *Wolfgang*. We don't even know who that old man is. We were merely ordered to follow him!]

[That's right. We are just bystanders. We have absolutely no relations to him!]

It was a magnificent showing of scum remaining as scum. With this kind of attitude they will never be able to find a suitable companion to stick through thick and thin together. However, the third man merely silently went over to the skinhead and carried him away, disappearing into the surroundings.

[Luna is shocked. Luna though that Youya is kind and would choose to forgive him. The last time Youya only smiled and let them go.] (Luna)

[Luna, I'm not kind to everybody in this world. I am only softer towards newcomers in this world. Every person is bound to make mistakes in their life. People who are able to learn from their mistakes will become amazing adventurers in the future. However, if they continue to perform bad deeds and make mistakes, then even I wouldn't be able to help them.] (Youya)

Just like the skinhead from earlier. Forgiving someone of his character isn't considered kindness, but rather foolishness.

[Huah, Youya is thinking about a lot of different things.] (Luna)

[However, you chose to use your fist rather than your sword. That was definitely very uncle-Youya like. If you were to use a sword then he would have definitely been killed.] (Selene)

[It might have been better to kill him earlier, however I'm not too fond of needlessly killing another. I may just be naive though.] (Youya)

I will reflect on this battle later. There is still some resistance in me towards killing other humans. If it is necessary then I would do it without hesitation, however I would like to avoid doing so as much as possible.

[Youya is great like this. Luna likes this side of Youya.] (Luna)

[Uhn. Me too.] (Til)

The two girls came over and hugged me. It doesn't feel that bad.

[Despite the hindrances, it's time for us to head towards the *Wailing Forest*.]
(Youya)

Everyone nodded as we proceeded to walk through the magic door.

The next time we open our eyes, the battle between the eel-type monsters in the river that was left mostly untouched and us will begin. As well as the enemy of the hidden room. It is our first ever boss battle. We will not just be gaining experience points from this battle, but actual battle experience in a fierce battle for our lives. Just what will these girls learn and develop in the midst of an actual battle? I am excited to find out.

Chapter 18: The old man challenges the Wailing Forest

which was Greenwood's most difficult dungeon has a unique characteristic which raised its difficulty. It is a forest that was alive. The wind that blows through the forest produces a eerie groaning sound throughout the entire forest which interferes with a person's train of thought. Meanwhile, the trees in the forest were not just alive, but also capable of movement. As soon as an adventurer passes by, the trees will begin to rearrange themselves, altering the path and disorienting the adventurer. Thanks to this, it is rumored that the eerie noises coming from the forest isn't just from the wind, but from the screams of the exhausted adventurers lost within the forest. That was how the name

Wailing Forest came about.

"Why are we walking along the river instead of entering the forest!" (Til)

Til who listened to my explanation raised her voice as we hadn't entered the actual forest. Currently we are walking upstream of the river that flows around the perimeter of the forest.

"Once we enter the forest we will be able to begin hunting monsters. It would be an excellent adventure for us right after the monsters have respawned, however it is meaningless for us to enter now." (Youya)

Excluding the fact that maintaining our sense of direction was difficult and pain in the ass, it is a good place to hunt monsters. However six days have already passed since the monsters have respawned, any monsters there were living in the forest have long perished. Popular dungeons often have prey up till the fifth day after they respawn and even if you were to search for monsters after then they would have already been hunted. Typically most adventurers would spend the entire five days hunting and spend the rest of the week resting and waiting for the monsters to respawn. We are part of the minority who continues to hunt everyday without taking a break.. This was a major reason

why we were raising our levels at a pace much faster as compared to other adventurers who weren't.

"But even if that was the case, there wouldn't be any monster around if we were to remain in this kind of place." (Til)

"That isn't the case. I am properly trying to search for monsters. Even though we are merely strolling along the river, there is a proper reason for this. Luna, are you properly paying attention to

Presence Detection?" (Youya)

"Uhn. Leave it to Luna, Luna is properly searching inside the river." (Luna)

The river we were walking along had a gentle flow with a width of 10 metres and a maximum depth of 5 metres. Although it was a shallow river, there are still monsters swimming around. However, most adventurers do not typically hunt in the water as attempting to hunt an aquatic monster in the water is akin to an act of suicide. Even if we had an overwhelming level difference, it doesn't make a difference if we were to drown from lack of oxygen. Humans were not built to fight on equal grounds against aquatic life in water. On the other hand, if we were capable of hunting aquatic monsters underwater, we would be able to monopolize the entire aquatic species of monsters.

"Til. It's a present." (Youya)

"This is.. A weird arrow isn't it." (Til)

"Well that's about right. It's a handmade arrow from Phil. Back when we were still adventuring together it was an arrow she made." (Youya)

At the tip of the arrow was a barb to prevent the arrow from being pulled out, however this barb was especially large for the arrow. Furthermore transparent threads were connected to the arrow.

"This isn't your typical thread is it?" (Til)

"It's a magical thread. It has the ability to stretch as long as you want so long as you pour magic power into it. When you pour your magic power into the arrow, the thread will stretch until you decide otherwise." (Youya)

"Fuu, so in other words we're going fishing." (Til)

"Exactly." (Youya)

As expected of Til. She caught up quickly. Meanwhile Luna and Selene were tilting their heads in confusion. I'm sure they will understand it once we demonstrate the arrow in action.

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After walking upstream for thirty minutes, Luna ears began to twitch quickly, producing a *pikupiku* sound. It was the gesture she did whenever she found an enemy.

"Youya. Monsters. Extremely long and big monsters at the bottom of the river!" (Luna)

"Yosh. Good job finding the monsters." (Youya)

To hunt an aquatic monster, the first hurdle to cross would be to actually finding the monster. However, to find the monster by swimming is practically the same as begging the monster to eat you. It could be taken as if

Presence Detection was a requirement for hunting aquatic monsters.

"But Youya. If it's that deep we won't be able to beat it." (Luna)

"Uhn I agree. Even with the arrow it'll be tough to penetrate even three metres reliably into the water. In that depth the power of the arrow will be diminished and it will not penetrate into the monster." (Til)

"Well, just wait and see." (Youya)

I took out several pairs of gloves from my magic bag and several black stones. I passed Luna and Selene the gloves while I held the black stones.

"Til, we are going to begin luring the monsters onto the surface, keep your bow on nock and get ready." (Youya)

"Got it. Ready anytime." (Til)

Til readied her bow as she readied the arrow on her bow. Her entire atmosphere changes as she poured her concentration onto her bow. The black

stone is a special kind of magic stone which explodes several seconds after a strong shock is applied, producing a large shockwave. It is an item that drops from several monsters with a certain drop chance and is fairly popular among adventurers due to its versatility. It is commonly called

Sound Bomb.

I threw the black stone towards the river and the moment the bomb struck the surface of the water, its detonation was imminent as it slowly sank into the river and exploded at the bottom. With a huge splash, the large eel-type monsters with black bodies that usually lurked at the bottom of the river were blown into the air and fell back onto the surface of the river.

It seems that the monsters lost consciousness or were stunned from the shockwave of the

Sound Bomb

, and continued floating on the surface of the water.

"Til!" (Youya)

"Leave it to me!" (Til)

Til released the arrow tied with a magic thread made by Phil. The arrow which was thicker than my arms penetrated deep into the two metre long eel.. Into the

Numeri Anguila.

"PIGYAAAAA"

The *Numeri Anguilla*

which lost consciousness violently woke up with a roar.

It is a monster with strong vitality that wouldn't die from merely being penetrated by one arrow.

"Luna, Selene, grab the thread and pull!" (Youya)

"Uhn. Understood." (Luna)

"I understand it now." (Selene)

Luna and Selene who were wearing the gloves firmly grabbed the thread and pulled it. In one breath, the

Numeri Angilla

was launched into the air, landing right in front of our feet. The next moment, I drew my blade and slashed its neck, severing its head from its body. Even if it has a lot of vitality, there isn't a living being that can survive being decapitated. I quickly grabbed the specially made arrow and threw it back towards Til.

"Hurry up and catch the remaining two eels. It'll be troublesome if they woke up." (Youya)

"I know that already." (Til)

Til quickly recovered the arrow and released it a second time, piercing a second

Numeri Anguilla

which was being pushed downstream by the irregular current produced from the shockwave. Her archery skills were as amazing as ever. Similar to the first one, Luna and Selene pulled the thread as I severed the monster's head as it landed onto the ground.

Although the monster appears to be easy to kill above ground, if a battle were to commence underwater, this tactic would never work. In fact our roles would be reversed. If the

Anguilla

were to wrap its body around mine and restrict my movements, I could easily be forced deeper into the water and drown.

Rule number one in a battle is to never battle in the opponent's zone. If we are unable to defeat it underwater, then we'll just drag it out of the water. This is how you perform a safe hunt.

"Now let's continue at this pace! Tonight will be the Eel festival!" (Youya)

"Tons and tons! Next is Luna's turn to cut the head!" (Luna)

"I too would like to smash its head with my spikes." (Selene)

Luna and Selene were saying scary things with tremendous vigor. As expected, the monsters inside the river were left untouched.

The Sound Bomb

which is vital to our fishing plan is an item that is often dropped in dungeons for levels 35 and above. However at that level there are many other items which are much more valuable to collect than the

Sound bomb

. It's no wonder that these guys were left untouched by other adventurers.

The Numeri Anguilla

is a level 26 monster. It's time to enjoy this meal with both tasty amounts of meat and experience.

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Our hunt for the Numeri Anguilla

continued as we slowly but surely continued upstream. There were plenty of other

Anguillas

for us to hunt as their numbers were left untouched by other adventurers and the amount of Eel Meat (

Average)

we needed for the quest was secured early into the hunt. Currently we were trying to secure several of them for our own dinner at the bar where we will pass the meat to the chef and have him cook it for us. I am already looking forward to dinner tonight.

Courtesy of Luna's *Increased Drop Rate*, we also managed to get a rare item drop, the *Anguilla*

's rubbery skin. We could utilize this to create an armour with high lightning resistance since there are higher leveled monsters that are capable of manipulating thunder, I'll be sure to take care of it so as to not lose it.

"Youya, Tired." (Luna)

"Right? I already don't feel like looking at that black and slimy thing." (Til)

"I am having fun though." (Selene)

Since we were just doing monotonous work, walking upstream while occasionally fishing out the

Anguillas

, it seems that the two children have already gotten tired of it. It could also be due to the steep incline of the area as our physical strength was being sapped away walking upstream.

"Don't say that. The hunt for *Numeri Anguillas*

is about to end. Plus, we are about to see a sight that would make your troubles go away." (Youya)

We arrived at an open area with a completely different landscape and the scent of water in the air becomes thicker.

"Uwaaaa, Pretty." (Luna)

"Amazing. It's going *dotedote!*" (Til)

"So this is a waterfall. I've read about it in books but this is my first time seeing one." (Selene)

A gigantic waterfall came into our view. This is the famous location within the *Wailing Forest*, the *Lamenting Falls*

. With a height of above 100 metres, an overwhelming amount of water falls from the sky and lands onto the lake below with a roar, producing a beautiful rainbow. There aren't many sights like this in this world.

"Youya, Luna wants to get a closer look!" (Luna)

"I'm good though, I definitely do not want to get closer to the water falling

from the sky. It feels like I'll die if I get hit by that." (Til)

"Let's head towards it!" (Selene)

With that mass of water falling from that height, if you were to be directly hit by that water you would definitely be washed off the face of the world. Luna stared at the waterfall with glittering eyes nearby.

"Nee. Youya, Is this our destination for today?" (Luna)

"That's right. Behind this waterfall is a hidden room. In that room there is a special monster, a boss that regularly spawns there." (Youya)

"Wait a minute. Are we going to go through that waterfall? We'll die!" (Til)

"That is why no other adventurers have been able to notice the room."
(Youya)

A cave behind a waterfall. Although this waterfall has existed since the game's beta, if it was the waterfall during the beta then this would be a totally different matter. I would avoid being reckless in our leveling as much as possible.

"I wonder how are we supposed to enter the cave? Even if we were to survive receiving a direct hit from the water falling from above, if we were to be pushed into the water directly beneath it, we would be completely engulfed by the pressure from the waterfall and there would be no way for us to survive."
(Selene)

"Truth is, it is possible to stop the waterfall for several minutes." (Youya)

I took a look at my pocket watch. There were a few minutes left to go. At the core of the

Wailing Forest

, there is a magical vortex with a sign next to it that says: Where the tears of lamentation drops, offer the song of a monkey. The forest begins to dance and the tears will begin to stop.

Exactly as it looks like, this was a cipher to reach the secret room where the boss spawns. The tears of lamentation refer to the

Lamenting Falls

while the monkey refers to the monkey of the zodiac signs. When expressing time using the zodiac signs, the monkey represents the time between 3pm and 5pm.

In other words, at the *Lamenting Falls*

, when someone begins to sing a song at within 3pm to 5pm in the afternoon, the waterfall will stop for several moments.

Once the waterfall stops functioning, it becomes possible to reach the hidden room behind the waterfall. As always, the deciphering of riddles in this world is hard to understand. Looking at my watch, it was 3pm.

"Luna, Til, Selene. Which one of you are the most confident in their singing?"
(Youya)

The three of them began to think.

"Impossible for Luna. Luna doesn't have any songs to sing." (Luna)

It is difficult for me to ask Luna to sing when she doesn't have any memories in the first place.

"Uhn. I will pass too. I am good with lutes but to say that I am good at singing would be pushing it. My sister is good with singing though, and I didn't want to compete with her so I went for the lute instead. Musical performance are my specialty." (Til)

"I could sing, but I wouldn't call it a talent of mine." (Selene)

Speaking of which, Phil's singing was always the best, I feel like listening to it again.

"Then Selene, Could you please sing a song?" (Youya)

"If it is necessary.. It's embarrassing but I'll try my best." (Selene)

Selene went as close to the waterfall as possible and began to sing. It was a beautiful singing voice that had the beauty of a beautiful flower and powerful as if there was a powerful force driving it. It was a voice that suited Selene well. It was a voice that I used to hear often back when I was in her kingdom.

Then, the waterfall began to change. The loud impacts of the waterfall began

to echo as a gigantic tree appeared from above the waterfall, as if it was swaying to the right then to the left. It appears that this is the dance of the forest. As Selene song ended, the gigantic tree got caught between the two edges of the waterfall right before it could fall, blocking the waterfall causing the water to be pushed to the sides. Without the water to conceal the entrance, a secret passage hidden behind the waterfall appears.

"That was a beautiful song. Let's hear you sing again next time." (Youya)

"Eee, if uncle Youya is pleased with it." (Selene)

Selene became bashful as the two children's spirits left their body, staring at the water with sparkling eyes and leaving me and Selene alone

"Uwah. The tree really stopped the waterfall." (Til)

"There is really a hidden passage behind the waterfall. Now that it stopped, let's go." (Luna)

The two girls looked like they would disappear into the passage any second now.

"Now then, let's hurry. It will only be a few minutes before the waterfall push and crushes that big tree." (Youya)

Everyone began to run towards the stone scaffolding that appeared behind the waterfall with astonished looks as we entered the hidden passage. At the end of this path, is the boss hidden in a concealed room. This will be our first boss fight as a party. Let's crush this boss and gain even more confidence as a party while praying that we will obtain the item to increase our party members' limit to welcome Phil.

<End of Chapter>

Hey guys! I hope you guys enjoyed the chapters so far. Just to keep you guys updated, I'll have any access to the internet during the weekdays as well as most of the weekends since I'll most likely be focusing on my own physical training. I'll still be focusing on translating the series however it's going to be much slower. Also, if you guys don't see your comments in the comment section do not worry about it as my comment section has been set to approve frequent commenters. Newer commenters will have to be manually approved

which I will be doing every weekend.

I hope you guys have been enjoying the series and thanks for the support!

Chapter 19: The old man has a tea party in front of the boss room.

We entered the secret passage hidden behind the waterfall. The thought had crossed my mind but it doesn't seem like it'll be that easy to reach the boss room.

"*Fortress!*" (Selene)

Selene activated her skill as a wall of light emerged from the center of Renoir's shield and directly received the Lizardman's heavy shoulder charge. The Lizardman was an extremely muscular bipedal reptile who held an axe in his hands and a pad on his shoulder, resembling something people wore in the 1890s.

(Note: I am unsure on what this part means so it'll be great if someone could confirm this for me. Raws:

斧を手に持ち、とげ付き肩パッドでの体当たりを得意とする世紀末スタイル。)

Two of them had appeared at the same time. The other Lizardman that appeared was currently my opponent. The Lizardman raised and dropped his axe as I deflected the attack and drove my sword into its neck, severing its carotid artery. After severing its carotid artery, I continued to move behind to its back and slashed his back once more. The Lizardman fell to the ground as blood gushed out from its back and neck, turning into blue particles as it landed onto the ground.

On the other hand, the Lizardman which charged directly into Selene had its weak points exposed to Luna who flanked and thrust her dagger directly into its body. Meanwhile, the last member of the party, Til was also busy.

"These bats, there are so many of them." (Til)

"We can only rely on Til for the enemies in the sky, do your best." (Youya)

Til was continuously firing arrows this whole time. Her opponents were the

Mouse Bats

, bats with large buck teeth that were also strangely fleshy for a bat. It was a monster that mostly spent its time in the air, and only Til was capable of attacking them unless they were descending for an attack. Even while muttering complaints, she was accurately shooting arrows onto the

Mouse Bats

, knocking down one bat after another. No matter how many times I see it, her archery skills is an exciting sight. One of the surviving

Mouse Bat

's signature buck teeth began to glow as it suddenly descended towards Til who had just released an arrow and was unprotected.

"Finally Luna is able to land a blow." (Luna)

Our party's middle guard, Luna followed up with a thrust from her dagger into the body of the

Mouse bat. The blade penetrates deep into the *Mouse Bat's* small body and turns into blue particles.

"Thank you Luna. Fuuee, I was a little bit surprised by that." (Til)

With this, all the enemies have been safely defeated. Somehow we managed this far without suffering much damage.

"This is already the seventh ambush since we entered the passage." (Selene)

"Amazing amount of monsters. Luna is surprised." (Luna)

"I have already used up most of my arrows and my inventory is going red soon. I have to start creating new arrows soon." (Til)

"At least it seems that no one has entered the passage ever since the monsters respawn earlier this week." (Selene)

Since this path was hidden behind the waterfall, the number of monsters here have not been controlled by other adventurers. Thanks to this, it's basically an all-you-can-hunt buffet for us. Normally we would welcome the monsters with open arms however we would prefer to conserve our strength for the battle

against the boss making these encounters a pain in the ass.

"Selene, from this point on avoid using your skills and preserve them for the battle with the boss." (Youya)

"I understand." (Selene)

Fortress and Shield Bash

were both powerful skills in their own right however they still required mana from its user, it'll be better for us to consider conserving our mana and strength from now on.

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After walking through the secret passage, we have finally arrived at the the end of the passage in front of the boss room. Once we open the door, the boss battle will begin.

"As expected I'm exhausted. Luna's legs are wobbling." (Luna)

"I've lost some of the feeling in my arms. The monsters here are strong and persistent, and they have their own strange abilities. It was tough." (Selene)

"It'll be tough for us to battle the boss with how it is now." (Til)

The three girls each had an exhausted look on their faces from the repeated battles. It wasn't unexpected since we had fought another five group of monsters before finally arriving at the boss room. In a short period time, we have already encountered and fought twelve battles. Aside from our mana, our physical strength and spirits were already completely sapped.

"Let's continue on to the boss room! Is what I would like to say but it's time for a change of plan. Let's take a break and have some food while drinking recovery potions." (Youya)

"Hurray! As expected of Youya. Luna is happy." (Luna)

"Snacks, food!" (Til)

"Physical condition aside, is this really okay?" (Selene)

"It's fine since this is a one-way trip. Since we've already defeated all of the monsters on our way here, there isn't any chance of a sneak attack from the back whereas the boss will never take a step out of its room. We should only challenge the boss once we are fully prepared for the battle." (Youya)

As such, I took out a sheet from my magic bag and spread it out on the floor. The two children took off their shoes and sat on the sheet. I smiled bitterly and began to pour cold juice into cups and handed them to everyone. Times like these are when I appreciate the handiness of the

Magic Bag

as items that are placed into it remain as it is. Food placed inside will not go bad, making it possible for us to enjoy cold drinks and even snacks when we're outside.

"Ah! Youya, is that the fruity rice cake! It was really delicious." (Til)

"That is why I thought about buying it. I thought it was delicious too." (Youya)

Til immediately began eating the rice cake.

"Delicious~~." (Til)

I wonder just how tired she was as she started shedding tears while chewing on the rice cake. Looking at such a Til, someone stomach began grumbling as I turned towards the source of the sound. Initially I expected it to be Luna however the source of the sound was Selene whose face began turning red.

"Well, our chances of winning will be higher once we take a break. Lets challenge the boss after our tea break." (Youya)

I smiled bitterly as I took out a stamina recovery potion and a greater mana potion and enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere of drinking tea and snacks in front of the boss room. Just like this, my physical strength, energy and plenty of mana recovered. With this, we should be able to put up a good performance.

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After we were done eating snacks, I began to explain our plan in approaching the boss. The boss attack patterns and skills as well as our party formation against it.

In this world, bosses are an one of a kind unique existences. Only one of each boss can exist in the world at any given time. They are a rare existence, and their unique drop items were materials capable of creating excellent equipment with powerful effects. They also provided heaps of experience points and at the same time, depending on the rank of the boss it is possible to get items from the bosses special item drop table once they are defeated. However fighting a boss doesn't only provide merits, but also a crucial demerit. Bosses in this world had overwhelming strength as compared to adventurers. Monsters in this world often gather in packs and groups to make up for their weaker individual strengths while adventurers would form a party and battle these groups of monsters. That was how the power level in the world was balanced. However, bosses were an exception. Bosses were designed to appear alone against a party of adventurers at the recommended level whom had researched the boss's abilities beforehand and prepared additional provisions for the battle. Even then, it would be a close battle that could go both ways.

Every boss in this world is strong. In the first place, it was difficult to even search for the boss's location, making it a life vs death battle to even get to the boss location. Yesterday I had already given a debrief about the information and strategy for the upcoming battle, but I will be going through the information once again to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Right now, we may not be at the recommended level for the battle, however our party has the potential to compensate for our lack of levels. So long as we do what we have to do, we will win the battle.

"Youya, Luna remembers it perfectly. It's fine." (Luna)

"Me too, me too!" (Til)

"I agree. I have understood the information thoroughly in my head. However, I am definitely afraid of the battle. It is a monster that even Youya is afraid of."
(Selene)

"The boss is on a whole different level from any monster you have battled up

until now. You may not be feeling it right now but once you see it, your nerves will begin to appear. And similarly it will be a large obstacle to overcome in order to defeat it. However, anything is possible and nothing is impossible."
(Youya)

(Note: The last bit in Youya's sentence sounds like a Japanese proverb and I have no clue on how to translate it so if anyone could clarify it would be great. Raws:

形になるものも、形にならないものもな)

This will be the first battle where the girls will be facing the possibility of death. However, so long as I am alive, I will never let that possibility become a reality.

"But that's strange. If the monster is as valuable as Youya says, then why is it still here? Wouldn't other adventurers target this monster as their first prey?"
(Luna)

"Put it simply, there isn't anybody who understands the gimmick behind the waterfall. Every boss in existence only appears in a hidden room. However, just as Luna said. When the method to arriving at a boss room is discovered by an adventurer, it will often turn into a scramble for the right to challenge the boss. The peaceful method to decide who gets to challenge the boss would be the first-come-first-serve basis, however if the peaceful method isn't accepted, then it would turn into a battlefield where the last party standing gets to challenge the boss." (Youya)

The drop items unique to each boss and the shared boss-item tables were both valuable enough for adventurers to chase after. For dungeons with a boss room, adventurers would often camp out the entrance to the room several days before it spawns to be the first party to challenge it, however any adventurers that come after who disagree with the system would often use violence and threats against the first party.

The value of information in this world was high. Even if you managed to find a way to safely arrive at the boss room, it didn't mean that the people who had already arrived would readily let you in. Fundamentally speaking, the known boss rooms are often being monopolized. By monopolizing the boss room,

every two weeks you will gain access to additional rare items and large experience values.

"Scary. Luna didn't know about killing other people just for a monster." (Luna)

"Nothing can be done about that. So long as there is something that you wish for, especially when it is a unique boss drop item. There wouldn't be another method in the world to obtain that item." (Youya)

A monster that only spawns one of its kind every two weeks. Along with the drop rate of 5% for rare drop items that was fairly common for all bosses. However, that causes a situation where every adventurer will be targeting the boss to obtain as much rare items as they can. As for the items obtained from the boss, it is possible to obtain enough money to survive for the rest of your life. As such there are many people who aim to monopolize the bosses present within lower leveled dungeons to obtain rare items for a fairly low risk to the point that adventurers would be willing to kill other adventurers for it.

Unfortunately, the boss room present within the dungeon at Flaregard is already discovered as well as the method to arrive at the room. It is inevitable for us to join the battle for the boss as there is a drop item that can only be dropped by the boss there that I want. Although just for that boss, the entrance to the hidden room doesn't appear until the boss is respawned, and since the method for traveling directly to the boss room was discovered, adventurers stopped entering deeper to clear out the dungeon, providing an abundance of monsters and unactivated traps in the dungeon. In regards to the battle for the boss room, it is still a peaceful battle as it is basically a game between the adventurers who aim to reach the boss through the hidden path, and us who will most likely be travelling the hard way.

"We're are lucky that this is a boss that no one else besides Youya knows about. It'll be tiring for us to fight other humans before the boss battle." (Til)

"I agree. I don't particularly feel like picturing that right now." (Selene)

"Exactly as what Til mentioned. Now then, the time for chit-chat is over. Shall we begin?" (Youya)

The girls nodded confidently and stood up. Then, the four of us looked towards the entrance of the boss room. I pushed open the door and entered

the door without any permission.

Boss rooms in these world has two ironclad rules.

First: Only one party can be present at any time.

Second: Until the battle is over, nobody will be able to leave the room. Even *Return Stones* are rendered ineffective.

The boss room is a spacious room with uniquely coloured green walls, with a large throne-like chair in the middle of the room. However, unlike a throne befitting a king, it is just a crudely made chair that is large in size. There was a figure sitting on the chair which was large enough to make me look like a newborn-infant. It was a boss with the head of a cow and a human body. A

Minotaur

. In one of his hand held a large axe which was suitable for his large physique.

"Human..Arrived...Long time...Well done...Puzzle..Door..Proven wisdom... Next..Is power.. Show me.. Defeat this

Minotaur." (Minotaur)

The Minotaur let out a horrifying roar producing an overbearing wind, sending chills down my spine. However it wasn't just a normal roar, it was a roar capable of stiffening a person's body with fear. As expected, everyone was rigid at the start as the Minotaur began to approach us. However, that rigidity was immediately dissolved.

"Everyone, don't be frightened. Just remain calm and do as we planned. Afterwards, all that's left is to win!" (Youya)

I let out a battle cry, and began running into the battle towards the Minotaur. The Minotaur began gathering power and activated his skill. It was a skill that the Minotaur would always activate at the beginning of the battle. If we were to receive that attack head on, it's the end.

Now then, this is my first boss battle ever since the reset. Let's win this, and push our party forward even further!

(Note: I'm going to just italics the name of each monster as they are

introduced, but not when it is repeated. Also, for the ending it was slightly altered as the raws stated something similar to putting foil on? So i'm just going to assume what it meant. Raws:パーティに箔をつけさせてもらおうか！)

Chapter 20: The old man battles against the boss

The fight against the boss, the *Minotaur* has begun.

I started running directly towards the Minotaur as Selene caught up, giving an apology for being late to the front.

The Minotaur stood up from its crudely made throne, lowers its hips and points the large horn on its head in our direction. The horn then begins to glow.

It's coming.

Selene held her shield up in an attempt to receive the attack.

"Don't get hit! Dodge to the side!!!" (Youya)

The situation was dire from the start, Selene who was delirious from the Minotaur's roar earlier had forgotten the precautions that I had told everyone in advance before the battle. However, somehow Selene regained her senses as she attempts to jump to the side.

The next instant, a large impact roared throughout the room as the Minotaur disappeared from the throne. The ground between me and Selene begins to shake as if an earthquake had struck the room. Looking behind us, the Minotaur's horn pierced the wall in the corner of the room.

That was the Minotaur's signature move, *Horn Crash*

. It was a skill that required a set amount of distance to accelerate to its maximum power, but it was the Minotaur's most powerful charging technique. Just attempting to follow him with my eyes made it seem as if he had disappeared. It was said that the moment the Minotaur's horn begins to glow, everyone has to jump to the side immediately. It wasn't an attack that can be received using

Fortress, it is an attack that is impossible to match.

However, it was an attack with a large range of motion, giving an opening of several seconds even after the horn begins to glow. Meanwhile, in that opening, it is a given that we have to dodge that attack. It may seem like a dangerous attack that easily slaughters every opponent, however it is an attack that is

easily rendered ineffective if you were cautious from the beginning..

"This is the power of a special monster... If I took that then I would be dead..."
(Selene)

Selene's voice trembled as she started to lose her grip on the battle. I hadn't realized that her heart was this fragile in a life-threatening battle. The Minotaur finally recovered from his charge and turns around, charging with his axe. It's target was Selene. Selene, while panicking directly received the axe with her shield. As a result, Selene's body was blown and crashed into the wall from the Minotaur's heavy attack. That is the result if she were to receive a blow head-on without using the spike to stabilize her footing.

"Gah... Hah... This level of strength. Am I supposed to keep defending against this?" (Selene)

As Selene leaned against the wall, trying to recover from the previous attack, the Minotaur approached Selene and raised its axe. Selene began trembling as she stared directly at the axe, without any indication of preparing her shield. In that instant, arrows began to rain all over the Minotaur. Til was running around at a distance, biding her time releasing arrows one after another. However, that wasn't all she was doing.

"Lightning Arrow" (Til)

She released the beginner-tier magic, *Lightning Arrow*

which struck at the speed of lightning simultaneously. It is a newly-obtained skill after she obtained the passive skill,

Arrow Generation

which increases the power of her arrows. Since it is a beginner tier magic which only struck a single target, it has a short casting time with high attacking power, furthermore it has a low mana consumption. As compared to the advanced tier magic,

Thunder

, it has a far higher damage to mana efficiency in this situation. Til began to shower the Minotaur with a volley of arrows and thunder.

"GUUUUMOOOOOOOOOO!!" (Minotaur)

While getting struck by countless arrows and lightning arrows, the Minotaur stare directly at Til. It looks like it had changed its aggression completely towards Til as it ran towards her.

"Selene, what are you waiting for? Hurry up and use *War Cry!*" (Youya)

"Eh? Uhn." (Selene)

Her reaction is too slow! The Minotaur is already approaching Til in a charge.

Our original plan was for Selene to hold the Minotaur's aggression using War Cry. Otherwise, Til who was our party's specialized attacker would be targeted first. If Til who has low defensive stats were to fall here, we will lose our party's main firepower. Selene herself knew this fact. However, when the Minotaur released Horn Crush as its first attack, it was an attack which was meant to completely annihilate everything in its path. Selene's head was completely dominated by fear after nearly losing her life and getting blown away from the monster's basic attack.

"Mr. Cow. You can't just focus on the front, your sides are open.

Assassinate!" (Luna)

Unnoticed, Luna who was running parallel to the Minotaur with similar speed almost condescendingly releases Assassinate as the ringing unique to critical hits could be heard throughout the room. Assassinate is a skill that has a drastic increase to the damage dealt whenever it landed as a critical hit. The Minotaur whose weak point on its flank was stabbed by Luna, stomped the ground and bellowed in fury.

"GYUUUNOOOOOOOOOO"

The Minotaur raised its axe filled with fury and swung it downwards Luna. However it was easily avoided by Luna who did not overstep her boundaries as she immediately jumped backwards to avoid the attack, increasing the distance between her and the Minotaur. In our party, Luna played the vital role of being the middle-guard to follow up on our backline, Til's attacks whenever she sees

an opportunity to land a deciding blow. I had placed firm emphasis on that teaching. Although the Minotaur was irritated at Luna's attack, its focus returned to its original target, Til. However Til had already created a distance between herself and the Minotaur and was preparing another volley of lightning and arrows. The Minotaur continued towards Til in rain of lightning and arrows as it caught up to her with pure speed and swung its axe. The axe which was moving towards Til's head..

Was obstructed.

"Good job Luna, thanks to you I made it in time." (Youya)

Thanks to Luna's distraction which caught the Minotaur's attention for a few moments, I managed to close the distance and intercept the axe before it reached Til. Originally it was Selene's role to be the tank, however as she was currently overwhelmed by the Minotaur's strength. Until she recovers, I won't have a choice but to be the tank in her stead.

I activated War Cry to catch the Minotaur's attention. It has lesser of an effect as compared to a crusader, however it is still effective for a short amount of time as the Minotaur swung its axe down towards me. I used my signature

Deflect

to divert the blow away. It was an extremely heavy attack, however with my current status it is possible for me to completely divert it away. Selene earlier was also supposed divert the attack rather than receiving the attack head on.

If it was the usual Selene, then it was possible for her to do so. That was how I had trained her, however fear has clouded her judgement. Doesn't matter how much power or skill a person possesses, so long as there isn't the presence of mind capable of demonstrating it, it may as well be all for naught. In order to obtain the strength in your heart, it must be capable of overcoming your own fear.

I continued to take control of the Minotaur subsequent attacks while Til was continuing to fire volley after volley of arrows and lightning arrows towards him, slowly but surely damaging him.

Suddenly, the Minotaur threw away his axe and its two hands began to glow,

resembling the activation of a skill.

It looks like it was coming as I immediately raised my concentration and focus to the limit.

"GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA"

Hurricane Rush.

It is a flurry of powerful attacks coming from both its fists.

One, two Three. Even though I could deflect each blow to an extent, heavy fists continue landing one after another. Through my Deflect, my posture was steadily collapsing as the weight of each blow was higher than its normal attacks. The effect of the skill also included an increase in his defensive stats, making it pointless to interrupt the attack. For now, all I can do is to endure it.

At the ninth hit, with my posture completely disrupted, I had no choice but to receive the blow head on as I received the punch with my sword. While the punch was about to land, I jumped backwards and was blown backwards. I rolled on the ground in an attempt to kill the momentum before standing back up. Finally, his skill ended as the Minotaur suffered a backlash from the powerful Hurricane rush and remained on the spot.

"Full of openings! *Assassinate*" (Luna)

"Just how much do we have to attack before you fall!" (Til)

Luna landed another blow with *Assassinate*

as Til fired yet another volley of arrows and lightning.

"GUUUUUUUUUGGGGAAAAAAAAA"

The Minotaur screamed in pain as it continued to accumulate damage from all the successive attacks. However there wasn't any time to be relieved. From that one flurry of attacks, even with

Deflect I still lost about 30% of my health.

This is a boss battle.

Once again, it's aggression was focused on Til who had dealt a significant amount of damage and begins attacking her once more. Matter of fact at the

moment is that I am unable to fight back against this opponent. Just

Deflecting

is taking all I have. Furthermore with each hit my accuracy is decreasing as my arms become numb. To add insult to injury, as I am unable to participate in the attacks, our damage output is garbage compared to our maximum potential.

In order to have a better chance of winning this battle, Selene's power is necessary. Even if she did not continue in the battle, we could win but it will still be a tough battle. However, if we do not help Selene recover from this beating then she might have the memory of running away from this difficult battle. Fleeing from one battle and leading to another. Sooner or later she will never learn to step up whenever the push comes to shove. Having a tank whose first thought is to escape will never be a competent tank. While receiving the minotaur's heavy blow, I shouted at the top of my lungs.

"Selene! How much longer do you plan to just stand there!? Are you the kind of warrior that can only pick on monsters weaker than you!" (Youya)

Selene's shoulders shuddered at my sudden outburst.

"No matter how weak I was, I had always challenged the strong with feelings, with a craving for victory far stronger than anyone I have ever faced. Yearning for the strength to overwhelm them with my own. Isn't that the figure you have always looked up to? You said that you always wished to be like me... Unfortunately, my strength was always a counterfeit. And yet you still continued to look up towards me. That's what I have always thought about you. If that is true, then show it to us, and bring out your courage!" (Youya)

Selene who was in a visibly miserable state lost her voice as she appeared unable to say anything, neglecting her own stance as her chest sunk into her knees. For an instant, her consciousness seemed to disappear, dissuaded by the power of the minotaur's basic attack earlier.

"GUMOOOO!" (Minotaur)

The minotaur's attack continued as he threw another kick towards me. I tumbled to the side in order to avoid the first attack and stood up with conviction. With a swift motion, I took out the black magic sword and circled

around the minotaur, slashing his open side.

"GUMOOOOOOooo!" (Minotaur)

Even with Selene being in this state, Luna and Til continued to say nothing. Instead, they continued to convey their thoughts to Selene through their actions. No matter how afraid they were, they continued to perform their role and do what they had to do.

"Selene, if you don't stand up in this battle then you will never be able to change. CHOOSE! Continue to chase after the figure you wish to be, or continue to be satisfied raising your levels and your status! As your teacher I am telling you now, your strength and techniques are enough! Open up your eyes and look! Is this beast's attacks sharper or faster than any of my attacks during your training!?" (Youya)

I may be forcing a hard decision onto her, but I know fully well how difficult it is to repair a broken spirit in the heat of battle. However, if we neglect this opportunity, then Selene will never be able to grow. Selene grinded her back teeth together, however the person herself didn't move an inch.

Just when I thought it was hopeless.

"War Cry!" (Selene)

Selene activated her provocation skill, pulling the monster's aggression towards her. She activated a dangerous skill despite her trembling legs. The minotaur's attention turned towards Selene as it charged towards her. Meanwhile, its axe regenerated and appeared in its hand. It swung its axe towards Selene as she held shield, however she hadn't activated her spikes. She looked directly at the minotaur's axe without blinking and lowered her upper body, holding her shield at an angle.

"Nice." (Youya)

The spikes are effective and convenient to use, however it isn't something that should be activated without any thought. Ideally, the spikes should only be used for powerful attacks that can't be avoided. Aside from that, we should be handling the situation using our own techniques and combat skills while using the spikes to increase the effectiveness of

Shield Bash.

By learning to deflect attacks to the side, you receive lesser damage as compared to receive an attack head on, plus it makes it easier to transition into an attacking stance. Furthermore, once it is used it can't be used for a short period of time. This method also has the merit of allowing the person to reserve their

Fortress

for another time. This is the battle style of the Battle princess Renoir. Her current figure in battle is heavily reminiscent of the figure of Renoir seen in the game.

No, I'm mistaken, it's not just her. Although she was using a shield, I could see a trace of my sword somewhere in her shield. That was proof that my teachings are being embedded into her.

"Uncle Youya. I'm sorry. My eyes are finally opened. It's attacks are heavy but its much slower, sloppier and softer to sink as compared to Uncle Youya's attacks." (Selene)-

Selene's voice was still trembling, however I could feel her conviction behind her words.

"Selene is late! However, now we can finally fight as planned." (Luna)

"Right? Selene is our tank, Youya is a close quarters fighter, Luna is our middle guard while I am in the back guard. That is how our party battles." (Til)

Luna and Til shouted out a clumsy encouragement each as Selene smiled back while receiving the minotaur's attack.

With this, we can finally demonstrate our original battle plan against the boss. Me and Luna crossed eyes as we began to run towards to the boss, Luna continued to the right while I turned to the left. Gathering magic power onto my left hand, it condenses and turns into a flame, burning brightly.

"*Assassinate.*"

"*Napalm Strike.*"

Now that its attention was completely occupied by Selene, I can afford to

release a powerful attack. My left hand was imbedded into the minotaur's flank as the explosive effect of the spell runs through its body. Meanwhile, Luna landed a critical attack using Assassinate. Simultaneously receiving a super high power spell on the left and the right, the minotaur was completely pushed back.

"UGAAAAAAAAAAAA" (Minotaur)

Without missing a beat, the minotaur further lowered its waist and turned its head towards Selene. Its horn began to glow. It was the characteristic of

Horned Crash

. In response, Selene began pouring mana into her shield, preparing to release her spikes.

Is she starting to get too excited and forgot my instructions? The explosive power of

Horned Crash

wasn't something that could be prevented. Even if she uses her spikes and *Fortress*

in preparation, it isn't enough to protect her against the attack. It is an attack that can't be stopped. However, looking at Selene's composure, I decided to stay silent. She clearly remembers my words and wasn't panicking just like earlier but with a look of conviction in her eyes. This was the move that she planned to bring for victory. Selene began to run forward.

Continue to run forward. With all your might!

"HAAAAAAAAAH." (Selene)

The minotaur's horn locked onto the figure of Selene who was currently running forward with her full strength and its skill was activated. The instant it was activated, Selene launched her spikes onto the ground and applies her entire weight onto her shield.

"Fortress." (Selene)

A wall of light appeared from Selene shield, the crusader's special skill that

increases their defense multiple times for several tens of seconds. However,

Horn Crush

was still too powerful to be stopped by her increased defense. However, that didn't happen because Selene had ran forward. By closing the distance between her and the minotaur, the distance required for the minotaur to reach his sure-kill level of power was reduced, hence reducing the amount of power she received. When the minotaur collided with Selene's wall of light, Selene was being pushed back, causing the spikes to gouge out the ground under her, throwing dust everywhere. In the end, Selene stood strong as the Minotaur failed to penetrate Selene's shield and was actually damage by the recoil of its charge, breaking its horn. The minotaur's defense was wide open when his horn was broken.

It was an opportunity to push the offensive.

"Til!" (Youya)

"I know that!" (Til)

I began chanting as Til concentrates her volleys of

Lightning Arrows

and normal arrows onto the minotaur's stomach, gouging its flesh while simultaneously burning the area.

Electricity begins to crackle on my palm as the air around my palm begins to tremble. My long chant is finally over

"*Superconductive Bullet!*" (Youya)

My customized magic made from *Lightning Storm*

. By increasing the casting time and sacrificing its area of effect, the spell was remade into a single shot of lightning with explosive range and power. I fired the spell onto the exposed flesh at the minotaur's belly, further gouging out its flesh while burning the surrounding area, inflicting damage incomparable to Til's damage and paralysis onto the minotaur. The next attack will decide the battle.

"End it, Selene!" (Youya)

While I called out to Selene, I began moving towards Selene as she nods back, increasing her pace towards the minotaur.

Twist your hips and stick out your arms, eject the spikes as the arm is accelerated, increasing the acceleration of the spikes to the maximum.

"*Shield Bash!*" (Selene)

"*God's Strength!*" (Youya)

I have watched her repeat this movement countless times, making it easy for me to match her timing. Just before her spikes crashed into the minotaur,

Shield Bash

converts her defense power into attack, and I amplify her increased power using my

Customized Magic: God's Strength for several moments.

Together with a loud explosion, her attack which was amplified multiple times pierces into the Minotaur's stomach where we had previously attacked, penetrating its body and transferring all her kinetic energy into its belly, causing its stomach to bulge up like a balloon.

"Your...Power...Seen. Reward...Items..However...Weakest.. Yet to see....Challenge... Real fear... Now on."

It seems that the attack earlier was the finishing blow as the Minotaur says its last words before turning into blue particles, leaving behind two items. First was the item I've been hoping for, the

Thread of Bonds

which increases the party member limit. The second was the rare item unique to the minotaur, the

Scarlet Horn

. We've gotten extremely lucky ever since coming to Greenwood. First was the

Starfish Larvae

, second was the minotaur and now its the rare item drops.

After the Minotaur completely disappeared, Selene knelt on her knees as she had an astonished look on her face.

"I.. won? I actually survived." (Selene)

"Yeah. You got off to a slow start but it was a magnificent ending." (Youya)

This experience will serve well to give Selene courage in the future. Next time it won't be so easy for her to be overwhelmed by fear, helping her grow significantly.

"I see.. I'm glad. I was scared.. And couldn't move my legs. Everything went white. The moment I heard uncle Youya's voice.. I thought that I had to do it." (Selene)

Selene jumped into my chest as I hugged her and pat her back.

"Even so. You did it. You became stronger. This time, you are genuinely stronger." (Youya)

At the start, Selene couldn't help but panic as she faced death. However she still managed to pull it together and recover from her trauma. That was proof in of itself.

"Now then, let's return home. There should be a vortex somewhere at the back. We'll continue the training once we are back but there will be a bonus for defeating the boss." (Youya)

After hearing the word "bonus", Luna and Til ran over.

"Bonus!" (Luna)

"Tonight is going to be another feast!" (Til)

The two girls began chanting and danced as if they were performing a ritual. I wonder where did they get this idea from.

"Uncle Youya.. I have a request." (Selene)

"What is it?" (Youya)

"I don't have any strength left in my legs.. Could you carry me." (Selene)

Selene said her request with a bright red face. I smiled bitterly at her request.

Till the bitter end, she still hasn't changed a bit. I guess that can't be helped.

"Kyaaa. This is embarrassing." (Selene)

"Today is a special day." (Youya)

Instead of the usual piggyback, I carried her with a princess carry as a reward for working her hardest today.

"Youya~, Luna's legs can't move too." (Luna)

"Me too!" (Til)

The two girls who seemed to have completed their rituals had envious looks as they sat on the ground.

"Give me a break. I can't carry three people at once. Maybe another time."
(Youya)

"Roger that!" (Luna)

"It's a promise okay!" (Til)

The two people who claimed to be exhausted suddenly jumped up in excitement.

Seriously? These girls.. Well I have to admit that this is kinda fun.

Now then, it's time for us to return. Let's not forget the reward for breaking through the trial for today. We seem to be celebrating a lot recently, however today was definitely a good day for a celebration.

Above all, it's been extremely fun.

Epilogue: The old man thinks about a new stage

We managed to defeat the boss in Greenwood, the *Minotaur*.

It was unprecedented that Selene was traumatized by the battle, however the result was even better than I expected. It is difficult for someone to gain the courage and experience to overcome a life-threatening fear. It wouldn't be likely for her to encounter another situation quite like this and make it out

unscathed. We also managed to obtain the item that is necessary for us to add Phil into our party, the

Thread of Bond

. It is an item that can only be obtained from the common boss item table, making it extremely lucky for us to obtain it in a single try. The other item we obtained was the Minotaur's unique drop, the

Scarlet Horn

. With this horn, it is possible for us to forge a magical sword with the flame attribute and a decent attack power. Unlike normal materials, materials obtained from bosses can be used to make powerful equipment regardless of the user's level. In the next city, the City of Forges,

Flaregard

there are first-class blacksmiths who are capable of turning this bad boy into a sword. Let's hurry up and finish our leveling so that we can head over as soon as possible.

"Bo-nu-s~ Bo-nu-s~" (Luna)

"Luna, I wonder what kind of bonus we are going to get~." (Til)

The two girls were energetic as we headed towards the next room. At the back of the room, there was a small room hidden at the side which can be seen once you walk past the throne. In that room, there is a treasure box in the center while the vortex can be seen at the back of the room.

"Luna, could you open the box?" (Youya)

"Leave it to me!" (Luna)

It was Luna's job with *Lockpick*

to open the treasure box as any traps present would not activate thanks to her Level 5 Lockpicking skills. While her fox tail was shaking back and forth, Luna opened the treasure box.

"Youya look! It's a *Return Stone*." (Luna)

"That's a huge haul. Treasure chests are always present once you defeat a

boss, making it easy for us to get rare items from the box." (Youya)

It takes a long time to defeat the boss, however once you do, there is a chance to obtain a rare item drop from the boss itself as well as the common boss loot table. Furthermore there are bonuses such as these as well. Although it is possible to be unfortunate enough to get common items such as

Return Stones and *Magic Bags (Large*

), there are also items that are only available from the treasure box.

"Selene, this *Return Stone* belongs to you. Take it." (Youya)

"Again, I wonder if its okay to give me something this valuable." (Selene)

"Me, Luna and Til already have a *Return Stone*

on us. With this all of us have a method of escaping without much risk. It's nice that we managed to obtain another stone this early." (Youya)

The

stones that the three of us had were given to us by Phil, however there isn't enough for all four of us. Now we managed to get Selene a stone as well.

"We managed to get good items for today, but sadly the feast has to be postponed for now." (Youya)

"We can't turn the rare items we got from the Minotaur into cash too can't we? It's a shame but looks like its the usual bar for us today." (Selene)

The two girls who were looking forward to dinner had a look of dejection as we didn't obtain any funding for a feast. However, that actually isn't a problem as we had plenty of Eel meat inside my Magic Bag.

"Actually, the eel meat we obtained from the

Numeri Anguilla

sells for extra in the market here, plus we will have the reward fee for the handing in the eel meat (Average) for the quest. So frankly speaking, it is still possible to have a feast for tonight." (Youya)

The faces of the two girls lit up like a light bulb as they reinitiated their ritual. Thanks to Luna's

Increase Drop Rate and the untouched Numeri Anguilla

, we were able to obtain a large amount of eel meat.

"Now then, shall we return home everyone?" (Youya)

"Uhn. The feast is waiting." (Luna)

"Tonight I will get revenge on the cursed alcohol." (Til)

"Although it'll be great if I could stand by the time we head over to the bar."
(Selene)

And, we finally jumped into the magical vortex. The things we have to are to deliver the items to the guild, return to the inn before heading over to the bar.

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We completed our report on the completion of the quest while trading away the surplus we obtained from the hunt. The receptionist completed the exchange with an astonished look as usual. As expected, the Eel meat (Average) was worth a large sum of money, nearly three times the price of Pork (Average) even at its normal market price. We obtained an even larger reward fee as we got an additional 50% of its value due to the quest. I wasn't surprised at the price as eel meat (Average) is a rare find and very delicious. I had also asked the receptionist to introduce me to a restaurant capable of making good use of them as we were planning to indulge ourselves in a delicious meal. Thus, it would be better for us to enjoy plenty of Eel meat in a store with higher quality than usual.

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After changing into our casual clothes at the inn, we headed towards the bar. Today's destination had a private room for us as it was a somewhat luxurious store with food that was fitting to its price, allowing us to indulge ourselves with

delicious food. I handed over the Eel meat (Average) and I agreed to the waiter's suggestion of simmering the meat in wine.

Luna and Til were scanning the interior of the store with glimmering eyes as if they had discovered something amazing. The furniture was well-decorated with a good sense. It was amazing and fun to just look at it.

"I bet Selene is familiar with this kind of stores right?" (Youya)

"Yeah. It feels nostalgic." (Selene)

Selene's true identity is Princess Lutra. Even though this was a luxurious store for adventurers, its standard was still somewhat inadequate for a princess to frequent. Next moment, the waiter arrived carrying three mugs of wine and one mug of ale. The two girls were fuming with vengeance as they planned to fulfill their revenge against their dreaded alcohol, though I pray that they will be able to enjoy their drinks like adults. I'll have to remember to stop them if they go out of control.

"A toast for our victory!" (Youya)

"Cheers!!!"

We bumped our cups as we took a sip and savoured the liquids in our cups. As the ale flowed down my throat, I felt my tired body being enveloped with a refreshing bitterness. Ale is definitely the best for me after all. The mug was emptied in one go and immediately asked the waiter for another cup. I wouldn't be able to enjoy myself without doing this

"The wine really varies greatly depending on the store. The taste of grape in this store's wine is really strong." (Selene)

"Uhn. Completely different. It is delicious but Luna prefers the other store. Their wine was much sweeter." (Luna)

"I prefer this store's wine as the smell of fruits is much stronger." (Til)

The wine here may not be a first-grade product, however it was still very well made. The mixtures added were most likely minimal. When the store serves its wine in a mug rather than a glass, it can be taken that the store isn't meant for the upper class of citizens in the truest sense. It is most likely a luxurious store

for ordinary people and adventurers with good income.

"Selene, could I have a taste?" (Youya)

"Sure, I don't mind." (Selene)

I'm not planning on ordering a cup but I definitely would like a taste. I lifted Selene's mug as I took a sip. It had a taste similar to a proper wine.

"Thank you Selene." (Youya)

"Uh, yeah your welcome." (Selene)

Selene face went completely red as she watched me drink from her cup. She is definitely still a pure maiden princess to be embarrassed from an indirect kiss. As an adventurer who has been in dungeons for multiple nights in a single adventure, this kind of thing is rare to see. It'll be good if I could help train her resistance to this sort of thing slowly.

"Youya, the dishes are small but each of them taste delicious!" (Luna)

"Their designs are so beautiful that I can't help but get right into it!" (Til)

The store didn't serve their dishes like a typical store and instead served their dishes as if it was a course meal. Small but numerous dishes were being carried over one dish at a time as each dish was annihilated by Luna and Til the moment it touches the table. After finishing each dish, they continued to look at the door with shining eyes filled with expectations.

The food here tasted great befitting of their high price. It's a nice shop for us to relax on special occasions. Then, today's main dish came as the waiter entered the room, filling the entire room with a delicious fragrance.

"It's my first time smelling something like this." (Selene)

"Is this your first time having eel meat Selene?" (Youya)

"Yes. Since it's uncle Youya's favourite dish I look forward to eating it."
(Selene)

The eel meat was placed on a large platter directly in front of us covered in wine. Boiled eel with wine was my favourite dish, and back when I was still travelling together with Phil, she learnt to make it extremely well. It was for this reason that I decided not to sell all of the meat we had on us back in the guild.

The sweetness of the vegetables and the saltiness of the butter spreading together with the smell of the eel spread throughout the room.

I took a knife and began cutting the eel into equal parts. Whenever I felt the knife come in contact with the eel meat, I felt the elasticity of the meat pushing back against the knife. After finishing the portioning, I placed a piece of meat into my mouth as I savoured the texture of the meat and the taste of the eel fat spreading throughout my mouth. By mixing red wine with tomatoes, the oily taste of the eel is neutralized, leaving only the delicious umami in the meat. As soon as the first piece is swallowed, you can't help but reach out for another piece.

I quickly gulped down a cup of ale before the umami dissipates from my tongue. It's the best taste in the world as I felt the impact right through my brain.

"I've been longing to eat this." (Youya)

Since eel meat is an expensive and rare dish, it is rarely circulated to a common store. Thus it was a luxury that can only be eaten by obtaining the ingredient by yourself. I am glad that we managed to encounter the *Numeri Anguilla* in this town.

"Youya, this is delicious! Even though it's a fish, it isn't pazapaza at all!" (Luna)

(Note: I have no idea what she means.)

"I have never had such a delicious fish. I didn't even know this kind of thing existed. This didn't exist back in the elf village." (Til)

"I'm surprised as well. The taste that feels like it has incredible vitality, it's as if I'm feeling energized just by eating it. It's been one surprise after another since I met uncle Youya." (Selene)

The eel meat simmered with wine was even more popular as it was already disappearing from the platter. We continued to drink alcohol as the meal went on. In the blink of an eye, Luna and Til had already ordered and finished their second cup of wine. However, for their third cup, Luna had ordered milk while Til ordered a cup of grape juice instead. They were still capable of thinking rationally although they both had a small body, causing the alcohol to take

effect quicker than usual. The amount they had drank was probably the right amount for each of them to drink.

Next came the main dessert. It was a cake filled with cream as the girls jumped in joy. As expected girls are in love with sweet things. After we finished the cake, we continued to enjoy a cup of tea as everyone thoroughly enjoyed the dishes in this store. Thinking it was an appropriate time, I said.

"Everyone please listen to me. It's about what we will be doing from now on."
(Youya)

Today was a celebration, however I chose this store with a private room as I wanted to talk about our plans for the future. The girls' eyes all converged onto me.

"We have become much stronger as compared to the start. And we even managed to defeat the boss. At this pace, it won't be long before we become stronger and reach level 30. By the time we hit level 30, the experience points we gain in

Greenwood will become exponentially lesser." (Youya)

Bosses were monsters that gave a tremendous amount of experience points different from a standard monster. Although it is said to be difficult to raise our levels in the 20s, the

Minotaur

had given us enough experience points to raise everyone's level. As a result, I am level 27 while Luna and Til were both level 26 and Selene is level 28

"Until the *Minotaur*

respawns eight days from now, we will continue to raise our level like this around the hidden room and immediately defeat the *Minotaur* once it respawns. Then, after these eight days, we will continue to hunt as many monsters as possible in the labyrinth until we leave

Greenwood." (Youya)

After it spawns, the *Minotaur*

will most likely increase our level by one again. If we followed this plan, we

could even level up to 30 right after the eight days, and even if we aren't able to hit level 30, we will definitely be able to reach level 29 at least. For dungeons with a recommended level of 28, the experience gain will become exponentially worse as our levels increase beyond the recommended level. Monsters below our level will have the appropriate decrease in experience points, making it difficult to increase our levels just by hunting weaker monsters.

"Understood! Looking forward to the next city already!" (Luna)

"Suddenly the monsters in this town is already insufficient for us. Let's hurry up to the next town to become stronger!" (Til)

The two children became noisy while Selene remained silent. It looks like she understood what I meant to say.

"The next town we are heading for is in the far east, Flaregard. Unlike Greenwood, it isn't a distance that we can easily transverse to return to Selene's home. Plus the duration for our stay is going to be at least a month. Although we had initially planned to return in time for Selene's inheritance ceremony, if we head over to Flaregard we might be unable to make it back in time." (Youya)

Even though Selene was set up by her siblings, it was still possible for her to return to the

Laluzulu Kingdom

. However, if we head over to Flaregard it will truly become impossible for us to return to the kingdom in time for the ceremony. It was her last chance to return to the kingdom.

"I told you before. Until the ceremony starts, I am Selene, not Lutra. I don't plan on going back on my word. Let's go to Flaregard." (Selene)

Without hesitation, Selene asserts her stance on the matter. It seems that it was an unnecessary worry as Selene was already resolved from the start.

"I understand your feelings now. Then, before we leave in 10 days, let's try harder than we have ever did before. Everyone, be sure to reach level 30 by then." (Youya)

"Luna will do her best!" (Luna)

"Uhn uhn. It'll be depressing if our departure was delayed because we didn't level fast enough. Plus it'll be bad if we don't hatch the egg soon." (Til

"It'll be a shame to leave the rare items we have as it is. I'll like to quickly make a gauntlet using the item we got from the

Terrafish Larvae." (Selene)

Everyone began to talk about their expectations when heading towards Flaregard. Looking at how Luna and the girls are enjoying themselves, I felt myself enjoying life even more. The city of flames and blacksmiths, as well as the city of hot springs. Flaregard. The flame which was born the same time as the world, capable of melting everything without extinguishing even once.,The

Sacred Flame

and the best blacksmiths in the world who are capable of using it to create powerful equipments. Using their hot springs which draws out a person's magic power and cleanses the person's soul, we are able to hatch the

Magic Egg

to give us a new fighting force. A volcano that contains the hidden item necessary to increase the number of party members by one. The special item that must be obtained from the boss in Flaregard and a skill that can't be obtained anywhere else. There are countless reasons for us to go towards Flaregard, plenty more reasons as compared to

Greenwood.

Originally, it isn't a town where a 2 month old party should be heading to. However we will be fine.

Because my party is the strongest party there is.

The thief who is overflowing with talent and battle sense fighting at the middle guard as well as possessing exploration skills.

The spirit archer who has mastered the art of the bow and magic, capable of utilizing them both to their maximum potential.

The crusader who has inherited the battle style and skills of the battle princess

Renoir, becoming the strongest tank in the world.

Then, Phil will finally be joining our party at last. I haven't mentioned anything about it to the girls yet, but a letter came from Phil the other day that the matters of the guild has already been resolved.

With this unstoppable party, there are no obstacles that we can't overcome. With delicious sake and hearty laughs, it was the best night I have ever had in awhile. We will only continue to grow from here, and continue moving forward. These were all the pleasures that I couldn't experience in decades. 10 days from now, we will head to our new stage, Flaregard.