

愛山雄町

Illustration 和狸ナオ



聖騎士  
レイの物語

Trinitas  
シリーズ

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# Trinitas Mundus

vol.1

by Aiyama Omachi

[Novel Updates](#)

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★黒鉄色のブレストプレート・肩当て

★オウゴンヘルメット  
腰当て・

★鈍い銀色の手甲・  
大腿甲！



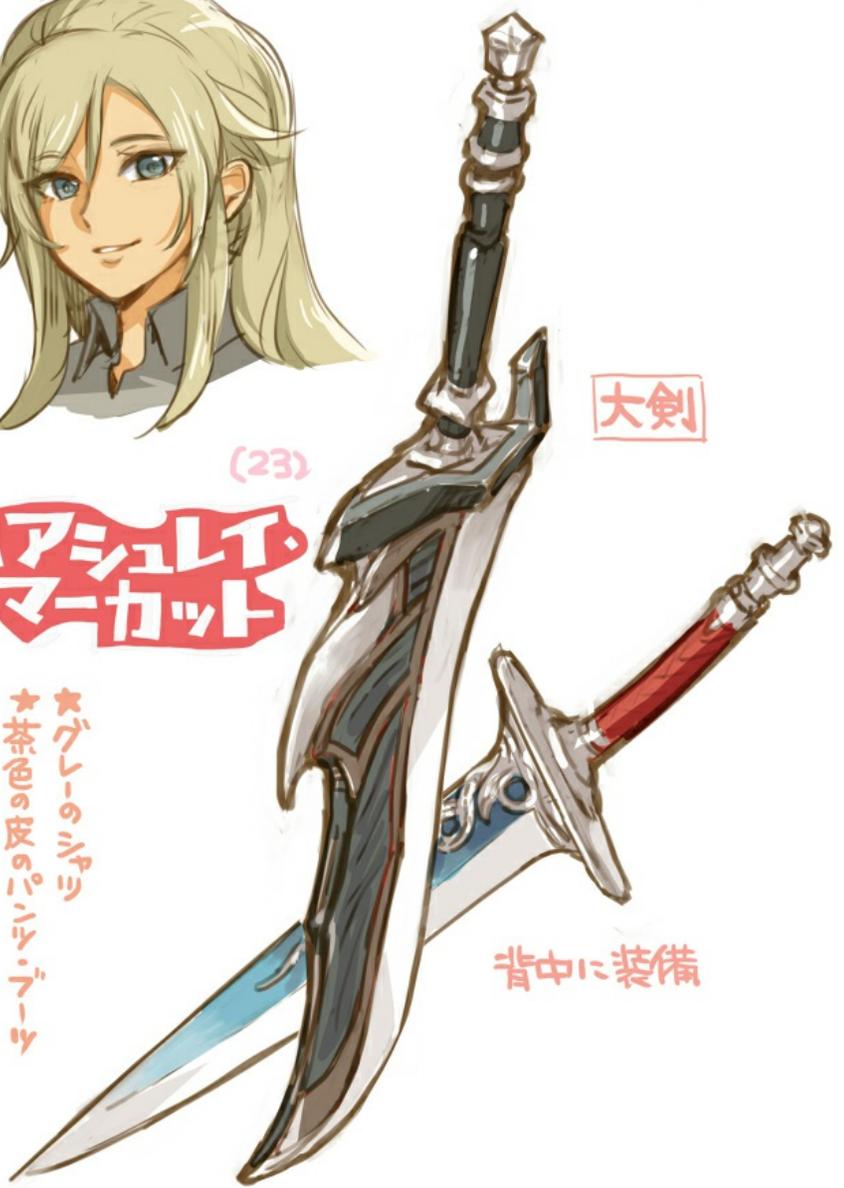
(23)

# アッシュレイ・マーカット

★グレーのチャミ  
★茶色の皮のパンツ・ブーツ

大剣

背中に装備



【インター】



半立体にする?



レト.  
アークライト

(18)

\*十字 いよいよ

- ★ 白銀のプレートアーマー  
(ニクスウェステイス)
- ★ ロングソード
- ★ 白銀の槍  
(アルブムコルヌ)
- ★ 白いマント
- ★ 革のブーツ

トリンターダス・ムンドウス

聖騎士レイの物語

Trinitas  
シリーズ

愛山雄町  
Illustration  
和狸ナオ

TOブックス

# Prologue

The current year, based on the Taulia calendar, is 4030. At the western edge of the Taulia continent, in the Holy Kingdom Yuust Rukydots, lays the sacred city Wiltus. Deep within the royal palace of Wiltus – often called the Silver Palace,

“Damn it! Arkwright! Draw back!”

Two knights clad in silver plate armor dashed through the white palace garden that was dyed in the purple and orange colors of twilight. Dozens of demons were closing in behind them. As if they had come out of an abstract painting, the left and right sides of the demons were asymmetrical. Human body parts – parts like the eyes, mouths and limbs – were stuck onto the demons with the wrong size and in the wrong position. Their grotesque figures instinctively invoked feelings of disgust in the viewer.

No emotion of any kind could be seen in the eyes of the demons. Even though the eyes were emotionless, the same couldn't be said for those who looked into the eyes. Anyone who looked at the vacant eyes were filled with a sense of despair.

The two knights had been able to escape only after losing countless comrades. As they attempted to drive back the demons close behind them, both were trying to reach a certain room.

“Arkwright, this is my last command. I'll hold them back. You will go guard his Royal Highness and his family.”

The young knight who was called Arkwright stammered, “Sh-shouldn't it be . . . Captain, who guards his Highness . . .” Cutting him off, the older knight said, “This isn't the time for us to be arguing! Besides, you don't even have the ability to hold these bastards back!”

Swinging his sword, he shouted, “Stop wasting our time! Hurry up and go!”

Ray Arkwright tried to object but held back his words after noticing the

figures of the demons drawing closer behind them. He saluted the knight and then silently ran down the white corridor.

The older knight who was left behind smiled as he looked at Ray's retreating figure. He then turned back around and cried, "You won't pass through here! There's no way I'm going to let you bastards come near his Highness!" Raising his sword, he plunged into the swarm of demons.

Ray did not look behind him. He felt that if he looked back, he would have hesitated to let the old knight face certain death alone. He would have decided to rush back and help him.

*I can't go against Captain's last command . . . otherwise, I won't be able to face all those guys who died in order for me to escape . . . in order to repay Captain, I will protect his Highness . . .*

While desperately holding back his tears, he entered the room where the magic circle used for transferring had been drawn.

*His Majesty should have already arrived at Jilsol – the kingdom on the eastern island. No one's going to come here after me . . . I have to destroy the magic circle before I transfer . . .*

A combustible substance had been placed inside the room in case of emergencies. It was a barrel filled with oil that was used to throw off pursuers. Arkwright fiercely dispelled the contents of the barrel onto the floor and ignited it with a magic tool. Fire quickly spread over the oil and by the time he reached the inside of the magic circle that was drawn at the center of the room, the stench of burning oil and smoke had begun to fill the room. However, the strength of the flame was stronger than he thought, illuminating the inside of the room with a brightness that made it seem like it was noon.

Arkwright casted a spell, causing the magic circle to begin shining white. The transfer magic was beginning to activate.

Immediately after that, at heavy impact struck his head.

An object that was about the size of a person had fallen from the ceiling. Because Ray had been concentrating on preparing for the transfer magic, he didn't notice that object – a demon species that had been outside in the

confusion a while ago. The demon had already arrived before Ray and anticipated him.

“W-what is this? Dammit! They had already come here!?”

He desperately tried to rip off the demon from his head but its length and thickness were unusual. Both of its arms were also much stronger than he thought. The demon extended things that looked like tentacles towards Ray’s head – they each attached to him, one by one.

The numerous tentacles pierced the areas that were exposed through his helmet – places like his forehead, his ears, the back of his head . . . Ray screamed from the intense pain.

“Aagh! S-stop! Don’t eat my memories! Don’t eat my soul! Stop!”

He pulls out his sword and stabs into the demon. However, the tentacles glowed ominously as they dig further inside his head.

*This is the end . . . before I die I have to destroy the magic circle . . . if I don’t . . . his highness will . . . everyone will . . .*

As his consciousness faded, he pulled out the spear he carried on his back and scraped off a part of the magic circle. The moment he destroyed a small part of the magic circle that was written in strange characters, the shining white circle quickly lost its power.

*With this, the transfer magic won’t activate . . . I’m sorry Captain. I couldn’t follow your orders after all . . . at the very least, I’ll take this demon down with me . . .*

He mustered the little bit of strength he had left and filled the spear in his right hand with magical power. The tip of his spear shines radiantly and then stretches towards the demon.

Pierced by the white light, the demon’s blood splattered everywhere. However, the demon’s tentacles remained unchanged as they stuck onto his head and glowed their ominous light. Having used up his last remaining strength, Ray collapsed onto the ground. After a while, his eyes finally turned dull and empty. The demon that had been attached to him was further pierced by the spear the moment he collapsed, and also perished.

In the room where the lives of one man and one demon met their end, flames continued to spread even further over the oil spilled upon the ground.

The flames burned Ray and the demon, trying to eat up everything, clean up everything.

At that moment, in the room that no longer had anything or anyone living within it, the magic circle that had lost its light began to shine once again. The silver light wrapped itself around the body of Ray Arkwright, immediately encasing his whole body in its shine. It was so bright, no one could have faced it directly. The light abruptly disappeared and then once again, only a red flame illuminated the room. However, only the dead carcass of the demon remained. The corpse of the young man named Ray Arkwright had disappeared.

Nobody would ever know.

# Chapter 1: Transfer

## Part 1

At a small town in the Kanto region.

On a certain day in March, a time when the chilly days still haven't quite ended yet.

There was a young man with a small build. At first glance, he could be mistaken for a junior high school student. In actuality however, he was going to turn 19 soon. The young man, Hiji Rei, was about to begin his university life and had gone through many busy days of earnestly preparing it.

*Preparing for university took more time than I thought. I should have started preparing sooner . . .*

When Rei decided to go to a boarding house near his university, he had to deal with a bunch of documents. After that, he only needed to sort through what he would bring to the boarding house. However, when it was finally time for him to sort through his luggage, it took more time than he thought. This was because he had decided to go through everything one by one.

*I was going to take this book . . . I can't remember what it was about though?*  
...

Every time Rei found an interesting book, he would quickly read through it. Because of this, there were now numerous books stacked on top of each other all around him. Although he had begun organizing his books in the morning, before he knew it, the sun had begun to set. He continued his slow pace even when it became dark outside. At around dinner time, he finally finished sorting through his books.

*Phew~ Looks like I'm finally finished with sorting my books. I have to pack up my computer now. Let's start with backing up the data.*

*Hm? Isn't this the novel I wrote last year? . . . how nostalgic. Where did I stop the story again?*

Due to his exams, he had taken a break from writing the novel, his first work. It was titled "Trinitas (The Gods of the Heavens, the Earth and the Men) Mundus (World)". Rei opened the file containing his novel on the computer. The novel he wrote was one those reincarnation novels. It was a story about a highschool girl who got reincarnated into country with swords and magic.

The female protagonist had been an ace in her high school's archery club. She was then reincarnated into a family of hunters. Her family lived in a small village that was situated between multiple large countries. The girl used her archery skills and her modern knowledge while living in the village. The story was at the point where the girl was about to reach adulthood. Her village was then attacked by demons. She became the only survivor when an adventurer who was pursuing the demons rescued her.

The adventurer took in the girl and they decided to lived together. In order to take revenge against the demons, the girl became an adventurer and gradually began to play an active role as an archer. The story had advanced to this point when Rei decided to take a break from writing.

*After that, their town was set to be attacked by demons I think? Where did I put the plot file . . . did it get mixed up with my other files?*

He searched for "plot" in the folder but the computer only returned the result that there was no such name.

*Shoot. Did I delete it by mistake or something? It might be in one of my folders somewhere though . . .*

Rei tried finding the plot by opening files at random but in the end, he still couldn't find it. At that moment, a file named "Reincarnation Setting" caught his eye.

*Did I really name it that?*

He thought doubtfully as he decided to double-click on the file's icon.

*As soon as his mouse clicked twice, the screen of the computer abruptly shined a bright white color that bathed his room in its light.*

“Whoa! What is this!?”

Rei raises a voice of surprise at the weird phenomenon. However, the intensity of the light was so strong it seemed to exert a kind of physical pressure. The powerful force caused Rei to fall from his chair and immediately lose consciousness.

When Rei woke up, he could smell a natural fragrance of moist plants that shouldn't have been inside his room.

*What just happened? The computer screen suddenly shined this white color . . . and then what? I can't remember . . .*

Rei shook his head a few times because his consciousness still felt hazy.

*My head feels heavy . . . hm? What's this? Why am I wearing a helmet?*

There was an uncomfortable feeling when he shook his head. He noticed that he was wearing a helmet because of that.

When he tried taking raising his hand to take off the helmet, he also realized that his hands were equipped with metal gauntlets. Flustered, he rushed to check his body.

*What are these? Gauntlets? . . . I'm also wearing plate armor and there's a sword at my waist . . . who put this cosplay costume on me . . .*

He stood up feeling confused about the situation and tried checking his appearance one more time. Rei thought at first that the armor was made of cheap cosplay materials. However, when he tried lightly tapping the metal, he found out that it was unexpectedly genuine thick armor. According to what he knew about real armor, they should be quite heavy. Contrary to that. the armor he was wearing didn't burden him at all. It was so light he felt like it was made of plastic or something. Because of that, the armor didn't really feel like something genuine.

*Where the heck am I though? Because of this cosplay-like outfit, everything feels too elaborate for it to be a prank . . .*

He carefully looked around.

Countless trees with a diameter surpassing 1 meter loomed over him. Most of

the sky couldn't be seen due to the tree branches. Rays of sunlight filtered through the foliage. Although it wasn't dark, Rei still got the strong impression that he was in an extremely dense forest. There were rocks covered in green moss and also things that looked like ferns or short shrubs growing from the ground. The amount of nature was overwhelming. He could find nothing that was man-made.

*Where is this place? Am I dreaming? I need to take a deep breath and calm myself down. Let's try to remember what happened . . .*

Rei reached back into his memory as he desperately tried to grasp the situation. However, the only thing he could remember was that he had been looking at his computer in his room.

*My name is . . . Hijiri Rei. I'm currently 18 years old but will turn 19 in 2 months . . . I was sorting through my luggage in order to get ready for Tokyo university . . . I wanted to backup the data on my computer and had been sorting through my "Trinitas Mundus" files . . . my memories stop there . . .*

He surveyed his surroundings one more time. He suddenly had the feeling that something was out of place and then realized the source of his discomfort.

*My line of sight is higher? There's nothing familiar for me to compare myself with but for some reason, I feel tall . . .*

Since Rei's height barely exceeded 160 centimeters, he was often considered short.

He couldn't really compare himself with anything and didn't exactly know how much taller he was. However, he had a feeling that he was about 20 centimeters taller, maybe even more. He lowered his sight and looked over his appearance again.

Below, he could see a pair of curates, leg armor, that were the same color as his silver plate armor. He was also wearing a pair of leather boots and a white cloak.

The skin visible between the gaps of my armor was white like a caucasian. On the left side of my waist was straight sword with a length of around 1 meter, the so-called longsword. Laying at my feet was a spear with a length of around

2 meters. The whole spear, including the handle, was made of a silver colored metal. There was a cross of around 30 centimeters at the point of the spear.

*If this isn't a dream then is it a different world? Since I have a different body, maybe I reincarnated or something? That's impossible right? . . . Ha ha ha . . .*

The sensations he felt were really realistic for a dream. He was beginning to think that this wasn't a dream.

He tried to confirm if he had any belongings by looking for pouches and bags but other than his spear, there was nothing else around him. He didn't have something like a backpack.

*I only have weapons and armor . . . there's no food or water . . . I sure hope this is a dream. At any rate, I need to get moving. I'll have to search for people and ask for their help if I want to survive . . .*

Rei switched to a pragmatic mindset surprisingly quickly. Whenever he was writing his novel, he always thought about what he would do if he were in his character's situation. Maybe this was related to that. Of course, he didn't have any survival skills. As an indoor person, the only methods he knew for acquiring food were part of the knowledge he gained from books.

Forced to rely on such uncertain knowledge, Rei began to wander through the forest.

## Part 2

Holding a spear in his right hand, Rei had gone quite deep into the forest.

More than one hour had already passed since the time he opened his eyes. The sun that could be seen through the forest's foliage was gradually rising higher and higher.

*I don't know how to guess the time by looking at the sun but since the sun is still rising, morning probably hasn't ended yet. Spending a night in this forest isn't something I'm eager about . . . I really have to find someone. Maybe a town or something . . .*

If he were to meet a traveler in this appearance, they'd probably be quite suspicious. He was worried about whether or not they'd even believe his story. However, the thing that he was even more worried about was how he was the only person in the forest so far. It stirred feelings of impatience in him.

Rei tried thinking about his current situation as he continued to wander.

When tripped over some tree roots and fell down, it felt extremely painful . He acquired a conviction that this wasn't a dream.

*If this isn't a dream, then how did I end up in this world? A time warp or something? I don't know how much this equipment I'm wearing is worth but I'm pretty much fully armed . . . with this, if my words don't get through and they absolutely don't believe me, then the worst thing that could happen is that I get killed . . . even if this is a dream, falling down was extremely painful. In that case, when I get killed it will be even more painful . . .*

It was still difficult for him to accept the situation he was in as reality. Even though he believed that he should be taking things more seriously, he still didn't completely throw away the possibility that everything was a dream.

Nevertheless, he knew that it would become dangerous for him if the situation didn't change. He desperately tried to think of what he had to do but couldn't come up with any kind of solution.

Rei dove deeper into the forest.

It had been impossible to even find a road, much less a town. The only sounds he could hear around him were the rustling of trees from the wind, the chirping of birds and occasionally the growling and snarling of various animals.

*The trunk of the tree a while ago had sharp claw marks on it. The animal that made the mark was on at the very least on par with a brown bear . . . the only time I've faced wild animals was when I visited the zoo in my childhood. What am I going to do . . . my throat is also getting thirsty. I sure hope I find water soon.*

Although he had found a small pool of water a while ago, as one would expect, it was impossible to drink the water. He had searched for a clean source of water, like a small stream. However, it looks like he might have walked in the wrong direction. There wasn't even a single trace of water now.

And so Rei continued to walk in this way, occasionally taking breaks whenever he became exhausted.

He never realized how abnormal it was. Being able to walk for more than 3 hours through the rough terrain of the forest. And he was wearing heavy equipment.

In the previous world, Rei had possessed a weak body since a young age. His constitution caused him to miss school quite frequently and this continued up until he entered junior high. Because his worried parents didn't want him to push himself too hard, he almost never went outside to play or participate in sports with his friends. As a result of that, he never did become used to moving his body around and rarely walked for long periods of time.

Maybe the strangeness of the situation caused him to not notice how much his body had changed. Or maybe his subconscious simply didn't want to acknowledge reality.

After walking for another short while, Rei could hear the screams of several people. It seemed like the wind had carried the sound a considerable distance.

*If this really is a different world then meeting travelers who are being attacked by robbers or monsters is a really common trope. Even if it is a trope, what*

*should I do? It would be a big problem if I get attacked after approaching them carelessly . . .*

Rei considered ignoring the screams but the fear of continuing to wander alone in the forest won him over. He came up with a good excuse and then decided to approach the voices.

*By listening to them, I might be able to figure out if it's possible for us to communicate with each other. I'll have to approach them carefully if I don't want them to notice me. Good thing my armor doesn't make much noise even though it's made of metal. Unless I make a serious blunder, they shouldn't be able to notice me . . .*

As he approached cautiously, he could hear screams also vulgar laughter coming from multiple different men. The voices steadily grew louder and more distinct, allowing him to catch their words.

“Hahaha! You should surrender already. I'll give you plenty of love~”

The men cackled as the voice of a young woman screamed back. Rei couldn't see her from his position.

“Watch your words! Touch me and I'll kill you! I'd rather die than allow myself to be dirtied by the likes of you!”

Ray peered out from the shadow of a tree he was hiding in. In front of him, he saw an immobilized carriage laying atop a crude unpaved road. The road had been naturally created by the countless people who treaded down the same path.

Nearly twenty men equipped in leather armor surrounded the carriage. At their feet lay several knights clad in metal armor who had collapsed in pools of their own blood.

*I didn't expect this . . . it's pretty obvious those guys are bandits. What am I going to do . . .*

Rei's legs shook in fear. Suddenly, moving even an inch felt like it would alert the bandits. He couldn't tear his eyes from the carriage. If he looked away, he would have no idea when the bandits might get closer to him.

A girl in the middle of her teens was violently dragged out from the amongst the bandits. She had blonde hair and wore a blue dress. The echoes of her screams mixed in with the vulgar voices of the men. It was a voice that didn't belong to the previous woman. It felt younger, much younger.



“Aaah! Let go of me! Father! Help me!”

The yells of a man who seemed to be her father resounded in response to the desperate plea for help,

“Please give back my daughter! I will hand over all the money I have . . . so please . . . give back Oliena . . . I beg of you . . .”

One of the bandits lifted up the girl’s chin and floated a vulgar smile,

“Be quiet old man! This cute lady is going to be accompanying us. We’re not killing her. After she’s been given enough love, we’ll sell her off somewhere. Be grateful! Hahaha!”

The girl faced the carriage as she cried and screamed. From the carriage, the pleading voice of the father continued to ring out.

*Aaah, I can’t do anything . . . for some reason . . . it feels like I’ve gone through this before. Abandoning someone. No! There’s no way I can abandon them!*

As Rei observed the scene carried out in front of him, he noticed that someone else’s memories were inside his head. His eyes suddenly began to quiver in despair and fierce emotions stirred within him. The vulgarly laughing bandits and the screaming girl were reflected inside eyes. And suddenly, it all matched up. The bandits’ figures morphed into the shapes of demons and the figure of the girl was overlaid with an image of the sweetheart he cherished.

At that moment, Rei’s consciousness faded away into a pure white and his memories were cut off there.

Rei continued to be unconscious as he took a stance with his spear and fiercely charged at the gang of bandits.

Before anyone could react, the spear in his left hand had formed a streak of white light 1.5 meters long and 3 centimeters thick. The instant he swung the light, it pierced into the chest of the man who was restraining the girl.

The man who didn’t notice the sudden attack gurgled like a frog that had been stepped on and then died without knowing what had happened to him.

The bandits froze. They prepared to flee but once they realized that their attacker consisted of merely one person, they immediately regained their calm.

A large man who seemed to be the bandits’ chief shouted, “What? Who the

hell are you!” and then ordered, “We don’t need to worry about him! Kill him!” The bandits remained vigilant against the silver knight who had prepared another spear of light as they moved to surround him.

Two bandits carrying bows appeared from behind them. They aimed at the chest of the knight who was approaching them defenselessly and fired their arrows. They flew straight towards his chest. It seemed obvious that he was going to be killed. However, both of the arrows were struck down by the spear in his right hand. It was like nothing had happened. In response, he materialized two magic arrows in his left hand and released them towards the two archers. The arrows accurately penetrated into the archers’ throats, severed their necks in half and then pierced into the large tree behind them.

“Don’t let him use magic! Surround him and chop him up!”

Once the chief ordered the bandits to surround knight, the bandits who heard his command rushed towards him.

The bandits gathered around him in an instant.

Grabbing his spear with both hands, the knight attacked the bandits by swinging his spear in a way that looked like he was mowing them down.

The tip of his spear suddenly began to shine a bright orange color. Leather armor was completely ineffective against the power that was concealed by the light. The unfortunate bandits who entered within the spear’s range had their throats and arms torn apart and their chests punctured. The way in which they had been killed was much too sudden. Too simple.

“I-impossible! H-he’s a monster! Aaaaah!”

One young bandit lost his will to fight and tried to flee.

However, like lightning, the devil clad in white dashed between the bandits and reached the fleeing bandit. Even as the bandit tried to beg for his life in tears, the white devil mercilessly killed him without showing any kind of emotion. It didn’t end there. Blood spurted wherever he ran and the bandits were eliminated one after the other.

The bandit chief sensed that there was no way he was going to be able to win directly and shouted, “Drop your weapons and don’t move! The lives of these

bastards are in my hands!” He thrust his sword in front of the girl and a middle aged man who was dressed in elaborate clothing. However, the knight’s expression didn’t budge an inch. He instead materialized a thin disk of light that had a diameter of around 50 centimeters in his right hand and hurled it towards the chief.

The thoughts of the chief paused for an instant due to the knight’s completely unexpected behavior. That short instant of time was fatal. With no time to evade the disk, a hole was made in the chief’s torso. An expression of surprise remained frozen on his face.

Having lost their chief, the bandits began to flee in disorder.

The knight pursued the scattered bandits and unhesitatingly killed them one after the other with magic in his left hand and a spear in his right hand. Crying and screaming in face of the merciless slaughter, the bandits begged for their lives. Their efforts were futile.

Once all of the bandits were annihilated, the knight’s body was smeared in fresh blood and his white equipment was dyed a dark crimson color.

The knight mumbled in a small voice, “Captain . . . everyone . . . I’ve done it properly this time . . . this time . . .” and then collapsed onto the ground like a puppet who had its thread cut.



Ashley Makat wore metal armor and wielded a large two handed sword. She was a relatively well-known female mercenary adventurer around these parts. Her father, Hamish Makat, led one of the strongest mercenary bands in the Laks Kingdom. She learned how to fight from a young age and devoted herself to activities such as sword fighting. For seven years, starting from the age of 15, she stood on the battlefield as a mercenary.

She separated from her father’s mercenary band roughly a year ago and moved alone as a mercenary adventurer. This time, she was requested to escort the Baron Atelier to the the Saltooth Kingdom’s capital city, Laurus. The baron placed particular emphasis on the protection of his daughter.

The journey to Laurus was entirely peaceful. The start of the return trip was

also uneventful but that changed once they left the borders of Laurus. Two days ago, the Baron Atelier's territorial knights mysteriously succumbed to a disease of unknown cause, reducing the number of knights in the escort party to a mere five. Since the party would now be unable to respond against even weak demons, they hired ten mercenaries from a nearby town. There was only a short distance left before they would enter the Baron Atelier's territory.

The area they were in had a dense forest and demons who would frequently appear. However, as long as the carriage was guarded by a dozen or so escorts, it was expected that they would safely leave the forest. However, that was true only under the assumption that the mercenaries wouldn't betray them. It was the mercenaries they hired who became their worst enemy.

Usually, mercenaries were hired through the mercenary guild. It was highly unlikely for these types of mercenaries to betray the client on an escort mission. Unless it was due to confusion on the battlefield, if a mercenary deliberately violated their escort contract the guild would track them down.

It was natural for the baron who didn't have any combat experience to be careless about such a thing. However, even the knights who had been entrusted with guarding him had been careless. The mercenaries guided the bandits into the forest when it seemed like the forest was empty of people.

When Ashley noticed the bandits it was already too late. Taken by surprise, the escorting knights had been either killed or mortally wounded. Soon after, bandits appeared one after the other from inside the forest. They surrounded the carriage and then dragged the baron and his daughter out.

A lustful man who seemed to be the bandit chief demanded for Ashley to surrender. However, she decided to resist since should would be violated and killed anyway.

Even the bandits were aware of Ashley's skill as a swordsman. Several of them hesitated to repress her struggle. Nobody wanted to become that "unlucky person" when they were in such an overwhelmingly advantageous situation. Therefore, there wasn't a single person who tried to approach her of their own volition.

In an attempt to break that kind of stalemate, the bandits decided to violate

the baron's daughter, Oliena. At that moment, a knight who was clad in silver armor assaulted the bandits' rear. At first, Ashley was glad to see help arrive but her emotions quickly cooled down once no one appeared after the knight. She felt despair once again as the lone figure of the knight rushed in to attack alone, without any kind of plan.

*It's hopeless . . . I don't know how much self-confidence he has but jumping in without a plan when there's such a large difference in numbers is . . .*

However, Ashley became astonished when the knight began to gather magic into his left hand.

*Is he one of the rumored Holy Knights of Rooks!? Rooks claims that each of their holy knights can match with a thousand men but in the end, what can a single knight possibly do?*

Her question was immediately answered.

The knight hurled a spear of light towards the bandits, obliterating two in the blink of an eye.

Possibly feeling that the knight was dangerous, the bandit chief decided to rely on the power of numbers and ordered the bandits to surround the knight. This time, magical power seemed to flood into the the cross-shaped tip of the spear as it began shine a brilliant orange. Every time the knight swung his spear, the bandits collapsed one after the other like wooden dolls. Although the bandits weren't exactly thorough in maintaining their leather armor, their equipment was by no means inadequate. Nevertheless, in front of the knight's spear, their utilitarian equipment was rendered completely ineffective.

*What is that spear? Is it a God Spear? Or is the skill of the knight just that amazing? It's as if a hero's come out of a myth . . .*

*The figure that was clad in gleaming silver armor and wielding a shining spear seemed worthy of being called a warrior of God.*

*If this is what a Holy Knight is truly like, then those religious fanatics who keep proclaiming the invincibility of their so-called divine messengers aren't necessarily spreading unfounded rumors . . .*

The number of bandit corpses increased every time the knight swung his

spear. This caused the moral of the bandits to plunge. The bandit close to Ashley also wavered.

Although Ashley was unable to tear her eyes away from the rampaging knight, she recognized that this was an extremely rare chance. She stabbed the bandit in front of her and then began to approach the baron.

However, at that instant, the bandit chief took the baron and his daughter hostage and then ordered the knight to drop his weapons.

*Damn it! I couldn't make it in time. What is that knight going to do . . . as a holy knight, I guess he would surrender his weapons?*

Her expectations were completely betrayed. As if to say he didn't care about the hostages, the knight invoked his light magic once again.

This time, his magic took the form of a disk made of light. Due to the knight's instantaneous and unexpected behavior, even Ashley couldn't budge her body an inch. During the time she remained frozen, the disk of light literally cut a large hole through the bandit chief's body.

*No hesitation whatsoever. He is trying to help us right?*

Ashley was wary of the knight but decided to focus on the more immediate threat as she brought down the bandit in front her.

*If that knight decides to attack us, there's no way we would be able to defend against him. Since he's not turning his attacks on us, at the very least it's safe to think that he's not our enemy . . .*

By the time everything ended, the silver knight was completely smeared in the dark crimson blood of the bandits.

The baron next to Ashley stiffened with a complex expression of astonishment and fear on his face. Fortunately, his daughter had already fainted a long time ago and didn't have to witness the knight's gruesome appearance. If the girl had remained to see him, it wouldn't be surprising for her to suffer a severe mental trauma.

Roughly ten minutes had passed since the knight appeared. In that short amount of time, the group of bandits had been utterly annihilated.

Ashley had no idea what was going to happen next and became increasingly vigilant. The knight mumbled something in a small voice and then finally collapsed face down.

While remaining wary of her surroundings, Ashley peered at the condition of the knight. She wondered what her employer, the Baron Atelier, wanted to do with him.

“What do we do about the knight? To be honest, I don’t want to even come near him . . .”

The baron had still not recovered from the commotion but hearing her words, he immediately regained his composure and said,

“We definitely owe our lives to him. I don’t know who he is but we can’t just abandon him here. Besides, we only have half a day left before we reach Molton. Accepting him as an escort would be quite reassuring, wouldn’t it?”

Ashley nodded but inside, she really didn’t feel too eager about it. Wouldn’t it be fine if we left him here she thought. However, seeing that there were no flaws in her employer’s reasoning, she had no choice but to approach the fallen knight.

## Part 3

When Ray regained consciousness, he saw the face of a young female mercenary in front of him. She was clad in a cuirass – sleeveless metal armor.

Her grayish blond hair was tied back in a ponytail and although her suntanned face was devoid of makeup, she possessed a sort of fearless beauty.

Suddenly having the face of such a beautiful female mercenary in front of him caused Ray to feel slightly unsettled. However, Ray quickly forgot his agitation when he perceived the putrid stench around him. A fishy metallic scent mingled together with a stench that smelled like manure, causing Ray's face to grimace. He also noticed that there was some kind fluid stuck on his face and raised his hand to wipe it. Shock came across his face when he saw his hand.

*Isn't this b-blood? Am I injured? It doesn't hurt though? What's going on?*

Ray panicked after seeing the large amount of blood splattered all over his body and surveyed his surroundings.

All around him were numerous corpses of the bandits who had been mercilessly slaughtered. A fierce nausea overcame him as he fell down on all fours and began vomiting. The female mercenary who saw that asked, "Are you alright?" However, Ray didn't have the strength to answer her.

He heard her what she said but was unable to easily regain his composure. He ejected everything in stomach. Even after belching out his gastric juices, he couldn't stop vomiting.

*Wh, what the hell happened . . . I feel terrible . . . somebody . . . save me . . .*

After continuously vomiting for around five minutes, Ray finally settled down as he laid on his back.

As she watched him, the female mercenary straightened her sitting posture and said "I want to give you my gratitude for rescuing me from that dangerous situation earlier. I'm Ashley Makkat. I'm currently serving as an escort for Baron Atelier. He's right over there."

Ray squeezed out his voice as he attempted to answer her, "I'm . . . Ray." That was only he could manage to say. No more words came out of his mouth.

*What the heck am I supposed to say? Am I supposed to tell her I came from a different world or something? I can't think of anything . . . ah, whatever. Let's go with the standard amnesia trope.*

Ray promptly said, "Sorry, my memories aren't too clear right now. All I can say for sure is that my name is Ray."

The Baron Atelier observed Ray from a distance. He was a middle-aged man who wore luxurious garish-looking clothes. When he confirmed that Ray was not dangerous, he approached him while bringing along a man who seemed to be his butler.

"Rei-dono, I am Bruno Atelier, a Baron of the Lacus kingdom. I am extremely grateful to you for saving our lives." (TL: If you don't know what [dono](#) means.)

Not knowing how to answer, Ray decided to only nod his head for the time being. The female mercenary who was named Ashley looks at Ray's appearance and hesitantly says,

"Rei-dono, now's a good time for you to wash off the blood on your body. If I remember correctly, there should be a brook nearby. I could lend you a hand if you can't stand up because of magic exhaustion . . ."

For the first time, Ray took a closer look at his own appearance.

His entire body was dyed a dark crimson and there seemed to be chunks of flesh clinging to him here and there. Ray felt the urge to vomit again but managed to withstand it. He squeezed out a question, "Could you tell me what happened?"

Atelier and Ashley exchanged glances for a brief moment. Ashley began to explain,

"When we were assaulted by bandits, Ray-dono rushed out and took out them out one by one . . ."

As Ray listened to Ashley's simple explanation, his face turned pale.

*I did all of that? Apparently, it was me who slaughtered all of the bandits . . .*

*so this blood on me belongs to them . . .*

Without caring about for his pride, Ray's began to tremble.

*What the heck is wrong with this guy? After acting like a hero, he vomits just from the sight of blood. Not only that, he starts shaking like some girl . . . I totally don't get him.*

Ashley's initial impressions of him as a hero quickly crumbled. She struggled to sort out the jumble of various emotions swirling within her.

*He probably isn't a dangerous person. Instead, he seems kind of amusing. Furthermore, returning a favor to the benefactor who saves your life is a precept of the Makkat family . . .*

After feeling some interest in him, Ashley once again suggested that Ray wash off the blood on his body.

The baron also seemed somewhat apologetic as he said, "Please do something about it before my daughter wakes up. I'm afraid she'll faint again if she sees your appearance."

Ray slowly trudged in the direction of the brook.

While gazing at Ray's retreating figure, the baron inquired Ashley, "What do you think of him?"

She shakes her head, "I don't understand him very well. At any rate, in his current state, I don't think he will pose to be a danger to us." She then proceeded to place the corpses of the knights onto the back of the carriage.

Ray arrived at the brook and attempted to wash off the blood by dipping parts of his body in the flowing water.

However, the coagulating blood stubbornly refused to come off. In the end, Ray was forced to plunge his whole body into the brook in an attempt to wash it. The brook's water ended up being much colder than expected and before long, Ray's teeth began to chatter. However, he prioritized cleaning off the blood and continued trying to rub it off while half in a panic.

*Hurry up can come off damn it! The smell of blood makes me want to vomit. For god's sake! Why the hell won't it come off . . .*

Ray continued to suffer the torture of the freezing water for around five minutes but in the end, he only managed to rub off the blood from his face and hands. His armor, mantle, the clothes that were under his armor and most importantly, his hair, remained mostly unchanged.

*If this were a novel, I would only need to use Purification magic to make this blood come off . . . if what they told me earlier was true, I should be able to use magic. At this point, I might as well give magic a try . . .*

Ray remembered that in the setting of the novel he wrote, there was a Daily Lifestyle magic called Purification. It was supposed to clean bodies and clothes. Daily Lifestyle magic was a branch of magic that combined the elements of Water, Light and Wind to create a cleansing magic. This was the setting he had thought up for the novel.

Ray calls to mind the Purification magic. The magical process went like this: Water spirits filtered away the grime, Light spirits broke it down, and finally, Wind spirits blew away the fragmented grime together with the Water. It was something he had seen in a laundry detergent commercial. Light gathered around Ray. First, blue light wrapped itself around his body. The light gradually turned into a bright golden white color and then finally gained a silverish hue as it continued to be wrapped around him.

Although surprised, Ray's body remained still as he waited. The blood and soil that had been stuck to his body were completely removed. His cloak and clothes looked brand new and spotless. It was as if they had just come out of a laundry machine.

Of course, the hair Ray had been so worried about was no exception. Anyone who looked at him would have easily believed him if he said that he had just taken a bath. Not only that, his body and clothes which had gotten soaked in the brook were now completely dry. The coldness was gone from his body. It was now replaced with a soft warmth.

*Wow! I actually used magic . . . it wouldn't be surprising if others could also use it . . .*

For a short moment, the fatigue and guilt he felt for killing others was forgotten as he became excited at the reality of being able to use magic. When

he became tempted to try using magic again, he heard Ashley's voice calling him from far away.

“Rei-dono! We will be departing soon, are you ready to come back?”

He thought it was slightly regrettable but when he remembered that there might be some surviving bandits around, he immediately headed back.

A spotless Ray approached the carriage where Ashley and the baron were waiting.

As he got closer, the smell of blood once again caused him to feel nauseated. However, he managed to suppress it.

Seeing Ray's spotless appearance, Ashley and the baron's faces shone with surprise.

“How did you manage to clean off so much blood? It's as if you've changed your armor and clothes . . .”

Ray wondered how he should answer her.

*Purification magic isn't a normal thing? Using Combat magic is normal but apparently Daily Lifestyle magic isn't? I have to make sure I don't make them suspicious . . .*

After worrying about how to answer, Ray begins his explanation with a feeling of nervousness,

“After cleaning myself for a while in the brook, I used magic to rub off the blood . . . you don't know about cleansing magic?”

“Using magic to clean bodies and clothes . . . it's rumored that the elves of the Saltooth Kingdom can use that kind of magic, but . . .”

The baron tilted his head in thought. However, Ray was bewildered by the name the baron had said.

*Elves, he said. I also heard the name Saltooth. The baron said he was from the Lacus kingdom right . . . in my novel, there was a kingdom named Lacus wasn't there? What does all this mean?*

While watching the two men ponder, Ashley pragmatically reminded them to

prepare for departure.

“Sir Atelier, Ray-dono, it would be best for us to depart soon.” She turned towards Ray and added, “Could you help me collect the Magic Stones from the bandits?”

“Magic Stones? . . . Oh, right, Magic Stones . . . wait, what?!”

Ray raised his voice without thinking when he heard the words Magic Stones.

*Assuming that these Magic Stones are the same as those from my novel, they should be the magical crystals contained within human and demon bodies. If I remember correctly, extracting them requires you to hover your hand over the corpse and circulate magical power through the body . . . ugh, I’m not exactly eager about facing corpses again . . .*

As Ray remained bewildered, Ashley suggested something different in a slightly irritated voice.

“What’s wrong? Did your memory loss also cause you to forget the methods of extracting Magic Stones? It’s fine, I’ll collect the Magic Stones myself. Could you go find our horses and bring them back for me instead?”

Ray accepted the task and entered the forest where the horses were supposed to be.

*The Lacus Kingdom and Magic Stones . . . Although I’ll have to gather some more information before I can come to a clear conclusion, it seems like I’ve somehow wandered into my own novel . . .*

He spotted the dead knights’ horses and timidly approaches them.

*I never even touched a horse before. Am I supposed to grab their reins? There’s more than ten horses in total, how am I going to bring them all along with me . . .*

Although Ray didn’t really know what he was doing, he decided to bring them back to the carriage in pairs. He only needed to lightly tug on their reins for them to follow. It seemed like they had been excellently trained.

As he brought the first two horses to the carriage, he spotted Ashley

extracting the Magic Stones from the corpses of the bandits. It was as he expected. As Ashley held her hand over the chest of the corpse, something that seemed like a glass sphere of around 1.5 centimeters floats out.

*It's as I thought, everything is following the setting of my novel, "Trinitas Mundus". Did I really get lost in the world of my novel then? Such a thing . . .*

Although he felt skeptical, Ray concentrated on gathering the horses and tried his best to not think too much. In around 12 minutes, Ray had collected all of the horses. Ashley also completed extracting the Magic Stones and then binded the previously collected horses with ropes. She mounted a horse and then worriedly asked Ray, "Are you able to ride a horse? If you can't, you could just ride on the carriage . . ."

He observed the way she rode the horse and said, "I'll manage it somehow." He was bewildered by a mysterious feeling.

*For some reason, I feel like I'll be able to ride the horse. Why is that?*

Ray put one foot on the stirrup and then straddled the horse. It was much easier than he thought. It was as if his body remembered the movements.

*It was even easier than learning how to ride a bicycle. What's going on here? No, wait, this body doesn't even belong to me. Who the heck did it belong to?*

Ashley seemed relieved when she saw that Ray could ride the horse. She heads to the baron to inform him of their departure and then makes a signal with her hand toward the man who seemed like the baron's butler. He was the one driving the carriage.

The instant he saw her signal, the butler started the carriage. Although Ray rode his horse with apprehensive feelings in the beginning, after around ten minutes he was able to freely control his horse. It was as if he had always ridden horses.

*Maybe the horses are just trained well. Still, is horse-riding supposed to be this easy?*

Although Ray harbored doubts about his sudden ability to ride horses, he continued to urge his horse on for the sake of getting out of the forest.

# Chapter 2: Going to the City Upon the Hill

## Part 1

Ray absentmindedly thought about the situation he was in. As if saying that such a thing had nothing to do with it, his horse steadily continued down the sloping trail. After riding for about an hour, their field of vision which had been obstructed by numerous trees opened up. They had finally come out of the deep and dark forest.

A beautiful scene spread out below Ray's line of sight. Lakes of various sizes were scattered about between the forest and some hills in the distance. Their surfaces reflected the lush green color of the forest and glittered like jewels of sparkling jade in the sun. Ray unintentionally stopped his horse as he became absorbed in the beautiful scene.

He couldn't help uttering a quiet compliment, "Wow . . . so beautiful . . . such a picturesque landscape . . ."

The carriage had also stopped when they arrived outside the forest, allowing the baron to hear Ray's words.

"Thank you. Everything you see from here is the territory of my homeland. I have to agree that it really is quite beautiful. It seems like Ray-dono is also someone who can appreciate the beauty of it. How wonderful!"

Seemingly pleased by Ray, the baron faced Ray with a wide smile.

"This really is the first time I've seen such a beautiful place. Truly beautiful . . ."

Fascinated by the landscape, it was more like Ray was muttering to himself than actually replying to the baron.

*In my plot, there was a country of lakes and springs, named Lacus. According*

*to what I wrote, the country should be located in the outskirts of Periclitar, the country of adventurers. Because of that, in my novel, I only expressed it as a beautiful country. However, it would have been impossible for me to pull off this level of detail with my writing skills . . .*

Ashley was amazed as she listened to the two's conversation.

*We're still in a dangerous situation . . . and yet, these guys aren't tense at all. Am I supposed to be on the lookout alone? The compensation I get for this job doesn't match the effort required . . .*

Despite her internal grumbling, she tried to capture their attention,

"It is still dangerous. We need to quicken our pace. Rei-dono, no matter how fascinated you are by the scenery, please do not drop your guard."

After slowly descending down the mountain pass for around two hours, they entered an area with many hills. Although the sun had already set, there seemed to be another two hours before night would arrive.

## Part 2

“Alright, here’s a good place to stop. Let’s take a short break. Edward-dono, could you park the carriage in that open space over there?”

As Ashley gave directions to Edward, who was the butler and coachman, she lead the horses to a meadow on the side of the road.

*We finally get a break . . . although my body feels less tired than expected, that does nothing to help my mental exhaustion. Incidentally, I wonder what I’m going to do after all this is over?*

Having entered a safe zone at last, Ray realized that he hadn’t thought about his future plans at all. He didn’t have any money or food on him. Neither could he find the object that served as his personal identification – the Orb. It was a magical device that was usually in the form of a bracelet.

*If you think about it from an outsider’s perspective, don’t I seem like an extremely suspicious person? The baron has somehow accepted me, probably because I saved his life. However, once the immediate danger of being attacked by the thieves is gone, don’t I become the most dangerous person to them? I’m a merely a mysterious stranger who used dubious magic to utterly annihilate twenty-four thieves. Typical barons would probably hesitate to let me enter their towns even if I was their lifesaver, . . .*

Ray descended from his horse and sat down on top of a soft grassy area of the meadow alone. He immersed himself in his thoughts for a while. A short time later, Ashley came over and sat down by his side. She handed him a flask of water and said, “I forgot that you haven’t had any water to drink, sorry about that.” while lowering her head.

“It’s natural to forget. You’ve had a lot your plate, remaining constantly alert by yourself. If only I wasn’t so useless . . .”

As he said that in self-derision, Ashley laid her hands upon his shoulders and made him face her.

“That’s not true. Nothing can change the fact that you were the one who saved our lives. If you weren’t there, I would have surely died. Not only that, those bandits would have probably had their way with me.”

Ray realized for the first time that even Ashley, who he thought was always cool headed, was probably under quite a bit of stress.

*Even though I thought she was a veteran mercenary, looking at her more carefully she she still looks quite young. We’re probably not even five years apart from each other.*

“Ray-dono, no, Ray, call me Ashley. Let’s drop the honorifics. So, what are you planning to do after this?”

“I was thinking about that just now. I still have no idea what I’m going to do. I’ve lost my memories and don’t have any money or personal identification. What am I supposed to do . . .”

“If it’s about money, then you’ll probably manage somehow or another. In addition to the bandits’ bounty, you should also be able to demand quite a bit of consolation money from the Mercenaries Guild. After all, the bandits who attacked Baron Atelier were registered by them.”

Ray tried to recall the setting he wrote for this world.

*If I remember correctly, Magic Stones are souls. They can be used to prove the subjugation of monsters for the Adventurers Guild. They can also be used to determine things like a mercenary’s degree of loyalty. Even though I wrote it myself, I still can’t help but admire how convenient the whole system is . . . Magic Stones can also be sold for quite a pretty amount, since they’re one of the materials used to craft magic tools. A single Magic Stone from a human should be able to fetch you at least ten Crona. Based on the values of Earth, ten Crona is roughly equivalent to 10,000 yen (TL: \$89). Even if we equally split the bandits’ stones, that alone totals to around 100,000 yen (TL: \$890). I guess money won’t be a significant problem for the time being.*

In the world Ray had thought up, the currency was called Crona, denoted by the symbol “C”. 1 Crona was a small silver coin, equivalent to 1000 yen according to the standards of Ray’s world. A platinum coin was 1000 Crona, a gold coin was 100 Crona, a normal-sized silver coin was 10 Crona, and as stated

earlier, a small silver coin was 1 Crona. Even smaller than that was the copper coin which was 1/10 of a Crona or 10 Elle. A small copper coin was 1 Elle. Besides these, there were others, including large gold coins equivalent to 5 normal-sized gold coins and half silver coins worth, wait for it – half the value of a silver coin.

Edward the butler called out to Ray as Ashley was explaining these things to him.

“I apologize for interrupting your conversation. Sir baron wishes to talk to you, Ray-sama.”

Ray followed Edward while wondering what it was the baron wanted to talk about.

When he arrived, he could see Baron Atelier and his daughter, Oliena standing outside of the carriage.

“My daughter wants to express her gratitude to you, Ray-dono. Please accept her feelings.”

Although Ray’s initial impression of the baron wasn’t very good due to his overly fancy clothes and plump figure, this changed when he saw the girl who was apparently the baron’s daughter.

*Although his clothes initially made me think he was the kind of baron who indulged in corruption, he’s a surprisingly nice person. He’s never acted stuck up or egoistic towards me either . . .*

Ray replied, “It’s fine. I’ll listen to what she wants to say.” and turned to face the girl.

## Part 3

Oliena seemed a bit dazed, probably because she hadn't fully recovered from the incident yet. Her eyes remained cast down as she said, "I-I'm O-oliena A-t-telier. T-thank you v-very much for s-saving us. If R-ray-sama h-hadn't c-come . . . u-uu", at this point, she seemed to be recalling the feelings she had when the bandits dragged her out of the carriage. Oliena became tongue-tied as tears threatened to break free from her eyes.

The baron gently took hold of her shoulders. In the end however, she wasn't able to prevent herself from sobbing. Ray hastily attempted to come up with something comforting to say, but in the end, he wasn't able to. For a while, the two of them submitted themselves to a period of awkward silence.

*I wish I could say something witty to cheer her up. However, I'm not very good at talking with people . . . Ryuji could probably do it . . .*

Ray remembered his only friend. Completely the polar opposite of Ray, Ryuji was quite sociable and also good at sports. And yet, for some mysterious reason, he had decided to hang out with the introverted Ray. If it was Ryuji, then he would be able to smoothly deal with this kind of situation. What would he do if he were here?

"Nothing is more important than Oliena-sama's safety. Now that everything is over, I think that it would be best if you tried to forget about what happened . . ."

Although Ray's voice slightly tapered off near the end, he somehow managed to say some words of comfort to Oliena. While holding back her tears, she nodded once towards Ray before returning inside the carriage with the baron's arms still around her shoulders.

*Was that good enough? Anything more than this is impossible for me.*

The group ate a crude and simple meal during their thirty minute break.

Ray had been feeling considerably famished ever since he dispelled

everything inside his stomach. Even now, the bandits' mangled bodies and the blood which had splattered everywhere were still fresh inside his mind. Nevertheless, in order to preserve his physical strength, Ray forced himself to swallow down the food.

After they continued their journey down the main road for a while, farmland gradually began to appear. Houses were built here and there, sprinkled out sparsely throughout the peaceful rural landscape. They probably belonged to the farming families of this region and seemed to have been built in a European style. A simple dark slate roof hung over the completely white walls, which were composed of a chalky-colored stone material that was covered in plaster. Although the buildings were simple, seeing them next to the verdant green forest was quite a sight to behold. The scene which could have come straight out of a picture book somehow felt unreal to Ray.

The clothing of the villagers were made of a woollen material that was dyed in yellow and red colors. It was quite colorful, seeing all the villagers together.

*This village appears to be fairly rich and abundant. There's plenty of water and the land is fertile. I also spotted some sheep, cows, and pigs roaming around. Although I don't remember much about what I had written for this region, at the very least, it doesn't seem like they're in need of food.*

Ray's worries had eased up considerably after his conversation with Ashley. He rode his horse next to her as he asked her various questions about the world.

He learned that this place was Baron Atelier's territory. It was on the west side of the Taulia continent, located in the Allied Kingdoms of Lacus and Saltooth. Out of the two allied kingdoms, the baron's territory was in the Lacus Kingdom. (TL: I previously mixed up Rooks and Lacus. Sorry about that. I've fixed this mistake in the previous chapters.)

In the Taulia continent, there were other major powers in addition to the Allied Kingdoms of Lacus and Saltooth. These included the southern Kaelum Empire and the eastern Kaumu Kingdom. These three countries were established so long ago that they were commonly known as the Three Ancient Kingdoms. In addition to these three nations, the more newly established

powers include: The Holy Kingdom of Rooks and the Kingdom of Jilsol, each of which had been founded after gaining independence from the Kaelum Empire. The relatively large, country of mercenaries, Fortis. The country of adventurers, Periclitar. The city of commerce, Aurela. The academy city, Doctus. These six nations were members of the City-State Federation.

According to the Taulia calendar, the year is currently 3025. Today is first day of April, which is coincidentally for this world, the date of the Vernal Equinox (TL: A day of spring when day and night are the same length length of time.)

In this world, a year is 300 days, a month is 30 days, a day is 24 hours, an hour is 60 minutes, and a second is 1/60 of a minute.

The system of weights and measures is virtually the same as earth's. For length: 1 merto = 1 meter, 1 cemer = 1 centimeter, and 1 kikel = 1 kilometer. For weight: 1 gran = 1 gram, 1 kigran = 1 kilogram, and as for the unit of tons, that remained unchanged.

The racial composition of the Lacus Kingdom comprises of approximately: seventy percent humans, twenty percent elves, and ten percent beastmen. As you can see, the Lacus Kingdom is home to a great number of humans. As for the other nations, they are also characterized by their race. The Kaumu Kingdom for example, primarily consists of dwarves, and the Saltooth Kingdom primarily consists of elves. It's also said that to the east of the Kaumu Kingdom is a region named Québet Dame Tenebre that is ruled by a demon race.

*Everything I've heard so far matches with what I wrote for Trinitas Mundus. The current date also roughly matches with the time period of the novel, I think. However, for some weird reason, no matter how hard I try, I can't remember the details of the story. It's almost as if I can't access a certain part of my memory . . .*

Ray continued his conversation with Ashley as they traveled down the main road. Since their last break, around an hour or so had passed. They could glimpse a large city in the distance. The name of the city was Molton and it was the largest city in Baron Atelier's entire territory. On top of the slightly elevated hill, was a neat arrangement of streets, each lined with numerous houses. On the highest point of the hill stood a spacious residence that was endowed with

several tall three-sided steeples. Ray reckoned that the building probably belonged to the baron.

A wall of around 5 meters in height encircled around Molton. Embedded inside the wall was a large gate.

Starting from the time when they first saw Molton in the distance, it took roughly 30 minutes to arrive in front of the city gate.

## Part 4

When the soldiers guarding the gate spotted the coat of arms that was affixed to the carriage, they flusteredly rushed out to greet them.

Originally, one of the baron's knights was supposed to announce the baron's arrival to the guards in advance. However, this time, Baron Atelier's escorts only consisted of Ashley and Ray. Both of them weren't retainers to Baron Atelier's house and therefore, weren't able to warn the city guards of his arrival.

A guard who appeared to be the captain stepped forward and knelt down onto one knee before the carriage. The lower-ranked knights behind him followed suit.

Seeing the two-person escort and the unmanned horses, the captain sensed that the baron and his party must have encountered some kind of mishap. However, he didn't immediately question the baron. Instead, continued to lower his head in silence as he respectfully waited for an explanation.

The baron descended from the carriage and morosely informed him, "The mercenaries we hired on the way here betrayed us." A disturbance spreads throughout the gathered soldiers.

"Although Oliena and I are safe, all the knights of the escort party have unfortunately perished. Their corpses are on the carriage. I ask that you carefully carry them into the estate . . ."

After that, he gave several other instructions to the city guards.

Ashley observed the baron and the city guards in an unconcerned manner. Although Ray considered assisting the city guards with their tasks, in the end, he decided to continue standing beside Ashley.

*Should I give those guards a hand? I guess that for now, I'll just silently stay beside Ashley until they tell me otherwise.*

When the baron finished giving out all his instructions, he once again boarded the carriage and ordered Edward the butler to head towards the estate. After

shortly holding out her bracelet to the city guards, Ashley mounted her horse and also began to follow after the carriage.

Wretchedly left behind, Ray involuntarily shouted “Ashley! Wait! What am I supposed to do!?”

Ashley’s face seemed to say, *oops*

, as she said, “Sorry, please stay here for a moment.” and then continued towards the baron’s carriage. When she caught up with the baron and reminded him about Ray, he replied, “Ray-dono is our benefactor. I don’t mind him entering the city.”

Ray breathed a sigh a relief as he mounted his horse and passed through the gate with the city guards’ eyes on him.

*Ashley’s bracelet is a Guild Orb isn’t it. A magic tool that replaces a person’s personal credentials. When I arrived in this world, I didn’t find that Orb anywhere on me. If I don’t hurry up and get one, I won’t be able to stay at an inn . . .*

Orbs were unique magic tools that were capable of interacting with Magic Stones. Orbs could verify a person’s identity by decoding the information stored inside their Magic Stone.

They were normally either hung around the neck in the form of a pendant, or equipped on the arm in the form of a bracelet. The use of these ingenious devices weren’t limited to guilds alone. Not even close. The governments of all cities and villages distributed these bracelets to everyone over the age of 10.

In addition to being used as proofs of personal identity, Orbs were also used when authorizing payments, checking into hotels, and entering and leaving cities. In the event your Orb is lost, requesting for another one to be reissued is no problem. However, your actions during the waiting period will be extremely limited. Because of this, most people never took off their Orb, even when they slept.

Ray caught up with the carriage and continued to follow behind it.

Since the city of Molton had been constructed on a hill, with most of the city on a slope, the trip from the gate was a gradual ascent. A meandering road

continued up towards the top of the hill, where several steeples and a massive wall stood. Several windmills could be seen here and there, their wide blades slowly turning.

Houses characterized by white walls and vibrant orange roofs were placed closely together on both sides of a road that was completely paved with cobblestone.

Ray gazed at the beautiful cityscape as he ascended the hill. In the background was a sky that was being dyed in the red colors of dusk. When the citizens saw the baron's coat of arms on the carriage, they immediately exited the road and politely bowed while standing to the side. When Ray saw all the natural smiles on their faces, he could feel that the baron was considerably popular in his territory.

After climbing up the slope for around 20 minutes, they arrived at building that was surrounded by a splendid stone wall and had steeples erected in all four corners. It boasted a level of splendor fit for a small castle. The sturdy-looking gray walls were of around 10 meters in height and equipped with a crenelated parapet. (TL: If needed, please look [here](#) and [here](#)) The building certainly asserted itself as a castle built for battle.

Still staying right behind the carriage, Ray passed through the castle gate.

Beyond the gate stood a large three story mansion that was built in the same style as the city's white walled and orange roofed buildings. Ray felt as if the mansion was something that had come straight out of a movie. However, he was also gradually beginning to fear that it was him who was out of place.

*Wow. Is it really okay for me to come here? Well, even though I say that, it's not like I know where else to go . . .*

Still feeling uncertain about what to do, Ray paid close attention to Ashley's actions. He matched her as she descended from her horse and nonchalantly passed her horse to the stableman waiting nearby.

After she had gone to the baron who had descended from the carriage and lowered her head to him, she asked, "Is Ray-dono free after this?"

The baron ordered the butler, "Hm, Edward, could you go prepare the rooms

for them?” and then turned towards Ray, and said, “For tonight, I’d like to welcome you to our residence, Ray-dono.”

Ray initially slightly hesitated to accept his offer. However, when learned that the baron had also invited Ashley to the dinner and that they could sleep a night in the mansion, he lowered his head and said, “Thank you very much.”

*Since I don't have anywhere I can go, it would probably be safer to be under the baron's protection for the time being. Until I get my hands on an Orb, going out on my own isn't even an option worth considering . . .*

The baron headed into the deeper part of the mansion with his daughter, Oliena, and Edward the butler guided Ashley and Ray to their rooms.

Ray's guest room was provided with a space of around 15 tatami mats and was located right next to Ashley's room. (TL: [Here's](#) a good example.)

“Dinner will be served in an hour. Baron Atelier will send me to you when it is time, so please make yourselves at home until then.”

Edward proceeded to explain the evening plans. Then, as if he wasn't affected by the mercenaries' betrayal or fatigued from the journey at all, performed a beautiful bow as he left the room.

*Before I knew it, they've already set the time for dinner. Are all butlers like this?*

After meeting a genuine butler for the first time, Ray felt quite impressed. However, now that he was alone, a heavy sense of fatigue abruptly overcame him. Although he wanted to dive into the bed right away, he changed his mind and decided that he had to take off his armor first.

*Alright, I'm going to have to take off this armor . . . wait. How do you do that?*

## Part 5

Although Ray somehow managed to remove his [gauntlets](#) (hand armor), [cuisses](#) (thigh armor), and [greaves](#) (shin guards), he couldn't take off the armor covering the upper part of his body no matter what he tried.

*How the hell do I take this off? I can't reach it at all because it's fastened behind my back from the upper arm to the shoulders . . .*

No matter how many times Ray tried to figure out the connectors near his shoulder area, he couldn't understand it. After fiddling with the armor for roughly five minutes, Ray eventually gave up and sighed in exasperation as he sat down on his bed. Suddenly, he came up with an idea. Maybe he should ask Ashley for help. And so, with his set of armor still only partially removed, Ray headed towards the neighboring room. When he knocked on her door, an Ashley who had exchanged her armor for a cotton, or possibly linen, shirt, appeared.

“What's wrong?”

Ashley slightly raised her eyebrows when she saw Ray standing there with half of his armor still on. However, the same could also be said for Ray. The woman he saw had a completely different impression from when she was wearing rugged armor. You wouldn't have been able to tell that she was the experienced female mercenary from earlier. His eyes widened as he stared at her. The strikingly long eyelashes above her almond shaped eyes and the twin globes pushing out from underneath her thin shirt dazzlingly reflected within Ray's eyes.

*It's as I thought, this person is absolutely beautiful. However, the way she's dressed right now is really bad for my heart . . . ah . . . the buttons on her shirt look like they're struggling a bit there . . .*

When Ray finally noticed that she was shifting uncomfortably under his stare, he recalled what he came here for.

“I don't know how to take off my armor. Could you help me . . .”

Although amazement flashed across her face for an instant, she quickly remembered the matter about Ray losing his memories, and beckoned him in.

“Alright, come on in. It sure seems inconvenient to lose your memories.”

She then proceeded to show him how to take off his armor, and also how to put it back on.

“If you want to remove the clasps here, you have to take off both of the [spaulders](#) (shoulder guards) first. After you’ve gotten the [rerebrace](#) (armor for upper arms) off, the [cuirass](#) (chest armor) will . . .”



After around 10 minutes, the pair finally managed to unfasten all the pieces of

armor equipped on his body. However, when Ray took notice of his current appearance, his face immediately reddened.

Once his armor had been taken off, only a simple white undergarment covered his body. However, the particular part that caught his attention was the lower half of his body, which was snugly wrapped in thick white tights (TL: [enjoy](#)).

*Isn't this basically just supersized underwear?! What kind of man would be bold enough to wear this in front of a woman?!*

When Ashley noticed Ray turning red and squirming restlessly, she puzzlingly asked “What’s wrong? Is there something else you need help with?”

“Ah, no. I just thought that wearing this feels quite embarrassing . . .”

“Oh, right. You shouldn’t wear something like this to the dinner . . . do you want me to ask Edward for a change of clothes?”

Compared to Ray, Ashley didn’t seem to mind his appearance even the slightest bit. After living the life of a mercenary for so long, she was probably accustomed to such an appearance.

Ray didn’t want anyone to catch him in this appearance by any means. Especially since he was currently inside a female’s room. He hurriedly tried to come up with a way to get out of this sticky situation.

*Do I really have to return to my room? No, wait . . . I wonder if it’s also possible for me to use that Storage Magic. If I’m not mistaken, I called it an Item Box.*

He remembered about another magic he had written about within his novel, in addition to the Purification Magic.

*First, you manipulate the fourth dimension with the element of Darkness . . . then, you manipulate the space within reality with the element of Wind . . . alright. Now, I just have to think, “Item Box Open” and . . . whoa! A menu appeared!*

When he called to mind the storage magic, the back of his left hand glimmered, and then a list of items appeared in front of his eyes. The list

contained all the things currently stored within his Item Box. There were items like a canteen of water, a knife, and various coins, including gold coins. Furthermore, as luck would have it, knight clothes were also among the items in the list.

Ray concentrated his thoughts on the clothes for a moment, and the clothes were taken out of the Item Box.

When Ashley realized that for some reason, Ray had sunken into an incomprehensible silence, she began to call out to him. However, she immediately fell silent when the back of his left hand gleamed with a brilliant light. Ashley froze and stared with wide eyes at the white clothes which had materialized onto the palm of his right hand.

“What was that!? Ray, what did you do just now!”

Startled by Ashley’s loud voice, Ray awkwardly answered,

“O-oh, I thought that Storage Magic was something that you guys could also use . . . it’s what I used to take out these clothes . . . do you guys not . . . ugh, wait, don’t tell me. This type of magic is also really uncommon?”

“N-no, rather than uncommon . . . this is the type of magic that only exists in legends . . . w-who are you . . .”

From her voice, she seemed to be in complete bewilderment. However, inwardly, she actually found the situation quite entertaining.

*Even though I almost died today, at the very least, it seems like I still got something good out of it. I’ve come across a truly interesting guy. If he ever happens to recover his memories, I wonder what kind of things would transpire . . . it should be quite fun to keep him company for a while longer . . .*

This person named Ray had piqued Ashley’s curiosity even further.

Unnerved by Ashley’s eyes which were brimming with undisguised curiosity, Ray muttered, “I’m going to change my clothes! I’ll come back to pick up my armor when I’m finished . . .” and as if to escape from her gaze, hurriedly exited the room.

Having been left behind, Ashley eyes wandered toward the metal armor

which had been temporarily abandoned in her room.

## Part 6

*Silver armor . . . is that Mythril? No, that can't be . . . after all, it didn't look like it was very heavy . . .*

When Ashley tried to lift up the cuirass (breastplate) that had been placed on the floor, she was overcome with surprise.

*What is up with this weight! The cuirass alone is at least 15 kilograms . . . and yet, Ray wears this like it's nothing . . .*

Seeing Ray so lightly pick up the armor, Ashley had assumed that it was only some kind of ceremonial armor. However, upon taking a closer look, she could see that it was even thicker than typical steel armor and also seemed to have quite high defensive power.

Furthermore, when she peered into the inner side of the armor, she could also see magical formulas that had been delicately drawn in yellow paint.

*What kind of magical formula is this? It's painted onto the armor itself . . . maybe it increases the armor's defensive power while decreasing its weight? If that's actually the case, then just this piece of armor alone should be extraordinarily expensive . . .*

The spaulders (shoulder guards) and rerebrace (armor for upper arms) both had different magical designs drawn onto them, supposedly to apply some kind of magic.

*He really is an incomprehensible, that guy. I've been living independently from my father for what? One year I think? Just when I was starting to think that I've had enough of this kind of life, this amusing guy appears.*

Ashley smiled to herself as she thought such things.

As for Ray, he had rushed into his own room with his newly materialized clothes in hand.

When Ray used the storage magic, he did notice how a glimmering magical

pattern had appeared on the back of his left hand. However, at the time, he felt that putting on the clothes was a more urgent matter and didn't have the leisure to think too deeply about it.

The clothes in his hand consisted of a white tunic with a long hem and a pair of loose pants. The tunic was lavishly decorated in silver threading lavishly. Both gold and silver threading were stitched onto the back into a coat of arms representing the sun. Seeing the design that should have belonged on something like a cosplay outfit, Ray sighed for what seemed like the umpteenth time today.

Although he felt irritated, these were the only clothes he had to wear. Ray resignedly put his arms through the sleeves of the tunic. They seemed to be his own clothes after all. His body fit into the clothes so perfectly, it was as if they had been made to order. After he placed on his sword belt, Ray felt as if his outfit somehow fit him

After seeing that there was nothing strange, as far as he could see, Ray headed back towards Ashley's room.

Just when he was about to knock on her door, Edward the butler appeared.

Following behind his back was a maid carrying blue-colored clothes in her hands. Seeing Ray, Edward made a slightly bewildered face as he said, "Oh? It seems like you already had clothes with you."

"That's right, I changed when I arrived in my room . . . could it be . . . that you've prepared those blue clothes for me?"

The butler politely nods.

"Yes, I prepared them since you didn't seem to have any baggage on you. I apologize for being so presumptuous, please excuse me."

*What an observation butler. His keen insight would have been much appreciated if I hadn't remembered about the Item Box . . .*

After leaving them a reminder that dinner would begin in thirty minutes, Edward took the maid along with him as he headed back towards the inner area of the mansion. Intending to recollect his armor, Ray once again entered Ashley's room.

Inside the room, he found a serious looking Ashley gazing hard at the pieces of armor he had abandoned on the floor. Seeing Ray come back in, Ashley suddenly asked, “Could you try lifting up this armor?” While wondering what it was she wanted, Ray reached out for the piece of armor she pointed at, and lifted it up.

Ray slightly raised his eyebrow as he asked, “Like this?” However, Ashley didn’t directly answer him, and instead, placed her own armor on the floor near Ray’s feet. Without stating her objective, she then continued to say, “Next, try picking this up.” Feeling even more bewildered, Ray tilted his head. However, he obediently picked up her breastplate.

“Which one do you think is heavier?”

“Well . . . it feels like your armor is heavier. Probably because it was designed for practical use. I suppose that means my own armor is only ceremonial then?”

“It’s as I thought . . . Ray, your armor is actually twice as heavy as mine. Could you show me the back of your left hand?”

He still didn’t really get what she wanted to say. However, when she asked him about the back of his left hand, he remembered how it had glimmered with a magical pattern earlier.

*What is she trying to say? It’s obvious that her armor is heavier isn’t it? The back of my left hand she said? Maybe she wants to see the magical pattern from a while ago again? Although I didn’t really have a chance to have a good look at it, Ashley might know something about it . . .*

He presented her his left hand and watched as she stared fixedly at his hand’s backside. An intricate magical design had been tattooed there. Ray asked,

“Do you know what it is?”

“No . . . magic is outside of my area of expertise. However, it seems to use colors that correspond to all eight elements . . .”

After thinking about it for a while longer, Ashley began to slowly state her best guess.

“Everything I’m telling from here is just a guess of mine, but, from what I’ve

seen, you've never needed to chant any spells to use magic. The magical patterns imprinted here are probably used to call the spirits that are needed to use magics such as the storage magic you spoke of . . . when you take into the account the magical patterns imprinted on your armor, those probably combine with the one on your left hand to form a set. When that happens, the weight reduction magic will come into action . . . I think. Of course, like I said, all of this is just my guess. There's no definite proof."

Hearing her conjecture, Ray remained silent as he gazed at his left hand.

*Purification magic and storage magic. That spear of light I never got to see . . . the weight reduction magic on my armor and the magic that was applied to my spear . . . according to the setting I wrote, magic patterns are . . .*

This world's magic had eight elements: fire, light, wind, timber, water, darkness, soil, and ore. By borrowing the power of these elements' spirits, it was possible to invoke phenomena that corresponded to each element. To borrow this kind of power from the spirits, you must first give your own magical power and then, based on the quantity and amount of that power, there are differing levels of magic you can activate.

There are an infinite variety of magics that can be activated based on the image the practitioner thinks up. However, it's highly interconnected with the element's physical attributes. For example, the fire element corresponds with attack magic, the darkness element with psychic magic, and the ore element with bestowal magic.

It's possible to activate magic without a chant. However, most of this world's magicians chanted spells in order to have a clear image of the specific phenomenon they wanted to invoke.

On the other hand, the case is often different when carrying out large-scale magic or activating chantless magic. The magical formation is drawn in a pattern that is easy for the spirits to understand and then magical power is circulated through the formation. With those two steps, spirits would gather on the formation, allowing you to borrow their power.

*Writing the magical formation directly onto the body should have been an idea of mine . . . however, since I can't fully remember the story, I have no idea*

*how or who it was intended to be used for . . .*

As Ray continued to ponder in silence, Ashley had also similarly sunken into a thoughtful silence.

*I've never heard of something like drawing magical formations directly on the body. It can't be something the worshipers of the Light God thought of, because their knights only use the light element . . . in Ray's case, the colors of all eight elements were used, including the element of darkness that the Light Religion abhors so much. Due to his equipment and knight clothes, I thought that he was someone connected to the Light Religion. Unexpectedly however, it looks like there might be no relationship between them after all . . .*

As the two indulged in their thoughts, the maid came to report that dinner had been prepared. Both of them paused their pondering and turned to follow the maid.

Ray and Ashley walked in silence towards the large dinner hall of Baron Atelier's mansion.

*They called it a dinner but . . . I don't really know any formal dinner manners . . . I never really thought about that kind of thing much while writing my story . . . how were meals carried out in the story again?*

He thought about such things while walking besides Ashley.

Ashley was also immersing herself in her own thoughts.

*I wonder how the baron will react when he sees Ray's outfit? I've never seen them before, but the baron has probably seen what a holy knight from Rooks looks like . . .*

Within the grand dining hall, was a large table that seemed like it could fit more than 20 people at once, and a large bright glittering chandelier. It didn't use candles, but instead, sparkled with the power of light elemental magic. The whole room was the epitome of splendor itself.

Today's private dinner consisted of five members. Other than Ashley and Ray, there was only the baron's family present, consisting of two people: a beautiful woman in the early thirties who seemed to be his wife, and his eldest daughter, Oliena, who looked to be around ten years old.

When Ray and Ashley arrived to their seats, the baron seemed startled by Ray's attire. However, he immediately began to introduce his family, and then after once again conveying his gratitude to Ray, commenced the dinner.

Many of the cuisines were made with the Lacus Kingdom's famous freshwater trout and vegetables. Both quality and quantity were satisfying.

Ray had only eaten a light meal consisting of nothing but hard bread and cheese during the afternoon. Furthermore, when you add in the best type of seasoning called "hunger", then naturally, Ray felt that the meal was abnormally delicious.

However, the dinner also included a white wine and a low-malt beer that had a deep red color. Having never touched liquor before, Ray hesitated for a moment about what he should do. After mustering his courage, he swirled a mouthful of white wine inside his mouth. The wine has an indistinct sweetness to it, coupled together with the weak pang of carbonic acid. It was quite flavorful, he thought.

And so, he continued to gulp down the wine at a considerably fast pace, and gradually began to reel a bit from the intoxication. It seemed like the manners he were so worried about weren't anything particularly difficult. The dinner continued to advance without any problems as Ray occasionally stole glances at Ashley who was sitting beside him.

When the dinner approached its end, the baron inquired about Ray's outfit,

"The knight clothes you're wearing resembles those of the Holy Kingdom of Rooks' knights . . . you still haven't remembered anything?"

Ashley curiously looked at Ray who was sitting beside her. Startled by the baron's words, he answered,

"No, still nothing . . . Holy Kingdom, you said . . . if I remember correctly, they utilize magic of the light element. These clothes are the same ones Rooks' Holy Knights wear?"

"Although I don't know the details, I don't feel like the design of their emblem is as complicated as yours. However, the colors it uses and the atmosphere it exudes are unmistakably the same as the outfits their Holy Knights wear . . ."

After making a slightly displeased face, he added, “If that Bishop of the Light Religion were to ever spot you in these clothes, it would most likely become troublesome for you.”

Ray doubtfully asked, “The Light Religion? Bishop? Why would something like that happen?”

In place of the baron, Ashley answered him,

“In our city, Azzaro is the bishop of the temple dedicated to the God of Light, Rukydots. He’s formally our chief priest. However, the problem is that he’s a religious fanatic. Despite the fact that Molton is located in Lacus, where the God of Water, Phonsu, is the most widely believed in, he continues to force the belief that Rukydots, the God of Light, is the absolute and only god. I’ve heard people say that it’s coming to be too much even at their own temple.”

For a city of Molton’s scale, it was normal for there to be twelve temples for all eight of the elemental gods in addition to the three creation gods: the Gods of the Heavens, Earth, and Humans. Although it’s not rare for there to only be a temple for Vita, the God of Humans, at small towns and villages, during things like festivals and special events it becomes necessary for everyone to assemble in the major cities of their region. The Light Religion’s belief that there was only one supreme god and that this god was Rukydots was a fairly new way of thinking. However, this belief has never really managed to spread beyond the borders of the Holy Kingdom of Rooks.

Priests were renamed to archbishops, bishops, and pastors. The Light Religion went as far as trying to condemn all other temples in the Holy Kingdom. There was a growing movement to expel all the temples of the God of Darkness, Noctus, within the Holy Kingdom. They were accused of being heretics who believed in the devil.

Believers were dispatched from the Light Religion’s Grand Temple which was located in the Holy Kingdom of Rooks. However, the Bishop Azzaro was considered to be exceptionally fanatic about his religion, even among them.

“Basically, if he were to ever see you, Azzaro would probably make a big uproar accusing you of being an insolent bastard who’s trying to impersonate their holy knights.”

Having come from Japan, a country with loose religious views, the only religious fanatics Ray could think of were religious cults.

*I don't remember thinking of such a setting for the Light Religion . . . however, there's no way I want a cult chasing me around. It would be better if I switch out my clothes . . . but there's also the issue with my armor. The armor's probably quite good, considering how much it caught Ashley's attention, but the problem remains . . .*

As Ray indulged himself in such thoughts, the baron signaled to Edward the butler who was standing behind him.

“Although it's not too much, I would like you accept this as a reward for saving the lives of me and my daughter.”

The baron proceeded to place a small and hefty looking leather bag onto the table.

Upon confirming its contents, Ray found twenty gold coins jingling inside.

*One gold coin is one hundred Crona, or 100,000 yen (878 dollars). So . . . twenty coins is 2 million yen (17560 dollars) . . . this is more than enough to solve my money situation. However, is it really alright for me to accept this?*

When he glanced in Ashley's direction, she gave a small nod and whispered, “The gift represents Sir Atelier's sincere feelings, you should accept it.”

Returning a small nod to her, he lowered his head towards the baron and replied, “Thank you very much. It's a great help.”

The baron asked Ray and Ashley if they had any plans for tomorrow.

Apparently, it seemed like the Mercenary Guild's Branch Chief had called for them and wanted to hear their account regarding the betrayal of the mercenaries. Ray naturally didn't have anything to do tomorrow. As for Ashley, she also didn't have any particular business tomorrow. And so, it was decided that they were to be at the baron's mansion tomorrow morning.

With dinner over, Ray returned to the room he was given. He sprawled down onto his bed and thought over everything that happened in the long day today.

*So, it looks like I've really gone to a different world after all? If I were to open*

*my eyes tomorrow morning and find myself snugly wrapped in my room's futon . . . well, if that were to really happen then I guess it can't be helped. At any rate, I was able to see the corpses of people who had been slaughtered for the first time. People I supposedly slaughtered . . . there's no way this is a dream, considering how real those corpses looked . . . it really is fortunate that there were no meat dishes at the dinner today . . .*

He also harbored doubts about how closely this world resembled the world he thought up for his novel.

*This place is eerily similar to the world in Trinitas Mundus. Although there's no doubt that this kind of situation is convenient for me, why did this happen in the first place? Despite remembering things like the setting of the world, I can't for the life me recall the main story . . . even the name of the protagonist has faded clean from my memory. It's as if my memories are being blocked by something . . .*

## Part 7

The moment Ray tried to continue thinking further about it, he was attacked by a dull headache. Even though he seemed to be on the verge of remembering a little more, he was trapped in the dilemma of not being able to think any further.

He gave up on trying to remembering the story and instead, began to think about the world's setting and its magic.

The setting he wrote didn't have parameters for things like physical strength or intelligence. Furthermore, things like HP and MP also weren't quantified into hard-set values.

Levels allowed for skills to be used more effectively. For example, if one's swordsmanship skill was high, then they would be a "swordsmen". If one's archery skill was high, then they would be an "archer". Their strength and effectiveness is called their "occupation level" and would be calculated from their experience points and skill level.

*Based on what I remember of the setting, although I can't look at my status, I should be able to look at things like my occupation level, skills, and magic . . . first, I need to imagine what my magic stone looks like, and then try to call to mind the data entries I want to look at . . . ah! There it is. My level is . . .*

The first data entry Ray wanted to check was his level.

*My occupation is "magic spearman"? Level One? Doesn't that mean I'm even lower than a novice! Even a beginner would be at around level six with some training. And yet, I'm only at one.*

In the setting of his novel, the levels of those who specialized in combat were generally laid out like this: amateurs ranged from level one to level five, newly recruited soldiers ranged from level six to level fifteen, the typical soldier ranged from level sixteen to level thirty, and veterans ranged from level thirty-one to level fifty. The highest levels that could be seen were usually within the

range of level seventy to level eighty. For the strongest class of humans: knights, mercenaries, and top-level adventurers, the level-cap was at one hundred. People say that for races who had long lives like the draconians, there are some who have far exceeded the level of one hundred.

Next, he tried to look at his skills. However, swordsmanship, spearmanship . . . all of them only displayed a question mark next to them. Ray couldn't figure out if the skills were simply blocked or truly unusable.

Last, when he looked at the data entries related to magic, he could confirm that he was able to use all eight elements. Ray felt slightly relieved. If he wanted to live in this world, being able to use magic was a considerable advantage. Ray turned his mind towards the things happening tomorrow.

*Taking advantage of the knowledge I have from modern Japan and using it for something like domestic affairs or industrial production is beyond me. I think of anything with my half-baked knowledge that could possibly be turned money immediately. Since that's the case, looks like there's no other choice than becoming an "adventurer" . . . although being a mercenary isn't always about fighting, it's still undoubtedly an occupation focused on killing . . . although killing humans isn't something I'm even considering, killing monsters is something I can probably do . . .*

The world did have guilds for people like artisans and merchants. However, entering these types of guilds was quite difficult for most people because of the system of apprenticeship they had been adopted. Although it's not necessarily a requirement to enroll at a guild, it's still better to do so because those who don't are limited by many restrictions.

Among the guilds in which one could easily gain admission into were the adventurers' guild and the mercenaries' guild.

Because both guilds were strongly based on a merit system, joining them didn't necessarily equate to a stable income.

*I have the gold I received from the baron, and later, I'll also receive a reward for subjugating the bandits. Not only that, based on what Ashley said, I'll probably also get indemnities from the mercenaries' guild. However, once I buy all the things I need to start my new life, I have a feeling that I'm not going to*

*have much money left. Unless I secure a source of income . . . hmm. I'll ask Ashley about it tomorrow morning . . .*

# Chapter 3: Adventurer Registration

## Part 1

The next morning, Ray opened his eyes to the gentle rays of the morning sun which were streaming through the window.

*It wasn't a dream after all . . . even though I was slightly hoping I'd wake up in my own room. Normally, shouldn't there be someone like god who would come and give me a proper explanation? Or maybe at least a messenger from god. I wasn't run over by a truck. I wasn't playing a game either. I think it would be nice to hear the reason and cause for my sudden trip to this world . . .*

After finding out that this wasn't a dream, Ray was feeling slightly pissed off by how he still wasn't told the reason for why he was plucked straight out of Japan. Nevertheless, Ray figured that staying in bed wouldn't solve a single thing, and decided to change his clothes.

When Ray finished dressing, his gaze casually wandered to the side of the room. He found something there that he hadn't noticed the night before. A mirror made of metal was hung on the wall.

He looked at the face in the mirror and saw a handsome young caucasian man with blue eyes and lustrous blonde hair being reflected.

*Wow . . . I'm pretty good looking . . . handsome enough to be an actor . . .*

Ray absentmindedly gazed at his own face for a while.

*It doesn't feel like my own face at all. If I pay attention to the way I speak and my behavior, there's probably no doubt I could become quite popular . . . it's probably impossible for me though.*

He cleared his head of the thoughts and then, as he had planned last night, headed towards Ashley's room. She had already woken up, had her armor on,

and also her equipment ready. Ray confusedly asked,

“Why are you all equipped so early this morning? I thought we’re having a meeting with the mercenaries’ guild branch chief later?”

“Ah, I was just planning to do a little bit of training in the courtyard. Want to join me?”

Ray also wanted to try moving his body around some more, and furthermore, didn’t want to refuse her when she had taken the effort to invite him.

“Alright. I’ll go get my equipment ready, so go on ahead of me.”

He returned to his room and put on the armor as he had been taught by Ashley yesterday.

Although he was still somewhat bewildered in the beginning, when he began putting the armor on, his body moved naturally. His entire body was clad in armor after around ten minutes.

*If it was this easy, why was I struggling so much yesterday? It feels simpler than the kendo equipment I had to put on during P.E class in middle school . . . I don’t even know how I managed to put it on just now, my body just kind of moved by itself . . .*

As he neared the courtyard, the figure of Ashley swinging her sword came into view.

She didn’t seem to be practicing forms but was instead swinging her sword at imaginary enemies she had conjured up in her mind. There were various deceptive feints mixed in with her extremely powerful swings.

*It looks like she’s actually in real combat . . . since there doesn’t seem to be anyone else around, maybe I should try moving my body around a bit as well . . .*

Although he tried to assume a stance with the spear in his hand, he had no idea where his hand should be on the spear nor how his stance should look. Through trial and error, his hands somehow arrived at a position that he felt looked okay, and began to repeatedly perform a series of simple thrusts.

Ray felt like his thrusts were gradually increasing in sharpness. After a while, he added in some double-thrusts and scythe-like movements.

*It's as I thought, my body remembers these movements after all. It's as if I'm playing a game I haven't touched for years . . . even though my movements with the controller are clumsy and awkward in the beginning, I slowly remember the feelings from a long time ago. That type of type of feeling . . .*

As Ashley swung her sword beside him, she felt surprised when she gave him a sidelong glance.

*In the beginning, he looked like a total amateur, no, even worse than that. However, his thrusts immediately began to become sharper. Although I can't really call him a veteran or anything based on his current skill level, he could probably be a match for the typical soldier . . .*

When Ashley asked, "Ray, do you have a moment?", Ray quickly stopped his hands and replied, "What is it?" while slightly tilting his head.

"Try switching out that spear for your sword. Since I didn't get a chance to see you use your sword yesterday, I want to see how you'll do with something other than a spear.

Ray nods and pulls out his sword after setting his spear on the wall.

The handle was short and seemed to be used with one hand. The so-called long sword. Its blade beautifully glittered as it reflected the light of the morning sun.

Once again clueless on how he should assume his stance, Ray tried holding the sword near the upper-half of his body. However, no matter what he tried, none of the stances looked correct.

"Ashley, what kind of stance do I need to take? Do I grip the sword like this?"

Using her own two-handed sword as an example, Ashley began to explain the fundamental stances and grips in a simple way Ray would understand.

Ray tried swinging his sword as he listened, and gradually, he improved in the same way he had with the spear. Feeling intrigued, Ashley was about to suggest that they try doing a mock battle. However, before she could ask Ray, the maid arrived and announced that breakfast had been prepared.

*What bad timing . . . well, it doesn't really matter I suppose. We'll still have*

*time after breakfast.*

And so, the two of them headed toward the dining hall.

Once they finished breakfast, Ray and Ashley resumed their training in the courtyard.

After training for a while, although Ray didn't know where she had found them, Ashley had two wooden swords in her hand. She tossed one of them to Ray and smiled as she asked, "Want to try a mock battle?" However, contrary to her words of invitation, the eager Ashley had already assumed a stance with her wooden sword.

Ray refused her with a bitter smile, "I'm not going to be your sparring partner, so stop looking so aggressive." However, she stubbornly continued,

"We're only going to hit each other lightly. Also, your memories will probably come back more quickly if your mind goes under the pressure of some actual combat. You're unmistakably someone who's gone through combat before, so training should be a kind of stimulus . . ."

Ray knew that even if he did as she said, those memories were probably never going to come back. However, as he looked at the figure in front of him who seemed so eager to fight, he thought it over. Regardless of those memories, considering his future from now on, sparring definitely wasn't something pointless.

## Part 2

*Ashley would probably be able to stomach my lack of confidence. There's no better time than now for me to gain some experience . . .*

*Ray raised one hand, indicating that he accepted her invitation, and assumed the stance he learned before breakfast.*

When the mock battle commenced, Ashley initially went easy on Ray. Although it somehow developed in an exchange of blows, when she mixed in some feints, he couldn't do anything about it.

Nevertheless, after around thirty minutes, his body continued to react until he was able to send out his sword.

*I'm somehow managing it. It's probably because Ashley's going easy on me, but at the very least, this much skill should be enough for self-defense.*

Sweat flowed down their backs as they continued the mock battle for another hour before taking a break.

Not having exhausted her energy yet, Ashley wiped her sweat with a towel and asked,

"How was it? Did you remember anything?"

However, Ray was still taking deep ragged breaths and could only manage to shake his head before answering, "No, still nothing . . ." While gazing silently at him, Ashley was starting to wonder who he really was.

*He's advanced to the level of an average mercenary after only one or two hours of training. Although I don't know what I'm going to do in the future, staying with him until he becomes better acquainted with this town doesn't sound like a bad idea . . .*

As for Ray, he was struggling with how he should broach the subject he had been thinking about last night. His own plans for the future.

*I didn't have the chance to ask about it earlier because of we suddenly started*

*training. Maybe now's the right time to ask.*

Ray began to speak,

“I have something I want to ask. It’s actually something I thought about last night, my plans for the future . . .”

He discussed with her things like, how he should earn his living from now on, is becoming an adventurer the right decision, are there any other options aside from that?

After thinking for a short time, Ashley replied,

“I see. You think that becoming an adventurer is the most reliable way to earn money . . . after all, entering the merchants’ guild is quite difficult and furthermore, you don’t have the skill needed to become an artisan. It’s not like the baron doesn’t need any more civil service employees, but that’s probably not an option either . . .”

Ray couldn’t understand what she meant in her last words.

“Working for the baron isn’t an option?”

“Despite how he seems, the baron is actually quite the prudent person.

Even though yesterday he did say he wanted to welcome you here tonight, during the dinner he never asked about your plans after this. If you had suddenly started killing people yesterday, you would have been a dangerous man who couldn’t be stopped. The baron never intended to look after you for a long time. In order to prevent that, he probably decided to hand over the money in the form of ‘thanks’ . . .”

Hearing those words, Ray didn’t know what to say.

*Me . . . a dangerous man . . . although that may be true from an objective perspective, hearing her say that so bluntly feels quite depressing . . . it does appear like he settled everything with money though . . . maybe he didn’t want someone like me to be close to his daughter any longer than necessary . . .*

Although he felt perplexed by what Ashley wanted to say, he accepted that it was certainly a possibility.

“Alright, I see what you mean . . . anyway, is becoming an adventurer the best

choice after all? The only thing I need to do is register at the guild right?”

“Right. Maybe your memories are starting to come back now? Molton has a guild branch so you should be able to come and register whenever you want to. Want me to go with you later in the afternoon?”

Ray nods, and then lowers his head, “Thank you very much.”

Once again, they began to resume training. However, at that moment, Edward the butler arrived.

“Ray-sama and Ashley-sama, Mr. Kottler, the mercenaries’ guild branch chief, is ready to see you. Please bring the Magic Stones with you to Baron Atelier’s office.”

The two nodded and after returning to their rooms, immediately headed towards the baron’s office.

His office was located on the interior area of the first floor. The baron and a shrewd looking middle-aged man with a glint in his eye were already seated on a sofa. The baron beckoned Ashley and Ray to also sit down on a seat and began the introductions.

“This is Mr. Kottler, the branch chief of the mercenaries’ guild. Over these is Ray-dono and as for Ashley, you already know her.”

Kottler nodded and appeared to evaluate Ray as he gazed at him. Once the baron lightly nodded in Ashley’s direction, she took out a leather bag which contained the Magic Stones, placed them onto the table, and began to explain how they were attacked yesterday.

“After we left Laurus, we arrived in the city of Sevigny without any problems. However, at Sevigny, the knights who were under Sir Baron’s direct control suddenly caught a disease. Instead of staying in Sevigny, we decided to hire some escorts at the guild and continue on. You can confirm this by looking at their Magic Stones, but all ten mercenaries were men at the sixth rank. After we left Sevigny and traveled for two days, we arrived at a forest on the border between Saltooth and Lacus. The hired mercenaries chose to attack us at that time and succeeded in killing every single one of our knights. Immediately following that, twelve bandits appeared and threatened to kill Sir Baron. If Ray-

dono had not arrived, we would have all died . . .”

Once Ashley finished telling her story, the branch chief pulled out a wooden box that was roughly thirty centimeters on all four sides. After excusing himself before the baron, he placed the Magic Stones inside the box. A pane of light materialized from the center of the box and floated in the air as words appeared upon it.

“Hm. Tiago Alvare, thirty years old, sixth rank mercenary . . . his color . . . clearly a violation of the contract . . . no matter how look at it, this was a betrayal . . .”

The branch chief looked over the information of the Magic Stones one after the other. His expression gradually turned sour, as if he had eaten a bitter bug. Ray could see the blood rising to his face. After he had completely confirmed all of the information, he abruptly stood up, deeply bowed his head, and spoke words of apology.

“Sir Baron, I have to apologize. This incident was absolutely inexcusable. I will immediately contact our Saltooth branch in Laurus and our main branch in Fortis (the country of mercenaries). We will do everything we can to investigate into this matter. Once the people involved have been identified, our guild will try to locate them by putting a bounty over their heads. Betraying the client they’re supposed to escort . . . something like this hasn’t happened for ten years. As this is a serious matter concerning our guild’s reputation, we will absolutely find out what happened.”

The branch chief apologetically continued,

“The full reparation payments will be quickly decided by our main branch. In the meantime, I will pay ten times the contract payment, 100,000 Crona. Of course, Sevigny’s branch chief will be severely punished. Please forgive us.”

He turned towards Ashley and bowed his head, “This incident was entirely our fault. I will also arrange reparation payments for you.” Finally, he bowed his head towards Ray,

“It has taken us countless years to build up our credibility. If you had not been present, the public’s confidence in our guild would have been completely destroyed. We will be glad to give you an appropriate reward. You have our

absolute gratitude.”

Unable to follow this sudden development, Ray didn't know how to answer and could only ask, “Reward?”

“As long as it is within our power, we will do anything you wish for. Is there anything you want?”

Ray looked at Ashley, asking for help.

She lightly nods, “Mr. Kottler, he appeared to have lost his memories. Could we wait a while longer until his problem is resolved?”

“I understand. Postponing the matter to a later date is no problem. Could you let us keep the Magic Stones? When we sell the bandits' equipment and their Magic Stones, we'll send you the proceeds as well as your reward for subjugating them.”

Ashley nodded. The baron and the branch chief still seemed to have something they needed to discuss, so she and Ray excused themselves.

## Part 3

Once Ray and Ashley arrived outside the room, Ashley asked him, “Was that okay?”

“I’m not sure what I should do about the reward? Normally, people would ask for money right?”

“That’s true. Money is probably what you currently need the most . . .”

Ashley continued to explain that most mercenaries would request the guild to hand over rare weapons or demand for permanent citizenship in Fortis, the country of mercenaries. However, most of the things in Ray’s possession were already weapons. Furthermore, it wasn’t like Ray wanted to be mercenary, so gaining permanent citizen in Fortis was pointless.

Making an excessive demand would definitely sour the guild’s impression of him. Therefore, agreeing to an amount of money suggested by the guild was probably the safe decision.

Ashley predicted that the amount would likely be around 10,000 Crona or so.

*10,000 Crona . . . 10,000,000 yen !? (88,910 dollars) . . . together with the 2,000 Krona I received from the baron, t-that’s enough for me to live for two or three more years. If I use that time to look for a way to go home . . .*

In the end, Ray was no more than a high school student who hadn’t even managed to enter university yet. He truly doubted whether or not he could survive in this ruthless world.

*Considering how limited my knowledge is right now, my money will probably be swindled away from me someday. Although this is making use of Ashley’s good will, I’ll have to ask her if we can stay together until I have the confidence to live on my own.*

Ray decided to tell the mercenaries guild he wanted his reward in the form of money on another day. As for today, he planned to go downtown.

The first thing he needed to do was acquire an ID. And so, Ray and Ashley headed towards the adventurers guild's Molton branch.

The city of Molton was located on the hill at an altitude of almost one hundred mertos (meters) above sea level. Surrounding the city was a wall approximately five mertos tall. Rural fields spanned the hill's southern side. On the northern side was a big lake. As for the east and west, the city was caught between thick forests on both sides.

The guild's branch was located on relatively low land, close to the city's southern gate. This area seemed to have developed into a commercial district. Ray could see numerous carts coming and going, their cargo areas piled with various goods.

Built in the same manner as the rest of city, the guild branch was a three story building with white walls and an orange roof. Even though it was not yet noon, the place was bustling with people.

Ray's heart throbbed as he saw the adventurers guild for the first time.

*Something every fantasy world has . . . an adventurers guild . . . even though it's a cliché, I can't help feeling excited.*

The interior of the building was brightly lit and a number of wooden counters and tables had been set up around the room. Several men and women, presumably adventurers, were talking with the female receptionists opposite them behind the counters. The adventurers consisted of humans, elves, and dog and wolf beastmen.

The moment Ray entered, he uneasily swept his gaze around the room. The receptionists and adventurers all concentrated their stares at him.

They seemed to feel uncomfortable because a man who looked like knight had suddenly appeared, clad in completely white plate mail and gripping a metal spear. Feeling the awkward atmosphere, Ashley warned Ray, "Stop looking around." and then immediately headed towards a counter that had an available receptionist.

Behind the counter was a young woman with light blonde hair who seemed to be in her early twenties. She floated a business smile and asked, "How can I

help you today?

Ashley responded as an acquaintance would.

“I want to register him. On top of losing his memories, he doesn’t have an Orb. Could you take care of his initial registration for me?”

“Who is going to be the guarantor of his personal identity? Or do you accept to take on that role?”

Ashley nodded, “Aah, yes. That’s not a problem.”

“I’m Edsel Wadler. Let’s begin the procedure then. Although the registration fee is five Crona, the guild can lend you the money and allow you to reimburse the fee at a later time. Are you able to pay the fee at the moment?”

“Yes, it’s not a problem.”

Ray handed her a single gold coin. Seeing how he casually paid the fee with a gold coin, Edsel’s eyes widened for an instant. However, she immediately returned to him his change and resumed the registration.

“First, please fill in these fields. Do you need someone to write in your stead?”

Suddenly realizing for the first time that he was able to read the characters of this world, Ray was overcome with surprise.

*How am I able to read this? Being able to speak normally was already strange enough. Suddenly being able to read is even weirder. Although the syntax somehow looks similar to English and the characters look like they’re a subset of the Latin alphabet, I’ve never seen this language before . . .*

Seeing the frozen Ray remain silent, Edsel asked him one more time if he needed someone to write in his place. He came back to his senses and replied, “I’ll do it myself.”

The required fields asked for things like his name, age, race, and birthplace. Ray tried to fill in as much as he could.

*My name is “Ray”. As for my age, eighteen is okay right? My race . . . human? My birthplace . . . I wonder if it’s okay to leave this blank, since I’ve lost my memories.*

“Excuse me, do I have to fill in my birthplace? I can’t remember it.”

“Sorry, I didn’t explain this earlier. Even if your form is completely blank, we can still extract the information from your Magic Stone. It’s okay for you to only fill in what you remember.”

Based on Edsel’s explanation, anyone could look at the information Ray was writing on his form through the Orb. It was much a problem even if he only filled in his first name.

*I wish she told me that earlier . . . I kind of remember writing about that in the plot though . . .*

At the bottom of the form were the words “Please sign here to acknowledge that you will never commit an act in violation of the guild’s policies.” In his own handwriting, Ray signed his name there.

*If I violate their rules now, a record is going to remain in my Magic Stone. When I was drafting my ideas for the Orb, I think my wording of the contract was somewhat similar to this . . .*

When IDs were issued, it was required that the one applying for the ID must pledge to obey the laws of their nation. This pledge activated a mechanism where if a crime were to be carried out, a record would remain within their Magic Stone.

Ray finished filling out the form and handed it to Edsel. She then said, “I’m now going to extract the information from your Magic Stone. Please follow me.” Edsel guided him to a room that had a large wooden box inside and told him to enter it. The box had a height of three mertos, a width of one point five mertos, and a depth of one merto.

As he uncertainly stepped inside, Edsel shut the outer lid and locked the box, plunging the interior into pitch-black darkness.

After around five seconds, lights of various colors that were similar to lasers scanned Ray’s body. After another thirty seconds or so, the scanning abruptly ended. Edsel removed the lid and said, “Alright, we’re done now. Your Orb will be completed in around thirty minutes. Is the bracelet model okay with you?”

Ray didn’t particularly care, so he replied, “Yes, that’s fine.” and then inquired

about what they would be doing after this.

“While we’re waiting for your Orb to be finished, I’ll give you an explanation of the guild. However, let’s head back to where Ashley-sama is first.”

Once they arrived back at the counter, Edsel began explaining,

“The adventurers guild has a main branch in Periclitar and also has other branches in various places on the Taulia continent . . .”

Here’s a summary of what she said. The adventurers guild was an organization that cooperated with adventurers to promote a relationship of mutual benefit between them. The organization wasn’t affiliated to any nation in particular.

The guild handled the subjugation of monsters, magical beasts, and dangerous animals. They also collected medicinal plants and mined ore. Escort missions were usually unrelated to them since this was the mercenaries guild’s line of business.

The guild mediated between adventures and clients to ensure that various requests of the clients would reach the appropriate adventurers. They also purchased the things that were collected, like medicinal plants and monster parts.

## Part 4

Although the guild charged a commission fee of 20% and took away another 30% to pay taxes, the final reduced amount was stated as the reward on the request slip. Failing the request meant paying twice the reward amount to the guild, which was basically equivalent to the amount the client paid.

If an adventurer made less than 1000 Crona (~8935 Dollars) in a year, he would have to pay the remaining amount to the guild. Not being able to pay leads to expulsion. Since the guild paid for the taxes in the adventurers' place, it was impossible for anyone to escape from their taxes. The Lacus Kingdom collected a tax of close to 50% from all citizens but made adventurers and mercenaries exempt from this tax. So, despite the taxes, adventurers actually received preferential treatment.

Although adventurers had ten ranks, the requests they accept are not restricted by their rank. The rank system only served to indicate the past performance of adventurers and was also used to compare multiple adventurers who had accepted the same request. Therefore, it wasn't rare to see tenth rank adventurers (lowest) accepting first rank requests (highest).

Since adventurers were able to move freely through national borders, dipping their hands into criminal activity unquestionably lead to instant expulsion from the guild. Examples of how some violated the initial contract include, murder, robbery, and betraying fellow guild members. Since committing such deeds would leave the information in their Orb, hiding crimes was impossible.

*Magic Stones and Orbs . . . what an absurd setting. It's a system where all the crimes I've committed are exposed for anyone to see . . . it's as if your thoughts are being monitored. Now that I'm part of the system, it feels a bit unpleasant . . .*

After thirty minutes or so, the explanation ended and Ray's orb was completed.

The Orb consisted of a bracelet with a depth of three cemers that was

embedded with a glittering black gem of one cemer in diameter.

“Your Orb’s done. Try confirming the information in it.”

After Ray equipped the bracelet Edsel handed to him on his left wrist, she continued,

“Try saying “display” in your mind towards the jewel. Information should begin floating within your head . . .”

When he did as she asked, information really did begin streaming into his mind.

Name: Ray Arkwright

Age: 18

Race: Human

Birthplace: ???

Rank: Adventurer – rank 10

Level: Magic Spearman – level 1

Skills: Swordsmanship ??? .....

Βει Αρκwright  
Ηυμοαυ -- ΑΦΕ 18.  
ΧΓΑΣΣαΔψεrτυε-10.  
ΓΩΕΓΕ μαφiλ.υααrχεγ-1  
ΣΚΙΓΓ δονα



*Information is actually appearing in my mind . . . Ray Arkwright? Eh! My pen*

*name suddenly became my real name? . . . which reminds me, last night I was only able to see my level and skills, I didn't see my name . . .*

Rei used the name Ray Arkwright as his pen name when he wrote his novel. "Rei" basically remained the same. Ark referred to Noah's "holy" ark. Ray used it because his last name was Hijiri (

聖), meaning "holy". Wright came from write, since he wanted to be a writer. So putting it all together lead to his pen name becoming "聖礼 (Rei Hijiri) = Ray Arkwright".

Ray had no idea why his pen name turned into his real name in this world.

*Well, whatever. No matter how much I think about it, I won't figure it out. However, my birthplace is "???". Maybe because I'm Japanese? My skills are also "???" . . . How do I look at crimes?*

"I see it. Although my name is there, my birthplace isn't displayed. Is that okay?"

Edsel smiled and said, "Yes, that's fine. Traveling entertainers also don't have their birthplace displayed. What about your rank? If you had registered at our guild before you lost your memories then you may have ranked up previously."

"I'm at the tenth rank, so it seems like I've never been an adventurer before. You said that information on crimes would also be stored but how do you see that?"

"There's a magical device we hold over you to check for crimes. The color of the device changes if you've committed a crime. We can use it to validate your skill level and based on the color, we'll also know how big of a crime you've committed."

*I see. It seems to be what the mercenary branch chief used earlier. If it was this easy to see someone's crimes, why did those mercenaries betray them yesterday? Was the reward really worth it? Did they have somewhere safe to hide? Unless they had the backing of a country somewhere, they shouldn't have been able to betray the baron so easily . . . have I been dragged into some kind of scandal . . .*

Ashley patted Ray's shoulder and happily said, "Now, you're an adventurer

Ray. We'll immediately start accepting requests tomorrow. For now, let's go purchase the equipment you need."

A man in his mid-twenties beside them laughed and said, "Heh, tenth rank . . . maybe he's a fallen knight from somewhere?" Hearing those words, Ashley glared at him, "What rank are you at then, for you to say that kind of thing to someone who saved my life? Don't forget, I'm a fifth rank mercenary and my swordsmanship is at level 40. And yet, I was saved by him. I'm sure you must be quite strong if you're able to laugh at him like that."

The man who was threatened by Ashley averted his eyes and muttered, "My bad." He stood from his seat and left the guild. "What an unpleasant man. We've finished our business with the guild. Let's go to the magical equipment store." Ashley left the guild at a quick pace.

Left behind, Ray lowered his head to Edsel and said, "Thank you very much. Please continue to take care of me from now on." He hurriedly chased after Ashley.

Edsel's face relaxed as she watched Ray exit the guild.

*Despite wearing such expensive equipment, he's only at level 1. There was also something strange about his skills . . . what an odd guy. Even though he spoke politely, he didn't really give off the feeling of a knight . . . looks like things will be interesting starting from tomorrow.*

After leaving the adventurers guild, Ashley and Ray had lunch and then headed towards the magical equipment store in the commercial district to gather the things Ray needed.

Upon entering, they saw a bored looking male elf tending to the store. His name was Manuel Mulville.

After giving a cursory introduction of Ray to Manuel, Ashley began to look for the equipment Ray needed.

"Let's get a backpack first. And then a mantle to cover up that flashy-looking armor. You also need a knife, a canteen . . . and maybe some daily necessities."

Ray gazed at Ashley as she eagerly listed out what he needed.

*Seems like all women really do like shopping. I wonder what's so fun about shopping for another person?*

Since he already had a knife and canteen stored within his item box, Ray told her, "I already have a knife and canteen, so we can skip those." However, since it was his first time seeing a genuine elf up close, Ray also unintentionally stared at Manuel.

Molton was located on the border, right next to the Saltooth Kingdom. Numerous elves lived in Salooth, so elves weren't exactly uncommon in this city.

Feeling disgruntled by how Ray scrutinized him, the elven shopkeeper grumbled, "Do you think elves are rare? Or is there something stuck to my face?"

As Ray meekly apologized, Ashley also helped clear the misunderstanding,

"This guy lost his memories. That might be why he thinks you're unusual. He didn't mean to offend you, please forgive him."

Manuel's expression seemed to say, "Oh, is that so?" However, besides that, he didn't say anything more.

They finished selecting the equipment that seemed necessary after around ten minutes. Their purchases included a backpack, a mantle, a magical device for starting fires, camping cooking gear, and a rope.

"I think we've got everything, but feel free to tell me if you need anything else."

"Thanks, this is plenty for me."

Once they paid for the goods and left the store, Ray felt slightly downhearted.

*The total was around 250 Crona . . . although the total isn't terribly expensive, I let Ashley do everything when it came time to negotiate the price. Being able to negotiate the price . . . is another thing I should be worrying about in the future . . .*

After that, they went to a clothing store to purchase for Ray some linen t-shirts for casual wear, some pants, and also some underwear. The clothes were

unexpectedly expensive. One full set of clothes cost around 50 Crona (TL: 1 Crona is basically 9 dollars (1000 yen), so if you want to make a rough and easy conversion, multiply the Crona by 10).

After registering at the adventurers guild and shopping for everything Ray, it was now three o'clock in the afternoon.

“Thanks for accompanying me today. You were a big help. So, what are you going to do after this? Are you going to stay over at the baron’s mansion again tonight?”

“I was planning to go to the inn I usually stay at. What about you?”

After thinking for brief moment, Ray hesitantly asked, “Can I also go to the inn you’re staying at? Since I can’t really go to the baron’s place again, I’m feeling uneasy about being alone . . .”

## Part 5

Ashley replied, "I don't mind" and then, in a slightly curt tone, she added, "I'm returning to the mansion to take back my luggage." She began to ascend the road that sloped upward by herself.

The moment her back was turned towards him, she realized that her face was faintly flushed.

*Why? Why does it feel fun to be with him? Even though he's only an unreliable guy . . .*

Ashley had lived most of her life as a mercenary.

Her mother had also been a mercenary, just like her father. After losing her mother at a young age, her father's mercenary group became her home. And her family.

After experiencing her first battle at the age of fifteen, she continued to participate in numerous battle. She fought against monsters when escorting merchant groups and also entered in the various skirmishes between the Lacus Kingdom and the Kaelum Empire. Although she never took part in large-scale wars, within seven years, she had already stood through more than one hundred different battlefields.

One year ago, she held doubts about continuing as a mercenary under her father's protection and decided to move to Molton and live as solo mercenary and adventurer.

Even though she changed locations, she continued to be surrounded by uncouth soldiers and adventurers. She believed this type of environment was normal.

After encountering Ray yesterday, he proved himself to be completely different from her definition of a man. Ah, no, if we judge him purely based on his fighting ability, then he would be an excellent man. Someone who belonged to the world she was deeply familiar with. The world of mercenaries.

However, Ray didn't seem like a soldier. He was also different from the merchants and farmers she had always protected.

He was an odd man who had rescued her using strange armor and magic. Even after acquainting himself with her, the daughter of a famous mercenary group's chief, Ray seemed to view her as an ordinary woman. He didn't have the eyes of the bandit chief. The shining eyes that overflowed with carnal lust. No, she felt that he interacted with her as he would with someone like the baron's daughter, Oliena. As he would with a very ordinary girl.

For Ashley, this was a really refreshing feeling.

*At any rate, these following days are going to be enjoyable. It's probably a good idea to partner up with Ray for the moment . . .*

The other party concerned also had Ashley on his mind.

He had always yearned for a lively girl like her. Therefore, the way she radiated a sense of confidence and her beauty were starting to draw him to her.

*Her qualities are certainly attractive. I've never had much experience with women though, so naturally, I'm still a virgin. Ashley probably doesn't view someone like that as a man.*

While thinking about her, Ray also sensed that within him, something was stuck.

*Again, I feel like something related to Trinitas Mundus' storyline is being blocked . . . a part of my memories from the previous world also seem to be inaccessible. I was beginning to remember the figure of a certain woman, however, a mist clouds the image back into something too indistinct for me to discern . . . who was that? What kind of relationship did I have with her?*

Feeling that worrying about the matter any further was pointless, Ray recalled the words he said to Ashley a moment ago.

*I said that I felt uneasy about being alone . . . am I a child or something? It's as if I'm asking her to stay together with me . . . I hope she didn't think I had any ulterior motives . . .*

After walking for around twenty minutes, they arrived at the baron's

mansion.

Upon entering, Edward the butler went out to greet them.

Ray asked, "I want to convey my thanks to Baron Atelier for accommodating me yesterday and also notify him that I'll be leaving now. Could you check to see if he's available right now?"

Edward replied, "Certainly. Please wait for moment in your room." and headed quietly towards the office room. As for Ray and Ashley, they both returned to their respective rooms and to prepare for their departure.

It took them very little time to finish organizing their luggage. Ray never had any luggage in the first place. Since Ashley was originally on escort duty, she only brought only the minimum amount of baggage.

Ray was troubled about whether or not he should use his item box. In the end, he decided to store the mantle and knight clothes he had originally worn and also a portion of his money in the item box.

*Based on how Ashley reacted, it's probably not a very good idea for me to use the item box magic recklessly. I'll seal away the mantle and knight clothes to avoid any trouble. The money is definitely going to be safer inside the item box. Oh, that reminds me, I didn't get the chance to compare the gold coins inside the item box with the gold coins the baron gave me. Now that I have time, let's have look . . .*

He retrieved a single gold coin from the item box, and then compared it with the gold coins inside the leather bag.

Although their dimensions were similar, the engravings on their surfaces differed quite a bit. The baron's gold coins were engraved with a simple design. Compared to them, the gold coins from the item box were engraved with the side profile of a man. The face of the coin also had the words "Rukydots Gold Coin" intricately engraved on the circumference.

*Although I can't really compare these gold coins with Japanese coins, their design is still considerably elaborate. The item box's gold coin seems to weigh roughly the same amount as the baron's. I wonder if that means I can use them? It feels like I always go to Ashley whenever I have a question . . . looks like I'll*

*have to trouble her again later . . .*

Edward arrived just as Ray was finished putting away his gold coins. Guided by Edward, Ray entered the baron's office, and then deeply bowed his head,

"Thank you very much for taking care of me. I've successfully registered at the adventurers guild earlier in the day. I should be able to stay at an inn in town now without any problems." (TL: I've changed Molton to a town now, instead of a city.)

"Is that so?" the baron muttered. He then asked in a slightly more cheerful tone, "So, what are you planning to do after this?"

"Since I still haven't recovered my memories yet, I'm planning to remain in this town for now . . ."

"I see. Well, if you ever encounter any trouble, remember that you can visit us anytime. After all, I don't intend to turn away someone who's saved my life."

Ray deeply bowed his head once again and said, "Thank you for your kindness." He then excused himself from the office.

The baron gazed at Ray's back as he exited the room.

*If Ray really is as he seems, it might be a good idea to recruit him into my group of subordinates. Oliena also seems pleased with him, so welcoming him into our family is also a possibility. However, his fighting strength and armor are a problem. He stinks of trouble relating to Rooks, especially the Light Religion. Until his background is clear, I should probably find a way to indirectly keep him under observation . . .*

The baron called over a government official and ordered him to track Ray and Ashley's movements.

Ray and Ashley walked with their backs to the mansion.

It was now four o'clock. The flood of people was gradually subsiding as they each separated into the roads that lead home. Ray and Ashley arrived at an inn that was located halfway up the hill.

"This is the Silver Bell Pavilion, the inn I usually stay at. Although the owner, Lester, and his wife, Bianca, are both young, this place is still quite cozy. It's a

tad bit expensive, but I can guarantee that you'll be pleased with it."

The Silver Bell Pavilion had three floors. Flowers had been planted below the windows frames of the bottom floor. The building gave off the impression that it was carefully maintained. Upon entering, Ray encountered a nicely polished wooden counter. A smiling woman who appeared to be in her middle twenties welcomed them.

"Welcome back, Ashley. I've heard that you got caught up in some kind of incident?"

News of how the baron had been betrayed by hired mercenaries and then attacked by bandits seemed to have already spread throughout the town.

Ashley looked at Ray as she replied, "If this guy here hadn't been there, I definitely wouldn't be alive right now. Anyway, do you have any available rooms left Bianca?"

Bianca smiled widely, "We actually do have some rooms open in fact." She peered into Ashley's face, "So. Is it a double room? Or would you rather book two separate rooms?"

## Part 6

Flustered by her words, Ashley's voice was slightly raised as she retorted, "Isn't it obvious that we're going to book two single rooms!?" She then remained completely silent as her face flushed a light shade of red.

Ray who was standing beside her had also stiffened when he heard Bianca say "double room".

"Aww, you didn't have to get so ruffled Ashley. I was just teasing you a bit." Bianca tittered and said, "How cute."

After picking on the reddened Ashley some more, Bianca turned towards Ray,

"I'm Bianca, the mistress of this inn. My husband is currently busy preparing dinner, so I'll make him greet you later. At any rate, you seem like a fine man. This is the first time the quiet and unsociable Ashley is bringing back a man with her. And yet, she manages to snag a good-looking man like you. I'm feeling a bit jealous~ Ah, keep this is a secret from my husband alright?"

She winked.

Feeling at a lost for words, Ray could only utter, "Please take care of me."

"The fee for one day and two meals is eight Crona. Tell me at least a day ahead of time if you need a bento. Booking a room alone without any meals is six Crona for one day. Our meals are pretty delicious, so going for the cheaper deal is really a waste in my opinion. Room one on the third floor is available." Bianca chortled and she added, "It's the room at the end of the hallway, right next to Ashley's."

This time, Ray's face also reddened. After his Orb was authenticated and he received his key, Ray quickly headed for the third floor as if to escape from her.

His room was roughly 3.5 mertos wide and 4 mertos long, about the same size as the room of a business hotel in Japan. (TL:

[Try this](#))

The room had a fairly spartan appearance, only having a bed, a closet, a small table, and a chair. There was no bathtub or toilet. When Ray asked Ashley about it afterwards, he learned that there was a shared toilet. Although there wasn't a bathtub, the inn did have a space for guests to wash their bodies.

His room's window didn't have any glass and was made entirely out of wood. Embedded within the wall was a single magical tool that served as the room's illumination.

*The baron's mansion also seemed to have these things. When I wanted to turn it on, I only needed to touch it and pour in some magical power . . . ah, there we go, the light's on now.*

The magical tool for illumination seemed to be something that was quite widespread. Ray had seen them used in various places, supplanting the need for torches and candles.

*I wonder if it needs a lot of magical power? The corridor alone had five or six of these. If you take into account all the other rooms, then this entire inn must have more than thirty . . .*

He later found out that they actually didn't require that much magical power. Even children could turn on around twenty of these without breaking a sweat. However, because the lights ran out of power after around two hours or so, they needed to be relit regularly.

Ray detached his equipment and thought about whether or not he should store his spear and armor inside the item box.

*These are definitely my most valuable belongings. It would be a nuisance if they were stolen, so also storing them in the item box would probably be much safer. What would Ashley think?*

He decided to take off all his armor for the time being. After changing into the new clothes he had purchased today, he headed towards the neighboring room.

As usual, he stood outside the door and asked, "I have a small thing I want to ask you about, are you free right now?" He quickly received a response, "Ah, come on in. It's fine." Without thinking about anything in particular, Ray opened

the door. His body immediately froze, his hand still on the door knob. The moment he opened the door, he had been greeted with the sight of Ashley in her underwear, putting on her clothes.

Ray hastily apologized by excusing himself, shut the door, and then stood petrified in the hallway outside the room.

*What the hell! I thought she said that I could come in. Did I hear wrong? Is she going to get angry? I kind of wish I had a better look . . . no, what am I thinking. Why am I thinking about doing things to make her hate me when I want to build up a better relationship with her?*

As he worried outside the door, Ashley who had finished changing called out to him,

“What’s wrong? I wouldn’t have minded if you went in. Anyway, what did you want to ask?”

Although she said she didn’t mind, Ray felt a little disappointed by the way she spoke with him. It was as if she wasn’t conscious of him at all.

*Looks like she really did say I could come in. Maybe she’s indifferent towards me? No, rather, she probably doesn’t see me as a man. I guess it can’t be helped since I’m not exactly a dependable person . . .*

After his eyes blinked several times, Ray asked about what he should do with his equipment.

“Bring your sword with you to dining hall, but leave the armor in your room. Although you can lock your door to be sure, it’s probably fine to leave it as is since the guests of this inn aren’t those type of people. If you’re really worried, it’s okay to use the storage magic.”

Having heard her advice, Ray returned to his room and stored his armor and spear in the item box.

*How much can I put in this item box? It doesn’t seem to be dependent on my level. I guess I’ll think about it when the item box gets full . . .*

It was now five o’clock, just the right time for dinner. They both headed towards the dining hall on the first floor.

The Silver Bell Pavilion's first floor was composed of Bianca and Lester's living quarters and a combined dining hall and bar. The second and third floors were both filled with guests rooms. The second floor had four double rooms and four quadruple rooms and the third floor had twelve single rooms.

Inside the dining hall on the first floor were eight tables that could each seat four people and also ten seats at the counter. Some of the inn's guests had already seated themselves at the counter and were enjoying their meals.

When Ashley and Ray arrived at their seats, a man with ashen-colored hair appeared from the kitchen.

"Ray, this is Lester, the owner of the inn. Lester, this is Ray, my life savior."

Lester nodded and curtly said, "Our cuisine today is meat or fish. If you want alcohol, please ask Bianca." No more words were uttered.

Ashley and Ray both requested the seafood and then waited for Bianca to walk by before also ordering white wine. Bianca laughed and said, "Sorry about that, he's quite taciturn isn't he?"

The food was plentiful and flavorful. Incidentally, the seafood for today was herb-flavored grilled char.

While smacking his lips over the food, Ray asked Ashley about tomorrow.

"I was wondering if you could accompany me tomorrow, since I'm going to be accepting my first request. I also don't know what kind of requests I should be accepting . . ."

Ashley made a strange face as she doubtfully tilted her head, "That's what I was intending to do. Did I not tell you? I've decided to partner up with you for the time being."

Ray's whole face lit up as he smiled and said, "This is great!"

"I was worried that you would be like the baron and also raise your guard against me. Thank you Ashley. Really, I have to thank you."

Slightly taken aback by Ray's behavior, Ashley's face tinged with red,

"No, it's an obvious thing to do. The Marquardt family always repays favors. However, don't expect me to go easy on you. I'm going to be strict, so be

prepared.” (TL: Makkat has been changed to Marquardt.)

“Understood. So, what kind of requests are we going to accept tomorrow? Collecting medicinal herbs in the forest?”

“Haa?” Ashley couldn’t help leaking out her bewilderment. “No, we’re obviously going to be doing subjugation. Besides, I’ve never even accepted a request for collecting herbs before. Subjugating monsters is a good way to strengthen you. We’ll worry about what request to accept after seeing the bulletin board.”

## Part 7

“Can I really do . . . subjugation? My spear and sword skills still have some ways to go and I still don’t know how to use magic in combat.”

Seeing his lack of confidence, Ashley rebuked him in a slightly strong tone.

“What are you saying! Who defeated all those bandits? Have some confidence. Your skills improved to the level of a second-rate soldier in just one morning. Your body remembers.”

Although Ray nodded to her words, inside, he truly doubted whether or not he could actually “kill” anything. After all, he was just your typical citizen. Someone who had been raised in the peaceful nation of Japan.

*Can I kill something living . . . it’s normal for Ashley who’s been surrounded by mercenaries since the day she was born. However, for me . . . no. I don’t want to show her a shameful appearance any longer. Let’s give it our all tomorrow.*

Each finished up their meals and returned to their respective rooms.

Without anything to do after dinner, Ray lied down atop his bed and began thinking about magic.

*Close combat is going to be tough. If I’m going to be using magic then I might be able to kill the monsters by pretending everything is a game . . .*

He tried to recall the setting for magic.

Among the eight elements, fire, light, wind, and water, were the four elements that were easy to use for attack-based magic. If they were going to be fighting in the forest, then fire magic had the risk of spreading fires.

*So it’s going to be light, wind, and water then . . . for light magic, it’s easy to imagine the light spear and light arrows I used unconsciously before. Calling to mind the laser weapons in some of those anime shows should be enough. For water, I could attack with an ice spear or cold wind. However, light spears probably have greater penetrating power than ice spears, and cold wind needs*

*another attack that has good affinity with it . . . wind maybe . . . imagining my opponent being blown away by a strong gust is easy. Cutting up my opponent by creating vacuums and utilizing the theory of air pressure is more difficult. Strengthening my wind and using it as an air cannon also seems quite powerful . . . for now, let's try to master a single element first. The light element maybe . . .*

Ray also had some things on his mind concerning healing magic.

*Healing magic uses the elements of water and arbor (trees/forests). For water, I could try to imagine medicine being injected into my bloodstream. Although arbor could represent life force, imagining it is difficult . . . oh, and there's also the light element. I could imagine light stimulating my body cells. I don't really want to stab myself to confirm these theories, but if I don't make myself ready to use healing magic in urgent situations, then I'll definitely be panicking when the time comes . . .*

He now began to think about how he could use soil, ore, and darkness.

*For soil, I could imagine things like pitfalls and walls. If I combine soil with water, I could make a swamp. I think ore can be used to reinforce my weapons and armor but this image is difficult. My current equipment probably doesn't need the extra reinforcement, so putting off this element for later is fine. Darkness is the most worrisome element. Turning darkness into some kind of smokescreen is a possibility. However, if I do that, the previously mentioned Light Religion will likely have something to say . . .*

While thinking about magic, Ray fell asleep before he knew it.

The next morning, Ray opened his eyes before sunrise. Although he had slept unexpectedly quickly last night, the stress he had for the first request today had probably contributed to that.

*What time is it right now? Not having a clock sure is inconvenient. It's still dark outside, so maybe I've woken up in the middle of the night? I don't feel like sleeping anymore though . . .*

Ray began to make his preparations as quietly as he could.

He used the storage magic to take out the armor he had stored away yesterday. On the item box's list, he saw the name Nix Vestis next to his armor

and also Alvim Korn next to his spear.

(TL: Nikusuu~esutisu and Arubumukorunu. Feel free to give them better names in the comments.)

*As expected of my equipment. They both have names . . . so, Nix Vestis next to his armor and also Alvim Korn means Winter Robes? And Alvim Korn means White Horn? . . . why do I even know what they mean? I want to understand the capabilities of my equipment rather than their names. However, to say nothing of parameters for offensive and defensive abilities, the item box doesn't even mention things like their weight . . . how unintuitive . . .*

While complaining about such things, he took out his armor, *Nix Vestis*, and put it on. Finally, he also took out *Alvim Korn*. Around the time when his preparations ended, the eastern sky was beginning to grow light. Seems like he didn't actually wake up in the middle of the night.

Since there was still some time before breakfast, Ray decided to go outside and do some practice swings.

*I'll feel stressed if I don't do anything. In order to not bother anybody, let's do practice swings quietly at the back of the inn.*

He left his room and began doing practice swings in a place close to the inn's stable.

His movement had improved a lot compared to yesterday morning. Both his sword and spear seemed to be following the trajectories in his mind.

*If possible, I want to improve my perception with some more mock battles, however, this is all I can do alone. I also want to practice some magic but I can't really do that in a place like this . . .*

At around the same time as the sun was rising, Ashley also appeared behind the inn.

"Good morning, you're up early. Quite motivated aren't you?"

Ray could only float a bitter smile at how low Ashley's tension was.

"Good morning. Can't really say I'm motivated . . . I can't seem to calm down unless I move my body . . ."

They sparred lightly, ate breakfast, and then headed to the guild after receiving a bento.

# Chapter 4: First Fight

## Part 1

Eight o'clock in the morning.

Ray hadn't noticed this, but the town of Molton had a bell that rang every two hours. By hearing the sound the bell, the townspeople would know what time it was. Ray hadn't realized it, perhaps because he was too busy yesterday.

The guild building was filled to the brim with the adventurers' liveliness.

Numerous people were swarming around the bulletin board that was plastered with various request slips. They scrambled for requests that seemed to have good conditions, struggling to be the first one to tear them off. When Ray anxiously asked, "Are we late?", Ashley replied, "Nah, the request we're aiming for isn't very popular, so we're probably fine." and leisurely made her way to the bulletin board. She easily spotted the request she wanted and took it into her hand.

She handed the slip to Ray and invited him to take a look at its contents.

The following words were written on the slip: "Subjugation of lizardmen in the vicinity of Dramenie Lake and Cloony Lake: Reward of 10 Crona for each lizardman."

"Lizardmen? We're doing this?"

"You see, nobody likes subjugating lizardmen. Despite the reward not being much, there's the risk of damaging your weapons because their skin is so tough. With my sword and your equipment, it's not going to be much of a problem. However, those who only have cheap equipment tend to keep a distance from lizardmen. On the other hand, those who have good weapons are already able to accept more profitable requests. That's why these requests are unpopular and end up being the last ones remaining. However, lizardmen are perfect as training opponents since they only have high defensive ability and don't launch

any attacks that are too troublesome.”

Ashley continued to explain the characteristics of lizardmen.

Lizardmen monsters were subhuman lizardmen who walked on two legs. Although their intelligence is quite low, they act in groups and use simple weapons. Their whole body is covered in a tough layer of scales strong enough to completely repel half-hearted attacks. In addition to using crude weapons such as clubs, they also wielded sharp claws, fangs, and a thick tail. For young adventurers, they weren't an opponent to make light of. However, their attacks were simple-minded and their cooperation barely counted as cooperation. For someone with a certain amount of skill, there's weren't a terribly difficult opponent.

“Nevertheless, I feel like the reward for this is too low.”

In response to Ray's doubt, Ashley replied, “Ah, the reason the reward isn't much is because the request is coming from some fishermen. Since the number of lizardmen still seems to be small, there's only a small influence on their fishing. Their lives are also not in much danger. If the number of lizardmen increases a bit more, then we could request for the reward to be raised. However, the situation right now probably only calls for a reward of this amount.”

“I see.” Ray nodded after returning the request slip to her, and they both headed towards the reception counter.

Dramenie Lake and Cloony Lake were located ten kimels east of Molton. The two lakes were connected to the each other in the shape of a [gourd](#). A fishing village named Latley was located in the narrow part of the gourd.

The decided to go to Latley and procure some information from the fisherman before heading off to complete the subjugation.

Since it was a distance of ten kimels, they rented horses, and arrived in the village at nine in the morning.

Latley was a village that was based on both agriculture and fishing. About thirty small houses that looked like huts had been built.

When Ray looked closely, things that looked like cat ears were on the

villagers' heads, so it seemed to be a village of cat beast people. (TL: Beastmen has now changed to beast people)

Although there were also beast people in Molton, Ray didn't see many small beast children, so he was feeling somewhat excited.

*Cat eared children . . . my heart feels warmed . . . this truly is a fantasy world . . .*

Seeing the state Ray was in, Ashley inclined her head. However, she quickly found the house of the village chief and called out to him, "Let's go." then immediately entered the building.

Although the village chief's house was slightly larger than the other houses, it wasn't too large. It was probably just the right size for the short-statured cat people. Since the furniture inside wasn't too crude, the village seemed to be moderately prosperous.

A cat-eared man who was in his fifties appeared.

"I'm Kieran, the chief of Latley village. Let me call over the ones who know more about this matter . . ."

While gazing at Kieran's face, Ray thought about something completely unrelated.

*He doesn't add "nya" at the end of his sentences . . . I suppose it's only natural. I would be a bit troubled if an old man like this said "nya" . . . cute girls are warmly welcomed to say it though . . .*

Although Ray's attitude completely lacked any seriousness, he wouldn't be able to stop his legs from trembling if he didn't distract his mind with such things. The tension he felt for the subjugation probably wouldn't allow him to move.

Unaware of these things, Ashley wanted to say something to Ray who seemed to lack any sense of tension. However, she decided to interpret it as him being high-spirited about his first request.

Called over by the village chief, three fishermen who were in their thirties immediately came to explain the situation.

The fishermen said that they had found five lizardmen on the western side of the village, near the banks of Dramenie lake. The lizardmen had stolen all of the fish from their nets.

To go to the place where the lizardmen had been found, they would have to cross the lake to the opposite shore and walk for another ten minutes. It was decided that one of the fisherman would guide them there.

Ray and Ashley boarded the small boat of a fisherman named Koda and began to cross Dramenie lake. Many reeds were growing on the waterside. There were also many muddy areas in the lake. However, the wind blowing across the lake was refreshing. Combine this with the idyllic landscape surrounding them and it didn't feel like this was a place where monsters would lurk.

After around thirty minutes, the boat jolted and they arrived on the opposite shore.

Only a small amount of reeds grew on this side. In front of them, the environment abruptly transitioned into a forest that obstructed their view.

Since it was said that lizardmen were in this forest, Koda promised to come pick them up after three hours. After he separated from them, they decided to search the forest.

While holding his spear, Ray nervously asked Ashley,

“How are we going to look for them? We're not going to just blindly walk around right?”

“Ah, we're going to search for footprints near the waterside first. We'll be able to find them by following the tracks from there.”

After searching the waterside for thirty minutes or so, they found places where the reed had been trampled down.

“It's here. There are claws on the ground, so these are definitely lizardmen. We'll follow the footprints while remaining alert.”

Ray replied, “Understood” and stuck closely behind her as he walked.

The footprints continued deep into the forest. Even a complete amateur like Ray could see that there were several of these lizardmen.

*Are we going to be okay? There's probably more than five of them. Ashley alone could take on several of these, but for me . . . no, this is no good. I'm too stressed out. Or rather, I'm scared . . .*

He harbored fear towards these lizardmen who he had yet to see.

The lizardmen in his memories appeared in games and anime. They had ferocious lizard faces, wore leather armor, and wielded spears. Although Ashley had explained that they only used clubs and didn't wear any armor, he couldn't dispel the image that had already clung onto his mind.

After walking for a short time, Ashley lowered her body and motioned with her left hand for Ray to lay down. He was about to ask "What is it?", but then managed to restrain himself. Similar to Ashley, he also laid down and hid his body among the clump of bushes near their feet.

"They're in front of us. Seven of them."

Approximately thirty meters in front of them were several reptile-type creatures clad in green scales that looked like lizardmen.

Ashley looked towards Ray and grinned, "Think you can land the first attack with your magic?" "Eh? Magic!?" He couldn't help raising a voice of surprise towards how she said that without any warning beforehand. However, he strengthened his resolve and doing as she said, tried to identify his target.

"I'll try . . . which one should I aim for?"

Without minding his surprise, Ashley pointed at a lizardman and said, "Aim for that one. The closest one with his back towards us."

## Part 2

Ray decided to use the light magic he had thought about last night, the light spear.

He calmed down his breathing and imagined a gathering of light particles within his mind. A spear of light appeared at his left hand.

He quietly celebrated the success and threw the spear at the lizardman Ashley had pointed at. Although the silently flying spear wasn't as fast as he had expected, it headed straight for the lizardman's back and beautifully hit the target.

Immediately following the attack, the lizardman raised a scream and collapsed.

Seeing his defeated figure, the other lizardmen all began to survey their surroundings. They roared when they found the two humans, charging at them with their thick and heavy bodies.

"They're coming! Can you fire off another one Ray! If it's impossible, then move to my right side!"

Despite Ashley's directions, when Ray saw the figures of the two merto tall lizardmen with their glittering green scales coming towards him with the intent to kill, he fell into a panic.

"There's too many of them, it's impossible! Let's run away!"

"What are you saying at this point!? Hurry up and prepare your spear! If you don't want to die then fight!"

Hearing those words, he forced his trembling body to move and stiffly gripped his spear.

"Remember what is was like during training! These monsters only charge straight at you! It's easy to evade them as long as you pay attention!"

Her voice no longer reached him. After all, his awareness was now completely

focused on the group lizardmen, on the green demons who were coming to kill him.

At that moment, Ray's sense of time became strange. It felt like the lizardmen's approach slowing down. Despite that, it also seemed like they were also somehow approaching him more quickly. Ray was no longer able to grasp the situation.

*It's impossible! I didn't become an adventurer . . . I didn't rely on Ashley . . . I'm going to die here.*

With his spear still pointed forwards, Ray's eyes were opened wide as his body froze.

"Ray! They're getting closer! Come on! If you don't want to die then fight!"

Seeing his pathetic appearance, her eyes turned cold.

*It's no good . . . I didn't think he was so spineless . . . however, I can't just abandon him . . . it's turned into a bad situation . . .*

Although it was his first battle, Ashley had thought that he would at least be able to move. After all, she could handle six lizardmen even if she was by herself.

However, it was a completely story if she had to fight while protecting someone who absolutely wouldn't move.

Despite choosing this request herself, she was feeling anger towards Ray. However, she felt even angrier at herself for misjudging him.

*Being able to grasp your partner's ability. The fundamentals of being a mercenary. For me to forget that . . . was I too high-spirited . . . no matter what it takes, we'll survive. We have to survive . . .*

With her large two-handed sword, Ashley cleaved at a lizardman that was heading for her as it raised its club overhead. It raised a scream of agony and collapsed by her side. However, another lizardman immediately approached.

The frozen Ray next to her somehow recovered and although weak-kneed, began to restrain them with his spear.

Although this lizardman raised its club overhead just like the first one, it did

not rush in blindly. Instead, it kept a distance of three mertos and raised an intimidating snake-like hiss as it observed Ashley's movements.

Seeing that, Ashley shouted, "Trying to act like a wiseman, are you now?!" and quickly rushed towards it, closing the distance all at once as she thrust at its throat. Unable to follow her movements at all, the lizardman's eyes widened as its body continued to raise the club overhead and it stared at the sword that had gone through its throat without any resistance. When she pulled out the sword was lodged in its throat, red blood gushed out like a fountain, and it slowly collapsed.

However, two more lizardmen immediately appeared to surround them and Ashley stepped back, returning to her original position. Once again, she brought her sword for a confrontation from the front.

Having resolved himself for death, Ray was thinking about giving up.

However, once he saw the seemingly disdainful eyes of Ashley who was standing beside him, he decided that he couldn't die like this.

*Being looked at with those eyes . . . I'm truly pathetic . . . hasn't Ashley already done so much for my sake? Who's fault is it that she's fallen into this crisis! At the very least, Ashley has to escape . . .*

Although his movements were stiff, Ray began to wield his spear.

Fortunately, the lizardman who had come in his direction was cautious of the range of his spear and stopped at a distance. If it had continued to rush in, then Ray would have likely died. However, its short time of hesitation gave him the time he needed to regain his footing.

Well, even though it looked like he had regained his footing, his movements were still terrible. He completely forgot about the movements he had polished during training and was instead blindly thrusting at the enemy. Nevertheless, his quick movements and the sharp cross that projected from his spear combined to give the lizardman no opportunity to step in.

Ray gradually regained his composure.

*I can do it! The other side is also scared of me, so I need to pull myself together! Ashley told me to remember my time during training!*

Ray forced himself to wring out a yell in an attempt to muster his courage, and released attacks that were even sharper than before. The lizardman evaded his simple thrusts by merely turning its body. However, Ray's attacks didn't stop there. The moment the lizardman evaded, he switched his form of attack to a sweep towards its neck.

The sharp cross-shaped spearhead that was around thirty centimeters landed a hit. Although it wasn't a deep wound, the sight lit a fire of hope within his heart.

*It hit! Attacking calmly is more effective. Next, let's do some double-thrusts . . .*

Ray quickly looked around him and confirmed the position of Ashley and their enemies.

There weren't any more enemies next to him and Ashley was also at a position a few steps behind him. Ray launched a double-thrust at the enemy before him and then moved to mow down its legs. On top of completely eating Ray's double-thrusts, the lizardman had also been successfully cut down at his legs. As it was still in the middle of a turn, it toppled over in an unnatural manner. As a result of that, the lizardman on the right side of Ashley ended up exposing its side defenselessly. Without letting that chance escape, Ray launched an attack towards its unprotected flank.

Having been stabbed in the side, the lizardman raised a scream towards the sudden pain and stepped back. Within that span of time, Ashley also slashed off an arm from its other side.

*We've somehow managed it . . .*

Thinking that they had won, Ray became slightly negligent. The final lizardman aimed for the instant when his front became open, and fiercely charged.

The lizardman had a superior physique and used a close-ranged body blow instead of striking with its club. Ray received the entirety of the heavy attack and was completely blown away towards the back.

For an instant during the impact, his consciousness flickered. As his hazy vision dimmed, the lizardman followed it up with another attack from its club.

The club which was crudely swung downward grazed his right ear and directly hit his shoulder. Although the collision was definitely powerful, the solid armor that was protecting his shoulder refused to yield.

*Argh! My ear hurts even more than my shoulder. Even though the club only grazed it, why does it feel so painful . . . damn it! It's too close for me to use my spear . . . there isn't any space for me to draw out my sword either . . .*

The lizardman that was preparing to raise its club a second time suddenly froze.

As he wondered what had happened, he suddenly noticed a silver blade protruding from the lizardman's stomach.

Ashley had snuck behind the lizardman that was attacking him and stabbed at its defenseless back.

Although the group of injured lizardman had already lost the will to fight, Ashley pulled out her sword from the dead lizardman and approached the others with an audacious gait. She then proceeded to pierce each them until their movements had completely stilled.

Once all of the lizardmen were killed, Ashley sat down on the ground and breathed heavily.

*We've survived . . . Ray somehow recovered near the end. What are we going to do from this point on? It's also my fault for suddenly making him fight. I'll have to see how the situation progresses for a bit longer . . . however, will I be able to look at him calmly after all this . . .*

Although there was hesitation in her heart, she became surprised when the words that came out of her mouth were unexpectedly assertive.

“Ray! What was that just now, you call that fighting!? When we get back, I'm going to specially train you! Let's collect the magic stones and go back!”

## Part 3

Ray wasn't able to understand her words at first. After all, her eyes plainly expressed her intent to abandon him.

"You're still staying with me? A pathetic man like me . . ."

"Saying things like this again! You have to fight properly next time. You need more resolve if you want to stand beside me!"

Immediately after she said that, her eyes widened as she realized the meaning of her own words.

*If you want to stand beside me . . . what was I saying? Being together with Ray is making me strange . . .*

Nevertheless, her attitude didn't reveal anything as she silently stood up to look at the condition of Ray's injury.

"It's not a serious injury. Your ears are hurting only because of inflammation. There should be nothing wrong with your shoulder thanks to the armor. Wow, it's amazing that you sustained that collision without a single wound . . ."

After expressing his thanks, Ray inquired about Ashley's own condition, however she replied, "I'm not so incompetent that I would be injured by something like a lizardman's attack." then proceeded to give out directions like seasoned veteran.

"If you can stand up, help me collect the magic stones and then let's get out of here. The stench of blood might invite other monsters to come."

And so, supporting himself with his spear, Ray forced his tired body to stand up.

Both of them began to collect the magic stones from the seven lizardmen.

Ashley held out her hand over the area of the lizardman's heart and muttered something. Upon doing that, her hand began to shine and a green jewel with a diameter of around one cemer slowly rose up from the corpse of the lizardman.

*Can I also do that? I'll have to try and see what happens."*

After steeling himself, Ray reached his hand out for the chest of the dead lizardman who had his white eyes turned towards him.

Upon seeing the lizardman's appearance, Ray couldn't help remembering the sensations he felt when his spear pierced through its scaly skin. The guilt he felt for killing a living thing welled up within him and simultaneously, an urge to vomit tore through him.

*It was me who killed it . . . is this fine? Even though it was for the sake of my survival . . .*

He forcibly suppressed the nausea and determinedly threw away the common sense of Japan, a common sense he had adhered to for all eighteen years of his life.

*No, thinking that way is no good. This isn't Japan. If I continue to be caught up in my common sense, then it won't only be me who will be affected. The people surrounding me will also be put in danger . . . in fact, I just endangered Ashley's life . . . unless I become stronger . . .*

Ray shifted his emotional gears and devoted himself to retrieving the magic stones.

The corpse of the lizardman was cold. Ray didn't know if it had been cold-blooded or warm-blooded but either way, he once again reached his hand out for the cold corpse. Upon doing so, a gentle light began escaping through his outstretched hand.

The light gradually grew stronger and a green jewel floated up.

Ray's voice involuntarily slipped out as he cheered, "I can do it!"

The work was divided between the two of them and before long, the magic stones from all seven lizardmen were collected. Other than their skin, the bodies of the lizardmen didn't have any useful parts. Even the skin had very low demand because the scales were difficult to process. Because of this, Ashley had decided to leave the corpses of the lizardmen alone.

While feeling mentally exhausted, Ray followed behind Ashley's back as she

walked forward.

When they finally reached the banks of the lake, there was still close to two hours until Koda, the fisherman, would come and pick them up. While looking at her own body, Ashley said, “I’m completely stained with the lizardmen’s blood. Could you stand guard while I go wash my sword and armor?” and headed for the edge of the lake.

Since Ray had fought with his spear, he was mostly clean from any blood that may have splattered on him. Now that they arrived here, he finally noticed that Ashley really was dyed red from blood.

*Because I put up such a pathetic fight, Ashley had to be covered in blood as she fought by herself . . .*

It actually couldn’t really be helped, since this was purely due to Ashley’s combat style. However, the Ray of that time didn’t realize this. And so, assuming that he was the cause of all of this, he wondered if there was anything he could do.

“I could make them clean again with my purification magic . . . although I can’t use it on your body, I can use it on your equipment . . .”

Upon hearing Ray’s suggestion, she replied, “You should preserve your magical energy. I can finish it immediately since it’s just my sword and armor.”

“I didn’t use much of my magical energy at all. Furthermore, won’t the stench of blood invite monsters over? Since that’s the case, it would be better if you cleaned your equipment as much as possible. No, not just because it’s better, but because that’s what I want you to do.”

Even if it was just a little, Ray wanted to make up for his disgracefulness earlier. He lowered his head and earnestly requested for Ashley’s permission. Seeing his intention, Ashley decided to leave it to him.

Ray imagined the purification magic’s process, and lights of three colors – blue, yellow, and silver – began to wrap around Ashley’s body. After around twenty seconds, the lights subsided and the grime and blood that had been stuck to her equipment were completely gone.

Ashley stared in wonder at the magic that had been done right before her

eyes.

“I really did become clean . . . you could make a living off of just teaching this magic to people! I want you to do this for me for the rest of my life. A-ah, n-no, wait, I didn’t actually mean that . . .”

When Ray heard her words, couldn’t help saying, “Eh?” He remained surprised and any more words were stuck inside his throat. An awkward atmosphere drifted about between the two of them.

In an attempt to shake off the awkwardness, Ray began speaking,

“I’m really sorry about earlier. It was my first time seeing a monster come for me. The lizardmen seemed as scary as dragons . . .”

Tears began to leak from his eyes. They weren’t flowing because of his memories of the fear. No, these were tears of frustration, directed towards himself for being so cowardly.

“Something like that will never happen again! I swear. Rather than be looked at by you with those eyes . . .”

While looking at Ray shed tears of regret, Ashley recalled her own memories from a long time ago.

*Looks like he actually did lose his memories. When I fought one on one against a monster for the first time, it really was a terrifying experience . . . I was still eight years old when I had to fight a goblin. If you look at it that way, it’s not like I can’t understand Ray’s fear . . . hmph, even though I’m saying this myself, I think I’m too soft on this guy . . .*

She floated a small smile, however, she immediately switched to a serious expression.

“That’s enough. We’re still going to be accepting subjugation requests starting from tomorrow. Isn’t that great? Not only that, the monsters are going to be even stronger.”

Ray made a large nod and changed the subject.

“Alright. However, in order to become stronger, I want to practice my magic. Is there a place where I can do that? If possible, a private place that doesn’t

attract anyone's attention . . .”

While tilting her head, Ashley replied, “I think the forest outside of town is a good place . . . why does it have to be private?”

He seemed to pick his words carefully, and then began to speak,

“I have a feeling that my magic is a bit out of the usual. Things like purification magic and storage magic for example. If I use my strange magic in public, there's no doubt I'll stand out in a bad way. I'd rather something like that never happens . . . is it strange?”

“I see. You're not wrong. Let's go find an inconspicuous place on the way back.”

At that moment, Ray suddenly remembered the pain in his right ear and asked, “Do you know what healing magic is like?”

“I've heard that healing magic borrows the power of the light, water, and wood spirits, but I don't know the details . . . Although I've been treated with light healing magic before, my wound was being covered with a hand and also wrapped in light when I was being healed, so I don't really know how it works.”

While thinking “As I thought”, Ray held his hand over his ear and tried to use magic with the image of his cells being revitalized by light. Although he couldn't see properly it himself, a light had wrapped itself around the injured area of his ear. The area gradually grew warmer and the pain began to disappear.

## Part 4

“I wonder if it’s been healed? Could you look at it for me?”

Ashley who had been looking at him with an astonished expression, flusteredly moved closer to confirm the condition of his ear.

“It’s healed. You can also use healing magic . . .? The chances that you’re a holy knight are getting higher and higher . . .”

Although she muttered the last words quietly, Ray was able to clearly hear it since she was close to his ear

“Why? I know that holy knights use the light element . . . nevertheless . . .”

“Although I’ve only heard about this from rumors, they say that the holy knights’ are actually better at healing magic than offensive magic. Well, some of them replace their bows with arrows of light when they’re on horseback, but it doesn’t seem like there are many of them who can do that.”

Ray wondered why that was, but didn’t arrive an answer since there was too little information.

*Is it that difficult for magic and swords to coexist? I don’t remember making that kind of setting though . . .*

In his setting, there were magic swordsmen who used fire magic and elven warriors who used wind magic.

“Perhaps, swordsmen who can practice magic are rare?”

“That’s right. It’s not that they don’t exist, but I’ve never heard of many people having first class skills in both magic and swordsmanship. Magic requires the assistance of magical equipment such as staffs. Furthermore, since the number times they can be used is quite limited, most magicians use a sword for self-protection instead of magic. Elves however, are a different matter.”

*I think I get the gist of what’s she’s saying. This world’s magic places great importance on the mental image. If the image is unclear, the efficiency of the*

*magic will be terrible, causing the consumption of magical energy to be high. In order to prevent that, magicians need to compensate with magical tools such as staves to raise the efficiency. Because of that, there aren't many magic swordsmen. Unless there's a weapon that also serves to increase one's magic efficiency, having both of them coexist is a difficult matter. Well, for races such as the elves who are geniuses at one specific element, the problem of inefficiency is resolved . . . I'll need to make sure I don't use too much magic during practice.*

The two of them continued to talk about such matters and before they knew it, two hours passed in the blink of an eye. When Koda arrived to pick them up and was told that they had already finished subjugating all of the lizardmen, his cat ears twitched in surprise.

“You’ve already finished? Alright then, please get on the boat.”

When they returned to Latley village, they headed for Kieran’s place and showed him the magic stones, informing him that the request had been completed. It seemed like he had never thought these two young adventurers would finish the entire subjugation in merely three hours. Due to his astonishment, Kieran’s round cat eyes rounded even further.

After he confirmed their completion of the request, they both departed Latley village. It was still early, two in the afternoon. If they headed for Molton right now, they would arrive before three o’clock. Since they still had some free time, they decided to search for the place where Ray could practice his magic. They advanced on the road until they were in the vicinity of Molton and then entered the forest on the eastern side of the town.

After walking for around ten minutes while pulling their horses, they discovered a place where the land sloped down into a shallow basin.

“I think this place is good. Ashley, sorry to trouble you, but could you stand guard for me?”

She immediately consented to the task and headed for the top of the basin.

After confirming her departure, Ray began to think about what kind of practice he needed to do.

*Alright, what kind of magic should I practice. I should concentrate on magic that can be used reliably if I don't want to hold Ashley back. With that in mind, it would be best if I try mastering the light element and also practice the soil and wood elements for surprise attacks. So, let's do light first then . . . (TL: I've changed arbor to wood.)*

Ray summoned the spear of light that he had thrown at the lizardman earlier.

He then threw it at the slope of the basin. However, it's speed was slower than the image in his mind and it's power was also lower than expected.

*The size of the spear is acceptable, so the problem is its speed and power. How do I raise its speed? . . . no, wait, why does the light have to be in the shape of spear in the first place? Why can't it be a laser cannon or a gun? There's probably no need for me to specially use the form of a spear right?*

He ordered the spirits of light to gather and decided to shoot the gathered light all at once.

Although light began to gather as he thrust his left hand out before him, the light wasn't very focused. The light finally finished gathering after one minute and was shot forward with a powerful force.

Just when he thought that the dazzling light was flying forwards, a sound similar to the crackling of thunder resounded throughout the area and a small hole was opened in the side of the basin.

*Does the sound come from when the air is torn apart due to the light being too concentrated? I can almost use this like a gun, but, its weak point is the time required until the light is completely gathered. Would the time be shortened if I suppress the power a little bit more?*

However, no matter how many times he repeated the process of trial and error, the magic wouldn't activate when the power was suppressed any further. He finally accepted that the one minute of focusing the light was required.

*Rather than a laser gun, this is more like a thunderbolt. I'm not sure what the range is but it seemed it seemed to have flown around fifty meters (TL: [Nelton's column is ~52 meters](#)). However, whether or not I can aim it accurately is a separate problem . . . it feels like any further improvement for this will be*

*difficult. Let's see if we can add homing capabilities to the arrow of light.*

He produced an arrow of light of around thirty centimeters in length and also shot it towards the slope of the basin. Although it was faster than the spear, its speed was about only as much as a normal arrow.

*Perhaps it's influenced by my mental image? The spear was only as fast as a javelin throw and the arrow was only as fast as one shot from a bow. As for the thunderbolt, that was only limited by the speed of light . . . I'll need to experiment with this some more . . .*

He produced another arrow of light. This time, he imagined it with the added homing function.

Because he imagined it more like a missile rather than an arrow, its initial velocity was slow but it gave off the feeling that it steadily accelerated and then once again, slowed down in the end. Compared to when he had imagined an arrow, its range seemed to have extended. However, its actual range couldn't be grasped due to the constricted space of the basin.

In regards to its homing abilities, the trajectory could be somewhat adjusted. However, it wasn't maneuverable enough to be called homing.

*The homing has room for improvement. Nevertheless, I wonder how the spears and arrows of gathered light manifest physically? Do the spirits of light gather and then harden? I still don't really understand it . . .*

As he thought about such things, Ray tried to materialize an arrow of light once again. However, the moment he tried to do so, he was overcome with a sudden wave of dizziness and had to squat down onto the ground.

Ashley watched Ray practice his magic from above the slope. As she saw him perform such abnormalities, she fell into mute amazement.

*Among the best mages I've seen up until now, even the elves of Saltooth didn't activate their magic continuously over such a long period of time. The spear of light in the beginning, the series of thunderbolts after that, and the arrow of light can change its trajectory . . . if he actually manages to aim those thunderbolts accurately, then nobody would be able to avoid them. Those arrows of light will also be considerably difficult to avoid . . . nevertheless, for*

*him to shoot so much magic in such a short amount of time . . . is he really human?*

She wondered how many times she had been surprised these past three days, and couldn't help letting a small smile escape.

## Part 5

*I've really come upon an interesting guy. After encountering numerous unpleasant things for some time in this town, I was starting to think about leaving. Seems like my boredom will be solved temporarily with this.*

Ashley remained vigilant of her surroundings as she thought about such things. However, when she spotted the figure of Ray seemingly about to collapse from magical energy exhaustion, she rushed down the slope.

*Did he exhaust his magical energy? Did he not know his limits after losing his memories? Or did he force himself to the limit in order to get stronger . . . if he was thinking about getting stronger because of my words . . .*

She'd heard from magicians that using your magical power to its limits was a matter related to life and death. She'd also heard that in the case where large scale magic was being carried out, if the magic was utilized beyond its limits then every single mage involved would lose their lives.

Immediately upon arriving, she embraced his shoulders and said, "Are you okay? I'm worried since it looked like you used a considerable amount of magical energy . . ."

In response to her worried face, Ray immediately stood back up and replied, "I'm fine. Just a little bit of dizziness."

Ashley cursed her own carelessness and made sure to pray special attention to the fact that Ray had lost his memories.

The magic which Ray had invoked was exceedingly efficient. That was an effect of the magical formula written on his left hand. However, these two people who knew little about magic related matters didn't realize that.

Magic was invoked by changing the energy of the spirits into a form in accordance with the practitioner's imagination, in exchange for the practitioner's magical energy. Spirits were existences who did not possess high intelligence. In order to convey the mage's image accurately to the spirit, it was

necessary to make it easy for the spirit to understand.

It might be easier to understand if you viewed the spirit as a computer.

In order to use the “spirits” or the computer in a manner that followed your expectations, a program or “image” was required.

Because this program didn’t reside permanently within the computer or “spirit”, each time used it, it was necessary to write the program from scratch, in other words, you needed “convey your image to the spirit by chanting.”

For those who could not program well, their programs would waste an unnecessary amount of processing time, the equivalent of “magical power”.

So how did you simplify a program?

You had to incorporate an application or “magical formula” into the process from the beginning.

The magical formula on Ray’s left hand was an application that was able to interact with each of the eight elements. When the imaginative power of a modern person like Ray was coupled together with the general utility of a magical formula, then his magical efficiency would be several times greater than a normal magician.

The two of them exited the forest and headed for Molton.

Although Ray appeared absolutely exhausted due to how close he was to completely exhausting his magical power, if you exclude that, there was no particular abnormality that could be seen. After they passed through the main gate and arrived at the guild, the time was four o’clock in the afternoon.

Ashley walked to the counter while supporting Ray in order to report the completion of their request.

After placing the seven magic stones onto the counter and they received a completion reward of seventy Crona and also another fourteen Crona for the magic stones.

Among the adventurers who saw Ray’s haggard form, those who knew that this was his first request wondered if he had failed it. They imagined on their own that it must have been a considerably difficult fight.

As for those who didn't know about him yet, when they saw a man clad in extravagant plate mail armor leaning upon on a completely clean-looking female warrior for support, they sent him scornful looks.

Within the guild, there were malicious words, like, "How did he end up in that sorry state after fighting just seven lizardmen?" or "He was saved by a woman?" Although the two of them heard them, they paid them no mind and headed for the inn.

Around the time when they arrived at the inn, Ray was somehow able to walk by himself again. However,

*Magical energy exhaustion feels so terrible . . . aah, I shouldn't have refused to quantify magical power. I purposely didn't include such a thing in the setting since understanding magical power and life force through digital values seemed strange. Besides, if someone was in an extreme situation, they should be able to exceed those kinds of values . . . nevertheless, I really want a gauge for my magical power right now . . .*

He hurriedly finished dinner and then immediately fell asleep after flopping into his bed.

After bringing Ray back to his room, Ashley once again returned to the dining hall and began drinking some alcohol by herself.

*My head's feeling confused after everything that's happened today. I wonder what I should do about my relationship with him from now on . . .*

After her disappointment towards Ray's pathetic performance in his first battle against the lizardmen, Ashley had intended to abandon him. Of course, since he was her life savior, she planned to look after him until he was able to be independent. However, similar to how she had felt about him in the beginning, this time her feelings toward him had also warmed up and then all at once, suddenly cooled.

Although he had somehow managed to hold a fight in the end, her feelings towards him shouldn't have changed.

And yet, when speaking with him, she had casually let out the words "If you want to stand beside me . . ." Ashley had no idea what she was thinking at that

time.

After she heard Ray's subsequent apology and witnessed him desperately practicing his magic, her evaluation of him once again changed.

*I don't know if he had worked himself so hard because he wanted to be with me, but it's not exactly something I can ask . . . I wonder what he actually thinks? . . . since meeting him, not even two days have passed. Despite that, what is this feeling?*

Not knowing how to deal with her various emotions, Ashley ended up drinking a bit more alcohol than usual.

The next morning, when Ray opened his eyes he welcomed the morning feeling refreshed.

*Although I was worried about how I would feel today after exhausting my magical energy, it looks like it was a needless worry.*

The weather was also good today. His eyes had opened due to the rays of the morning sun which had streamed through the crevices of the wooden window together with the break of dawn. Since the time was just right, Ray immediately put on his equipment and headed for the back of the inn.

For some reason, Ashley was not yet present, so he had to begin his practice alone. After swinging by himself for around thirty minutes, a sleepy-looking Ashley arrived.

"Good morning, you're quite late today. Perhaps you were too worried about me last night to sleep?"

While looking slightly ill-humored, Ashley shook her head.

"No, I just drank a bit too much last night. The sleepiness will go away immediately after I start sweating. After we've warmed up, want to spar?"

Ten minutes passed, and they began the mock-battle with one holding a wooden sword and the other holding a wooden rod. It seemed like Ray really was compatible with the spear after all, since he seemed to improve even further than yesterday.

"It's as I thought, you're quite talented with the spear. What level is your

spearmanship skill at?”

“I can’t see my skills . . . I don’t know why though . . .”

“Never mind, don’t worry about it. Based on how I felt during our exchange, it’s probably around level twenty or thirty. A level that’s more than enough for a soldier to make a living.”

Having been given the stamp of approval by Ashley who was a mercenary, Ray felt slightly comforted.

*We should also be accepting a monster subjugation request today. I’m happy even if she said that just to make me feel better. Let’s do our best not to show her an unsightly appearance today.*

The two sweated for another thirty minutes and then passed through the guild entrance once again at the same time of eight o’clock.

Identical to yesterday, the bulletin board was crowded with people. When Ray asked Ashley about what kind of request they were going to accept, she replied, “We’re aiming for a big one today.” She then showed him the request slip.

“A grizzly appeared near Latley Village which we went to yesterday. He’s going to be the one we’re taking down. There’s a possibility that we’ll have to spend the night at Latley today.”

Not knowing why they had to stay over at the village, Ray inquired about the reason.

“The area of activity of a grizzly bear is quite wide. Since its active area is divided into separate parts by the two lakes, the area we have to search is even larger. It’s best to think that if we go now and have good luck then the most we can do is find its trail.”

While wondering if that really was the case, Ray recalled the stories he’d heard about the Matagi and then, accepted it. (TL: [Matagi](#) were traditional winter bear hunters of Japan.)

*Now that she mentions it, I’ve heard that the Matagi had to enter the mountains for several days. Not only that, they also brought hunting dogs with*

*them. For us who don't have any means of tracking the bear, it's probably a mistake to think that we can find it in a single day.*

Ray's theory was actually slightly off. Different from the monsters of this world, the bears of Japan were fundamentally timid animals. Compared to them, the monsters and wild beasts of this world actively attacked humans, rarely ever deciding to run away and hide.

Even if they were to hunt down monsters without any dogs, the monsters would attack them on their own. So it wasn't like the adventurers of this world were better at tracking than hunting dogs.

## Part 6

Upon the slip for the grizzly subjugation request were the words, “Subjugation of grizzly in the vicinity of Dramenie Lake and Cloony Lake: Reward of 100 Crona.” It was a considerable reward amount.

Despite the reward being this much, why did it remain left behind? Feeling curious, Ray once again asked Ashley. According to her explanation, the grizzly bear was a fifth rank monster, meaning that in a one on one confrontation, a fifth rank adventurer or three to four sixth rank adventurers were necessary. In theory, six to eight novice adventurers who were at the seventh or eighth rank also had the ability to accept this request. If that many people were needed to go on a two day subjugation trip, then the hundred Crona reward was no longer very attractive. Furthermore, the grizzly bear had high defensive capabilities, even attacks from bows wouldn't be very effective. Because of that, it was safer and more profitable to aim for monsters and beasts with lower defensive power if you were looking for a reward of the same level.

If that was the case, why wasn't the reward higher? Upon asking, Ray learned that the reason was the same as it was for the extermination of the lizardmen. The village simply couldn't afford to raise it any higher.

Based on the scale of Latley village, issuing a reward of one hundred Crona for a one time request was their limit. Furthermore, even if they were to exterminate a large wild beast like the grizzly bear, if another monster or wild beast of the same level were to immediately appear, the village's funds wouldn't be able to handle it.

*I see, someone should eventually come to subjugate the bear as the number of requests decrease. The best case is that no damages are incurred until that happens, but if things start to get more serious, then they'll be able to raise the reward continuously without stopping. That's seems to be their plan.*

With the request slip in hand, the two of them headed for the receptionist counter.

Although the adventurers who had seen Ray's exhausted figure yesterday gazed at them with chilly looks, Ashley once again ignored them and sat herself on the seat before the counter.

The receptionist, Edsel, who had taken care of Ray's registration said with a worried face,

"This may be rude but, setting aside Ashley-sama, isn't this request a bit too much for Ray-sama? Since you seemed quite tired yesterday, wouldn't it be better to choose a slightly easier request -"

Ashley cut her off, "It's fine. I'm glad to know that you're worried for him but Ray consented to this himself. Could please you authorize the request now?" With a slightly grumpy attitude, she held out her orb.

Unable to say anything more, Edsel silently carried out her duty as a receptionist.

Once the authorization procedure was finished, Ashley immediately stood up and headed out. Ray thanked Edsel for her concern and following behind Ashley, exited the the guild.

Edsel felt uneasy as she gazed at their retreating figures.

*Is it really going to be okay? Although I don't think she would make a mistake in her judgement, it's hard to believe that they can return safely based on what I saw of their condition yesterday . . .*

After looking at the entrance the two people had exited one last time, she immediately devoted her attention towards her duties.

Ray and Ashley once again rented two horses and headed for Latley village.

The repeated the same process as yesterday and asked for some information from Kieran, the village chief. However, the information didn't yield any particular clues that could be used to find the bear. Ashley began walking towards the nearby forest, thinking that this was the first thing they should do for the time being.

Ray called out to Ashley who was beginning to walk off, "There was something I thought of . . ."

He proposed that the first head to the place where they had fought the lizardmen yesterday.

Although he didn't really know how sharp the grizzly's sense of smell was, if it had been able to catch the scent of all that blood, then there was a possibility that it had gone there to eat the lizardmen's corpses. Even if we suppose that it hadn't gone there, it still might have approached near the area.

"Although that might be true, we'll also have to consider the possibility of other carnivorous monsters lurking around there . . . well . . . I can't imagine there being any monsters here that could be stronger than the grizzly though. Let's try going with that."

The went back to the village chief's house once again and then in the same way as yesterday, were ferried across the opposite bank of the lake.

However, this time, they told Koda that they would send a signal to him with magic. He would come pick them up after seeing it. After he left, they entered the forest.

They arrived at the place where they fought the lizardmen at ten o'clock in the morning.

The lizardmen's corpses had basically been completely devoured. Among the corpses, large bite marks that looked like they had come from a large monster were found.

"Seems like it's already come here. It only ate the internal organs of the lizardmen's corpses and left the flesh that was covered in their tough skin alone. There's a high possibility that it's still lurking somewhere around here . . ."

The two of them found the bear's footprints and began to carefully follow them. The bear went to the banks of the lake, returned deep into the forest, and then seemed to wander around but then somehow or another, ended up returning back to the lake. It seemed like it was still there.

Ashley pulled out her sword and then very carefully quieted her footsteps as she cautioned Ray, "Don't drop your guard."

“The grizzly’s probably in this area. Try to get a drop on it with your magic. The bear is faster than it looks, so don’t be too worried if you miss it.”

Ray nodded and gripped his spear. He continued walking behind Ashley while also paying attention to his footsteps.

After ten minutes, they found a giant bear drinking water from the side of the lake.

The grizzly was covered in grayish brown fur and was at a position that was roughly twenty meters away from the two humans. (TL: 20 meters  $\approx$  [bowling lane](#)) It was a big-game animal, with a body that was more than three meters in length. (TL: christmas tree  $\approx$  2.3 meters) Although there was still quite some distance between, the grizzly seemed to have noticed them through its sense of smell. As its lips curled back in a low growl, the grizzly stood up on its hind legs. It once again lowered its head and then began to rush towards them.

Without a moment of delay, Ray immediately invoked the magic which he had so earnestly practiced yesterday and an arrow of light materialized before him.

The arrow of light glared a brilliant bright white and then launched itself towards the grizzly bear’s face, its speed continuously accelerating.

The bear seemed to not think that the small arrow was not much of a threat. Other than turning its head to avoid the troublesome thing, it continued to charge at them without stopping.

Aiming for the bear’s face, the arrow rapidly began to alter its trajectory.

Regardless of whether or not it was a total fluke, the arrow of light managed to lodge itself deeply into the bear’s right eye. Half of the arrow’s total length, approximately twenty centimeters, was now inside the bear’s eye. The arrow of light then burst open, as if someone had smashed it apart, and then disappeared. (TL: 20 cm  $\approx$  half of bowling pin’s height)

After the grizzly bear’s body pitched forward and collapsed, all four of its limbs violently convulsed. Within several seconds, the convulsions calmed down and then as if its body had been hardened, the bear’s body completely stopped moving. The point of the arrow seemed to have reached the brain. An apparent instant kill.

“Eeh? Are we done?” Ray looked in Ashley’s direction.

*This guy managed to land a critical hit? . . . nevertheless, this counts as combat . . . is this what they call beginner’s luck . . .*

She froze in mute amazement. And then, while feeling like there was something disappointing, remained vigilant as she watched for hints of the grizzly bear rising back up.

“Somehow or another, it seems like it’s actually dead. Were you aiming for its eye? . . . no, you couldn’t have advanced this far from training . . . how are your magical energy reserves holding up?”

While bitterly smiling, Ray replied,

“I was only aiming for its face . . . my reserves are fine. I think I only exhausted my magical energy yesterday because I shot too many thunderbolts . . . if it’s these light arrows, I have a feeling that I should be able to launch twenty or thirty more.”

Ashley shook her head in disbelief as she carefully approached the grizzly bear to collect its magic stone.

Thinking that the bear might be playing dead, Ray watched over Ashlye, his body in a posture that was ready to jump in and support her at any time. Although they took great pains to confirm it, it seemed like the grizzly bear had really died after all, as it was no longer breathing. Ashley successfully extracted a relatively large magic stone that had a diameter of three cemers. (TL: [2 aspirins side by side](#)  $\approx$  3 cm)

## Part 7

Since they had completed the request too quickly, there would be quite some time before the boat would arrive to pick them up. In order to signal that they were already finished, Ray decided to try using fire elemental magic. He called to mind the image of something resembling fireworks. The magic would involve launching a ball of fire up into the sky and then detonating it.

*I want to shoot up a ball of fire and make it explode in the sky, but how should I do it? Even if I try to imagine gunpowder, the spirits probably won't be able to understand it . . . if I launch up a ball of air together with the fire . . . would it be ignited by the fire and expand? . . . no, if I do that, it might suddenly explode without warning on me. Argh, let's just forget the difficult things and imagine an explosion in the sky.*

He gave up thinking any further and in order to for the fire spirits to understand, called to mind an image of fireworks that was as vivid as possible.

After around twenty seconds, a ball of fire took shape on his left hand. He threw the ball up into the air and it began to steadily ascend. When it rose to a height above the treetops, it burst open with a loud popping noise and then expanded to a size comparable to those fireworks sold in the market.

Although the explosion didn't appear very glamorous since the sky was still bright, it still managed to create a cloud of white smoke that floated in the air.

*Well, seems like it worked. It ended up being more shabby looking than I expected though. Still, it's probably good enough to replace a signal fire . . .*

Ray wasn't able to feel satisfied since he had imagined a slightly bigger firework.

As for Ashley who was standing next him, she wasn't able to conceal her surprise.

*What was that just now? Although I thought for sure that he was just launching a normal fireball, his magic managed to so far as to create sound . . .*

*if this was properly utilized in a night attack, it could cause considerable confusion to the enemy . . .*

As Ashley recalled her time as a mercenary, she was able to immediately realize the worth of this magic which she had never seen before.

“What was that magic just now? Was that also an original of yours?”

Without noticing the serious expression upon Ashley’s face, Ray embarrassedly told her about the magic he believed had gone unsuccessfully.

“Ah, I thought that it would be a good idea to add sound since we want them to notice us. The explosion was a bit dull though . . . I was expecting the fire to spread out a bit wider . . .”

Ashley’s grave expression didn’t slip an inch as she heard Ray’s casual tone.

“Don’t show the magic you used just now to anyone. Since it’s still considerably rare and could be useful in ambushes. It might become troublesome if the military were to know of this.”

A short time later, Koda arrived to pick them up in his boat.

“What was that magic earlier? It’s the first time I’ve seen such a thing.”

Ray bitterly smiled and tried to give an excuse, “My magic failed.” In an attempt to change the topic, Ashley began talking about the bear in a cheerful tone.

“The grizzly bear’s been killed. The bear’s body is mostly free from any wounds since we defeated it by penetrating its eye. If you could help us transport it, we’ll pay you for the labor.”

“You’ve already defeated it?!” Koda’s eyes widened as he couldn’t help expressing his shock. However, he immediately replied, “Please give me an hour! I’m going to call everyone over.” and then furiously paddled back towards the village.

Even faster than he had promised, within forty minutes a group of fishermen were assembled upon the lake’s shore.

The grizzly bear weight close to one ton and although it was a considerable

struggle, they managed to safely bring the whole thing back to the village. While reporting the completion of the quest to the village chief, they asked if he could buy the grizzly bear from them.

“You want to sell the grizzly to me? . . . hm, since it’s fairly large, how does one gold coin sound? One hundred Crona.”

Since Ray had no idea what the market price was, he told Ashley, “I’m leaving it to you.” and assumed the role of a bystander.

After thinking for a short moment, Ashley consented to the deal. They paid twenty silver coins, in other words, twenty Crona, to the fisherman who had given them a hand and then left the village.

Since they had completed the request more quickly than expected, the two of them decided to go to the forest yesterday for Ray to practice his magic.

Ray received a warning from Ashley, “Be careful not to exhaust your magic again.”

While smiling, Ray replied, “I won’t fire off my magic continuously like yesterday. I promise.” and began to practice his magic.

*Let’s practice tree and earth magic today . . .*

Rau wondered if he could turn the roots of a tree into a weapon with the the tree element.

*After rapidly growing the tree roots, they could be thrust up from below. If I could harden the ends of the roots, they might be able to replace my spear . . .*

Ray called to mind the image of a tree root growing. His memories were based on a sped up video he had seen of a plant rapidly growing. A long time ago, he had seen a documentary on the growth of trees in the forest on his television.

A root was beginning to crawl out from near his feet. However, it was slower than he had expected. When he touched it, it seemed to be a normal root, with a tender sponginess.

*This can’t be used as a spear . . . however, if I can control this freely, then I wonder if it could be used as a binding restraint? An image of it freely moving . .*

*. that would be . . . a carnivorous plant? No, this world should have plant-type monsters. If I try to imagine something like that . . .*

He invoked the magic once again.

The tree root crept out of the ground in the same manner as before, but this time, it moved about as quickly as a snake. Still not nearly enough to restrain any human though.

*Still too slow . . . was it a mistake to expect more power from a plant? Power? Hm, what if I make it bend and then release all that power at once . . .*

He forced the tree root to bend into a shape resembling a bow and then made use of the recoil. As he release the potential force, the root lashed back with the force of a whip, releasing a loud snapping sound.

*It's a success! If I can make the root soft enough to wrap something, and then harden it rapidly, this is going to be quite an effective magic. Especially in forests . . . although I haven't determine its usable range yet, I need to move onto the the next one.*

For the next one, earth elemental magic, Ray wondered if it could be used to fashion a pitfall. He tried to convey the image of a fissure opening up in the ground, of the earth separating apart, to the earth spirits.

*A fissure in the ground . . . an image of the earth's tectonic plates rubbing together . . . uwah!*

The moment he conveyed the idea of moving tectonic plates to the spirits, no fissure opened up in the ground. Rather, it was an earthquake that sprung forth.

Although it wasn't of a very great intensity, the earthquake still managed to toss up the ground. Even Ray who had cast the magic himself ended up falling onto his rump due to the oscillations. Also startled by the vibrations, Ashley shouted, "Are you alright?!"

Looking embarrassed, Ray replied, "I'm fine." He brushed off the dust on his body and stood back up.

*Won't this magic be unexpectedly useful. Although I don't know how hard the*

*ground needs to be until this becomes ineffective, if I can make an enemy fall over, then we'll gain a considerably advantageous position . . . however, I'm going to be injured if I don't pay more careful attention while trying out new magic . . .*

Although Ray felt like his magical power could still go on, he decided to stop here for today in order to not worry Ashley.

*Seems like there's at least three more hours left, so I might as well polish my spear and sword skills some more when we get back. I want the ability to stand on my own as soon as possible.*

And so, the two of them returned to town.

Ashley and Ray headed to the adventurers guild to report their completion of the request.

It was still three o'clock in the afternoon when they arrived. As it was a fairly early time for adventurers to be coming back, most of the receptionist counters were empty. Thinking that it was probably fine to carry out the completion procedures with their acquaintance, Edsel, they walked towards her counter.

Although Edsel handled the work with an indifferent outward appearance, inwardly she was actually quite shocked that they had only taken this much time for a grizzly subjugation request. Suddenly, she noticed something as she gazed fixedly at their orbs, and couldn't help raising her voice.

"Ray-sama . . . is now a seventh rank adventurer. Furthermore, he . . . he's reached level ten . . . for this to happen in only two days . . . I . . ."

In the end, she didn't know what else to say, and remained silent. As she heard Edsel's words, Ashley also stared with a surprised expression at Ray, who was sitting right beside her.

"He's risen three ranks, you say? Not only that, he jumped ten levels in one go . . . well, he managed to defeat the grizzly bear, a fifth rank monster, by himself in one swoop . . . I have a feeling that might be why . . ."

"B-by himself?! Ah, sorry for raising my voice. However, you really didn't assist him at all?"

In response to the abnormality that didn't fit her common sense, Edsel lost her usual composure and unintentionally used a loud voice as she spoke with them. However, she immediately re-assumed her usual expression. Well, the only thing she could manage at this moment was a slightly cramped smile though.

## Part 8

“Ah, he defeated the grizzly by himself before I even had the chance to lend him a hand. I can’t tell you how he defeated it though.”

Ashley didn’t forget that it was necessary to conceal Ray’s magic. She didn’t intend to say anything even if the other person were a guild employee like Edsel.

Before their surroundings became too rowdy, the two of them accepted their reward and swiftly stood up to leave the guild.

While they were on their way back to the inn, Ashley only said, “Please tell me your level and skills later.” For the rest of the time, she silently walked ahead while thinking.

*He was definitely only at level one in the beginning. I’ve never heard of something like this happening before . . . in the first place, it’s already strange that he can’t confirm his skills . . . considering all the strange things he’s shown in front of me, I wouldn’t be too surprised if someone told me he was sent by god . . .*

Based on her long experience within her father’s mercenary band, Ashley knew that a person’s level and skills advanced at roughly the same rate. For example, even if you didn’t have any real combat experience, if your training was at a level that could raise your skills, then your level would also naturally rise as a different type of experience accumulated.

Rarely was anyone called a genius. However, even a so-called genius would have to advance their skills and level at essentially the same rate, starting from around the point when one of their skills surpassed the tenth level.

As far she knew, even the quickest people took at least one year to rise from level one to level ten. If people were told that there was someone who could go from one to ten in merely two days, they would probably laugh their faces off.

Immediately upon returning to their rooms within the inn, Rai looked at his

skills and level.

“For my level, it says . . . magic spearman, level ten? As for my skills . . . yeah, it’s the same as before. I can’t confirm anything.”

“Is that so . . . it’s my first time seeing someone’s level jump so suddenly. Ray, do you really not have any clue as to why this is happening? Has anything happened lately? Maybe some kind of message from god, that kind of thing?”

He could only groan, not saying anything.

*Should I tell Ashley everything? I’m worried doing that will strain our relationship from now on . . . it’s still not the right time yet . . .*

He pretended to think for around ten seconds and then answered, “No, I really can’t think of anything.” Although Ashley didn’t seem to be very convinced, she didn’t push the matter any further.

Ray began recalling the setting he had written for the guild’s ranking system and the world’s occupation level.

*The guild’s ranking system should be based on their members’ level of contribution. A person’s level contribution should multiply several times if they were to accept a request that’s ranked higher than them. Since I completed a fifth rank request, it shouldn’t be too strange for me to be promoted three ranks . . .*

Ray had actually risen to the ninth rank yesterday after defeating the lizardmen, who were seventh rank monsters. However, he didn’t have the chance to confirm this himself since he was magically exhausted.

It wasn’t rare to see people with considerable ability jumping several ranks after registering at the guild for the first time. However, jumping three ranks at once was only possible for those who possessed skills befitting of a fifth rank. In other words, this indicated that Ray’s actual strength was equivalent to a fifth ranked adventurer.

*As for the occupation level, that’s merely displayed as a person’s overall “level” and is displayed as either the value of their accumulated experience or skills, whichever one is lower . . .*

In his setting, occupation level only represented how skillful someone, a swordsman or an archer for example, was in their occupation. This was displayed as their level and was the number was equivalent to either the value of their experience or technical skill, whichever one was lower. If one only had experience and didn't possess appropriate skill, they wouldn't be able to demonstrate their full power. Conversely, even if one had skill, if they didn't have experience then they also wouldn't be at their full potential.

It might be easier to understand if you imagine a seasoned veteran who has accumulated considerable experience and pretend that he is going to fight a trained young swordsman. If the swordsman who was formally trained doesn't have any actual combat experience, then the veteran has a high chance of winning. However, if the swordsman has some degree of experience then wouldn't he have a higher chance of winning?

Experience and skill were two sides of the same coin. Strength couldn't be measured with just one or the other. That was the kind of setting he thought up.

*I'm now a magic spearman who has accumulated enough experience for level ten. Meaning that both my magic and spearmanship are at the tenth level. Have I finally reached a level comparable to a new soldier . . . doing that in two days, I'm not exactly sure if that's fast or slow . . . I'll need to confirm my skill by sparring with Ashley again.*

Ray wasn't able to comprehend why Ashley was so surprised.

Although level ten was certainly the level of a new recruit, Ray was only at level one when he registered two days ago. No matter how you rushed it, turning a complete amateur like that into a soldier would take at least one month. Furthermore, that soldier wouldn't have even reached the tenth level yet.

Ashley wondered if Ray had really become someone with that degree skill.

And so, the two of them suddenly looked at each other and said, "Let's confirm it!" They then headed straight for the back of the inn.

Even as they began sparring, Ray's movements weren't much better than yesterday morning. Ray personally felt relieved that he hadn't changed much.

*True battlefield experience can only be acquired through life and death experiences after all. Since this isn't a game world, hard-set values aren't absolute . . . training and combat are completely different. I learned that the hard way yesterday . . . even though I'm now as strong as a new soldier, there's still plenty of space for improvement. I don't need to be worried about things like levels.*

Ashley on the other hand, was feeling bewildered.

*Despite his sudden rise in level, his movements haven't changed very much. Although training and actual combat are different, after reaching level ten, there shouldn't be this much a difference between the two . . . does this have something to do with his lost memories? . . . ugh, I suppose that in Ray's case, it'll be pointless no matter how much I think about his level.*

Due to different reasons, the two people came to the same conclusion that they didn't need to be too fixated on levels.

They continued exchange light blows until it was time for dinner.

# Chapter 5: Crisis

## Part 1

Starting from the next day, they actively accepted a number of subjugation requests.

In addition to beasts like mountain boars and fanged monkeys, they also subjugated fungus, mushroom type monsters, and a giant leech that was three meters in length.

Ray tried to avoid using his magic as much as possible in order to improve his spear and sword skills and gain experience with close combat. The result after seven days was that he had risen to the thirteenth level.

By experimenting with his magic everyday, Ray increased his repertoire of original magics with a light magic he named “Flare” and a composite magic of water and earth he named “Quagmire”.

The two of them always partnered up together and before long, the surrounding adventurers saw them being together as a normal thing.

Ten days after Ray had become an adventurer, on April the twelfth, the mercenary guild contacted Ashley.

Now that they had decided upon the remuneration amount for the mercenaries’ betrayal, the guild requested that she visit their branch office. The following day, Ashley headed for the guild together with Ray.

The two of them left the inn at a later time than they normally did and walked towards the guild while casually carrying out their usual conversation.

“Have you decided? The reward from guild.”

“Ah, it’s going to be money after all. I’m going to accept whatever amount the guild proposes.”

At that moment, a voice suddenly called out from behind them.

“How’re you doing, Ashley?”

He turned his head, and saw a man in his thirties standing there. The air of an adventurer surrounded him and a [scimitar](#) was hanging at his waist. (TL: curved sword)

With his black hair tied behind his back and a finely chiseled olive-skinned face that was reminiscent of a gypsy, he seemed to be the type of man who was popular with women.

For an instant, an unpleasant expression flashed across Ashley’s face. She turned her head around and only said, “It really has been a long time, hasn’t it, Seron. I’m in a hurry right now, so you’ll have to excuse me.” and then briskly strode forward.

“Don’t say something so heartless. We have a relationship together, do we not . . .?”

Not letting him continue, Ashley cut him off,

“Will you stop saying things that will invite misunderstandings. The relationship between you and me, is nothing more than fellow adventurers residing in the same town. Ray, let’s go!”

Without bothering to hide her displeased expression any longer, she pulled Ray by the arm and attempted to depart from the place. However, the man named Saron continued in a provocative manner,

“Is that guy, your “man”? Seems like you’ve managed to snag a rich kid from somewhere. Well, whatever. One of these days, I’ll make you my woman whether you like it or not.”

After uttering those words, Seron took his leave.



Although Ray wasn't sure what to say,

“Who was that just now? He gave off a slightly malicious feeling . . .”

With a truly irritated expression on her face, Ashley replied,

“Seron’s a fourth rank adventurer. Although his skill isn’t bad, his personality is . . . at any rate, he’s been trying to approach me and I have no idea why. That kind of man really isn’t my type though. At this point, I don’t know how many times I’ve refused him . . . and yet, he continues to follow me around, even now.”

Ray now understood that Seron was some kind of stalker.

*He must be considerably skilled to be a fourth rank adventurer. After all, he’s strong enough to make Ashley say “his skill isn’t bad”.*

“Ray, you should also be careful. He’s someone who won’t hesitate to use methods bordering on being illegal.”

Thinking that Ray had now caught the attention of a dangerous man, she seemed to be sympathising for him.

*Well, now matter what happens, he won’t be able to commit any outright criminal acts, since there’s the existence of the orb. Besides, we can always leave this town if we need to . . .*

Ray didn’t ponder too deeply about the matter. After all, stalkers were a never ending problem even for Japan, a nation that had police organizations put into place . . .

Although the mood was now soured, they eventually arrived at the mercenaries’ guild.

They requested a meeting with Kottler, the branch chief, and were let into his office after waiting for roughly five minutes.

“Sorry for the wait. The reparation payments for you have finally been determined. One thousand Crona. Phonsu headquarters was hesitant about this, since you weren’t a client, but a mercenary registered at our guild. I have to apologize . . .”

Kottler apologized to Ashley since his negotiations with the main branch in Phonsu, the Lacus Kingdom’s capital, hadn’t gone too well.

“No, don’t mind it. After all, I can’t deny that I wasn’t also careless during the escort mission.”

“Thank you for your kind words . . . the reward for subjugating the bandits’ and the proceeds from the sale of their equipment are a total of 1500 Crona. This is the limit of what our branch here in Molton can give, so although it’s only a little, we’ve also added a little extra money in there.”

Ashley conveyed her thanks to the branch chief and accepted the leather bag that was filled with gold coins.

The branch chief then turned towards Ray and asked, “Ray-dono, about the matter of a reward from our guild. Have you decided what it will be?”

“If possible, I would like to request money . . .”

“Understood.” The chief made a large nod, and continued,

“I’ll try to convince headquarters to hand over to you as much as possible. Although it’s regrettable, I have to ask that you give me around ten days.”

Discussions ended. Just as they were about to leave the room, Kottler added,

“Have you thought about becoming a mercenary, Ray-dono? If you’ve registered at the adventurers guild, then the procedures here are simple.”

“For the moment, I’d rather have monster and wild beasts as my opponents instead of humans . . . sorry.”

He lightly bowed his head and left the room.

*Actually “killing a human” is going to be impossible for me. It’s bearable if it’s for the sake of protecting myself, but I’ll never get used to “killing” as an occupation. I want to avoid having human opponents as much as possible . . .*

This was how strong feelings were towards the matter. Although he had vowed in his heart to throw away the common sense of Japan, he couldn’t help feeling hesitant about killing humans. Pointing his weapon at humans.

Because they had gone to the mercenaries guild, their schedule was now messed up. They hadn’t planned to accept any requests today anyway. However, there was still too much time left since their business with the guild had concluded earlier than expected.

Although Ray couldn't think of anything in particular he needed to do, Ashley said, "There's still quite some time left. Want to take a stroll through town? Ah, before we do that, could you store away my money for me? I'm afraid it would be much more insecure otherwise . . ." and held out the leather bag to him.

"Alright." After finding a deserted place with few people, Ray stored the leather bag into his item box.

*Although this is certainly safer, it sure is inconvenient to have to hide every time I want to deposit or withdraw something.*

The two people then began their carefree stroll through town.

Although Ashley already lived in this town for more than a year, it seemed like she still hadn't taken many of these kinds of strolls yet. Even as she explained various things to him, she would periodically show an expression of admiration while walking through the town.

They headed towards the residential district at the top of the hill, the central part of town. Different from the commercial district on the southern side, there were small brick and mortar stores lined up along the streets. In the narrow alleyways were numerous grocery stores and general stores that sold things like clothes and accessories to the common citizen.

Energetic voices of old men called out from the fish markets. Vegetables of various colors were lined up neatly in rows. The delicious and tempting scent of bread wafted over from the bakeries. Although they were only walking, the experience was plenty enjoyable for the two people.

*If you think about this carefully, isn't this a date? Eh? My first date??? I feel like the tension has suddenly gone up . . .*

Since Ray had never really associated deeply with any particular woman until now, naturally, he had also never gone a date before.

*What should I do? Act normally? I wonder how Ashley thinks about this?*

Utterly ignorant of Ray's thoughts right now, Ashley saw his face redden all of a sudden, and asked, "What's wrong?" Unable to say anything, he could only shake his head in response.

Worried about his strange state, Ashley brought her face closer to him. However, that only caused his face to redden even further.

After saying, "I'm fine, it really is nothing." he then pointed at the windmills in the distance in an attempt to change to subject.

"I was wondering about this earlier, but, what are those giant windmills used for?"

"Ah, those things? They're used to pump up water, I think. I've heard that after being pumped up to the top of the hill, the drinking water is then supplied out to the rest of the city."

There were large water tanks behind the baron's mansion at the top of the hill. These tanks seemed to supply water to each of the districts in town. Incidentally, this town was also equipped with a sewage system. Compared to the medieval towns of old, Molton was relatively free from any foul smells. This was something that went unnoticed by Ray though.

Some time later, the pair continued towards the commercial district.

The reason for this, was because Ray said that he wanted to visit a weapons store. However, since they didn't really need to buy anything in particular, Ashley couldn't understand why he wanted to go.

"Don't we both have enough weapons already? Why would you want to go to a weapons store?"

## Part 2

Since he was feeling strangely conscious of himself even though they were simply talking a walk, Ray thought that it would be a good idea to visit a weapons store. A common subject which both of them could easily relate to. However, that wasn't the only reason. If he were compelled to give a better reason, it would be that since he had gone through the trouble of ending up in a fantasy world, he might as well go look at a weapons store. Something that has often appeared in numerous video games. Basically, he didn't really have a good reason.

*Would it be strange if I told her that I want to visit a weapons store just because I want to see it? Maybe I should give her a more acceptable reason?*

And so, in a slightly unnatural manner, Ray began to explain the purpose behind this visit to the curious Ashley.

"The spear I'm currently using is too powerful, so I don't know if my ability is actually improving or not. I thought that it might be better to try completing requests with a normal spear . . ."

"Oh, so that's why. It's probably better if you gain experience with various weapons. However, don't spend your money unnecessarily."

Although it felt like Ashley's agreement was slightly passive, they both agreed to go to the weapons store.

Upon entering the store, they were greeted with the sight of various weapons such as swords, spears, hatchets, and clubs, lined up around the room. The store interior was strongly dyed in the mixed odors of iron, oil, and leather. Ray swept his gaze around with great interest.

*Seeing this kind of thing really reminds me that I've come to a fantasy world. Just looking at these oiled blades is enough to make my heart pound. Especially since the oil isn't used to maintain them in someplace like a museum, but is*

*actually used to ready them for genuine combat. It would be truly nice if people didn't use these kinds of things to kill each other though . . .*

Deep from within the store, a human man with a solid build came out. He seemed to be in his mid-forties. No matter how you looked at him, you would think he was a blacksmith.

“What are you looking for? If you tell me, I can pick it out for you.”

Ray couldn't bring himself to say that he was only here to look around, and replied, “Could you show me your spears? About as long as this one.” He showed him Alvim Korn, the spear in his hand.

Morris Sheridan, the blacksmith, gazed at the spear and said,

“Do think it needs any repairs?” However, he immediately noticed that Ray's spear was considerably well-built. “Oh? Could you let me see that spear for a moment?” With a slightly helpless expression, Ray handed his spear to Morris.

“Urgh! What, is up with this weight! Can you really use this?”

Ray's spear, Alvim Korn, had a weight reduction magical formula drawn on it, just as his armor, Nix Vestis also did. He was the only one who could wield it with the same weight as an ordinary spear. Its true weight though, was actually several times heavier than typical spears. Fifteen kigrans. (TL: Two times the weight of a bowling ball)

“Yes, I can use it. However, I would prefer a light spear if possible, so please show me your normal spears.”

After returning Alvim Korn to him, Morris came out from the back of the store holding a short spear with a spear tip of roughly twenty cemers (TL: ¼ of a man's footstep).

Ray accepted the spear and gave it a few light swings.

*It's about as heavy as the spear I usually use. Seems like the weight reduction magic is considerably effective. Since we're only window-shopping today, I'll consider buying this some other time.*

Ray told the blacksmith, “We're only taking a look today.” and returned to him the spear.

Morris gazed at Alvim Korn, seemingly reluctant to part with it.

“If you ever need that spear repaired, take it here. Ah, no, I mean, please let me repair it.”

“I’m not offended . . . alright, I’ll entrust the spear to you next time then.”

And so, both of them exited Morris’ store.

Now alone, the blacksmith absentmindedly thought about the two.

*That spear was forged abnormally well. Good enough to be called “God’s Spear” . . . however, who was that young man? Ashley was together with him . . .*

Although Morris had worked as a blacksmith for well over thirty years, this was the most splendid weapon he had ever laid his eyes on. He muttered quietly to himself, “I hope I’ll be able to hold it longer next time.”

The day after their stroll through town, the two came to the guild branch early in the morning to accept requests.

The sky was overcast, densely covered in thick grey clouds. Although it didn’t seem like it would rain for now, there was probably going to be a heavy downpour tomorrow. The adventurers around them muttered such things.

While gazing at the bulletin board, Ashley said, “This should keep us busy for the whole day. Since it seems like there’s going to be rain soon, subjugating giant toads seems like a good choice.” She took a single slip into her hand.

Ray tilted his head, “Giant toads? Why something like that?”

Ashley murmured, “I suppose you wouldn’t know of them?” However, she immediately explained,

“These toads are easily frightened, so they rarely come out of their lakes. However, for some reason, they appear within forests on days where it’s about to rain. Requesters want us to kill these guys whenever the opportunity arises, so the reward during this period will be especially high.”

Ray nodded, “I see.”

The giant toad was approximately 1.5 mertos long. (TL: height of average

refrigerator = ~1.8 meters) Its main means of attack were its long tongue and a paralysis-type poison that gushed out from the surface of its body. Although the toad was usually a docile monster, it fiercely bred during the period between spring and summer. In order to reduce their numbers as much as possible, before their breeding period, requests would always come out in this season, spring.

With their request selected, the two of them began heading towards the receptionists' counter. However, there, they once again came face to face with the man who they had met yesterday. Seron.

“What is this, you're also doing toad extermination? Why don't we do it together?”

Seron initiated the conversation, his words directed at Ashley.

“No, Ray and I are more than enough for this request. Could you stop meddling with us?”

After saying those words, she tried to walk away from Seron.

Seron grabbed her arm and said,

“Don't be shy. Rather than such a pale-looking guy, you'll have much more fun with me. The other guys are also waiting, so let's get on our way.”

Ashley fiercely shook off her arm, and glared at Seron.

“Don't touch me! How many times have I said this. I'm going to be doing this request with Ray!”

Upon hearing her shout, the inside of the guild sunk into silence.

A few saw Seron and slightly shook their heads while thinking, “Here he goes again.” However, for some reason or another, an atmosphere that was sympathetic towards Seron hung in the air.

*What is up with this atmosphere? Isn't it obvious that Ashley's not at fault here? What's going on?*

Ray was unable to comprehend the strange atmosphere. However, although bewildered, he felt that it would be best if they didn't stick around here any longer than necessary. He grasped Ashley's hand and said, “Let's go.”, leading

her out of the guild.

Seron gazed at their retreating figures with hatred in his expression.

*Making a fool out of me . . . that woman, she's just like her father, looking down on me. I was thinking about forgiving her if she submitted herself to me. However, on top of ignoring me, she goes around holding another man's dick in her mouth . . . damn it, no matter where I go, I'm made to be the fool. I've had a enough. I'll show what happens to those who treat me as a fool . . .*

Ashley wasn't aware of this, but ten years ago, Seron had challenged her father, Hamish Marquardt, to a duel, and was overwhelmingly defeated.

During that period, he was absolutely overflowing self-confidence and still hadn't thrown away his dream of becoming a first rank adventurer. And so, he challenged Hamish, one of the most prominent masters of the sword in the Lacus Kingdom. However, said mentioned previously, the result was his utter defeat. Although it was a mock battle, Seron was completely beat up until no area of his body was unwounded.

The words which Hamish said at the conclusion of their duel, "Know yourself", changed Seron's life.

Hamish was only telling Seron, a young man who still had quite some ways to go, to abandon his bloated sense of self-conceit. However, Seron interpreted his words as saying, "You're worthless."

With pride in tatters, from that point on, Seron frequently lost his temper and the companions who were together with him gradually left. And so in that manner, he eventually rose to be fourth rank and decided to come to a relatively small town. Molton. If it was here, he could be "number one" he thought.

One year ago, Ashley also unexpectedly came along to this town, presumably by chance. Nevertheless, starting from that time, Seron tried to take possession of her, to make her into his woman. It was how he thought of getting revenge against Hamish.

He'd lost count of how many times he'd set traps for her, each bordering on the edge of being outright illegal. However, she managed to evade every single

one of them. After learning that she had partnered up with a man who wasn't him, Seron's sense of paranoia grew even stronger. He now held an absolute conviction that he was being treated unfairly.

## Part 3

Ray and Ashley headed for Tarbide Lake, which was located approximately five kilometers south of Molton. (TL: [The Indianapolis Motor Speedway](#) ≈ 4 km)

Ashley still seemed to be in a bad mood. In attempt to make her forget about the matter, Ray brought up a subject related to today's request, the giant toads.

“Hey, could you tell me the weak points of the giant toads? Also, in addition to their poison, is there anything else I need to be ready for?”

Although Ashley was initially bewildered by how Ray was unusually desperate to talk with her, she eventually realized that it was him being worried about her. Her gloomy expression regained a little of its brightness as she began explaining about the monsters.

“Their weak points? Hm, well, they're basically defenseless against spears and swords, due to how thin their skin is. Their stomachs are especially easy to cut. You need to be wary of their tongue. Although their bodies are around 1.5 meters long, the tongue can extend out to more than twice that distance. The only troublesome thing about the tongue is that it's quite tough. Weak attacks won't be able to cut through it . . .”

While discussing such things, one hour eventually elapsed and they arrived at Tarbide Lake. The beautiful lake was surrounded on all sides by [white birch trees](#) and had a circumference of roughly five kilometers. A small island could be seen at its center.

Not having the leisure to enjoy such fine scenery, the two of them remained vigilant of their surroundings as they began to carefully search for the giant toads.

After walking along the lake for thirty minutes or so, soft sound of croaking could be heard.

“We've found them. I'm guessing that there's around two or three.”

Ashley pulled out her sword and Ray readied his spear.

A large black shadow suddenly jumped out from a clump of bushes. The giant toad made a large leap, springing itself upon them.

Although they didn't agree upon this beforehand, each dodged beautifully separately to the left and right as the toad flew in an arc in their direction. It then landed at a position around three mertos away from them.

"We'll attack it on both sides! Let's go!"

Ashley shouted those words as she changed directions, running towards the toad this time. She closed the distance in an instant, her sword quickly piercing through its slimy back. Although the toad should have been quite severely injured, it didn't seem to feel any pain. Even as it was pierced by the sword, it remained silent, not raising a single croak. Poisonous venom began pouring out of its pores.

Ashley who had anticipated this attack withdrew her sword and jumped backwards, once again creating distance between them.

Seeing their exchange, Ray readied himself for his turn. He then thrust his spear from the side opposite of Ashley.

Although he attacked with his spear, basically none of the poisonous fumes reached him. After stabbing the slowing toad several more times, he also similarly separated himself from the toad.

Nevertheless, the toad seemed to be stronger than they had expected. It acted as if all the damage it had endured up to this point was nothing at all. Even as blood continued to flow from its slippery skin, its eyes restlessly shifted between the two humans who had surrounded it on both sides. The toad seemed to be determining which human to attack.

Ray exchanged a look with Ashley, and then veered sideways, circling around to the back of the toad.

Lured in by his sudden movements, the toad rapidly shot out its tongue in his direction. Although Ray hurriedly used his spear to repel it, the extremely resilient tongue's trajectory remained mostly unchanged as it continued to stretch out towards him.

*Shit!*

In an attempt to evade the tongue's attack, he plunged his body down towards the ground beside the toad.

Even as his body was falling, he determined that at this distance, his spear could reach the toad. Ray made use of his current momentum to tear apart the side of the toad's soft belly with his spear. As the spear sunk into the toad's belly with barely any resistance, pain seemed to have finally reached it. The giant toad sprung up as if it were bouncing and attempted to make an escape.

Without the missing the timing of its jump, Ashley rushed in to slice off the toad's left hind leg just as it was about to straighten itself to release the stored power.

No longer able to hop, the now one-legged toad pitifully crawled forward across the ground, still somehow holding hope of escape. However, the two humans eventually came to deliver the final blow, only remaining wary of its toxic poison.

"We've gotten our first one. Did any poison get on your body?"

"I'm fine." Ray went to collect the giant toad's magic stone.

*Seems like Ray has gotten considerably used to it now. The only thing he needs to worry about in the future is not being overly prideful.*

After that, they defeated two more giant toads and then decided to have lunch at a place that would have an unobstructed view of the lake shore.

They found a slightly elevated area that overlooked the lake and sat themselves down on a fallen tree, unwrapping their lunches.

Ducks floated on the lake with a blithe attitude. The peaceful scenery was spread out before them. So peaceful that it could make them forget that there were giant poisonous toads there.

"If only the weather was nicer . . . that would undoubtedly bring out the full beauty of this place . . ."

Without speaking to anyone in particular, he muttered those words to himself.

"Scenery, you say . . . I've never thought about it that way. The only reason I

would be interested in a forest is whether or not there are any enemies in it. You always say things like, “the scenery around here is so pretty” or “the sunset today is beautiful” . . . what kind of environment were you raised in? Even if you weren’t a mercenary like me, you shouldn’t be saying these kinds of things if you were part of a knight house . . .”

“Ah, you’ve got a point there.” Although he was slightly embarrassed, he continued,

“You really don’t think this place is beautiful? Seeing this mystical beauty, I wouldn’t think it would be strange even if a water nymph were to appear . . .”

Ray was beginning to grow attached to this kingdom’s abundance of nature. Although he had only lived here for around half a month, leaving town and taking a walk in the forest felt quite enjoyable to him.

He understood that sooner or later, he would have to leave this place and go on a trip to search for a way to return to Japan. Nevertheless, his attachment to the beauty here would not change.

Although they were taking a relaxing break in this manner, it was still too early to return to town. It seemed like the giant toads were still out, so they decided to continue hunting for two more hours. As Ray checked to see if his equipment was in order, something in the lake caught his eye. By chance, he saw a small boat heading for the island in the middle of the lake.

*What is it doing? That doesn’t seem to be a fishing boat . . .*

As he continued to gaze at the small boat, Ashley asked,

“Are your preparations complete?”

He turned his eyes away from the lake and then picked up his belongings in order to return to the shore. When he shifted his gaze towards the lake one more time, he saw a ball of fire flying from the small boat.

“Ashley, look! Fire magic is being launched from the boat . . . what are they aiming at?”

When she looked towards the lake, the ball of fire had already disappeared. The small boat was now changing directions, moving far away from the island.

“What? Did something happen?”

Feeling confused, Ashley asked Ray. He had also only seen it for an instant. “No, never mind . . .” As he began walking towards the shore, he quietly mumbled to himself, “I wonder if there’s something on that island?”

Having eaten lunch, Ray and Ashley once again returned to the shore.

As the two of them walked along the shore of Tarbide lake, searching for more giant toads, they suddenly realized that the croaking of the toads had become considerably louder than before.

They paused for a moment and exchanged looks. However, even after they looked around, they weren’t able to find anything else that was particularly abnormal. And so, they once again resumed walking along the shore.

Suddenly, the reeds on the side of the lake began shaking. Wondering what was happening, the two once again looked around. The figures of Seron and his party appeared from the direction of the shore.

Seeing Ashley and Ray ready their weapons, Seron assumed a surprised expression and said, “What is this, you’re also hunting here? Well, I suppose it doesn’t matter. We’ve already gathered plenty, so we’ll be going back now. Take your time and enjoy yourselves.” Only leaving behind those words, he laughed and left at a quick pace. Puzzled by how quickly he left them, Ashley and Ray tilted their heads.

## Part 4

“What was that? He seemed to be in a strangely good mood?”

“That’s what I also thought. Well, there will always be something things we can’t understand. Don’t worry about it. Rather that, the toads seem to be behavior strangely. We shouldn’t be careless.”

While remaining vigilant of their surroundings which had become even rowdier, the two of them continued walking along the lakeshore.

The toads croaked more loudly, the sounds of their hopping growing more intense.

“I have a bad feeling about this. We should move away from the lake for now.”

The moment Ashley uttered those words with a hard expression on her face, several toads suddenly leaped at them at once.

The two of them had to devote all their efforts towards evading the flying toads and didn’t have any leisure to mount a counterattack. They swept their gazes around, looking for an escape route. However, in addition to the ones already heading towards them, there were dozens of more toads unreasonably leaping in their direction. The two humans who were surrounded on all sides could no longer move.

The croaking toads completely ignored these two as they hopped around, some colliding into trees and others colliding into their own fellow toads.

Although their behavior was evidently irregular, there was no indication that they were going to attack. Instead, the panicking toads appeared to be scared of something.

Ray felt a sense of danger rising in up in him as he grasped the situation. However, he had no idea what to do about it.

“We’ve been surrounded! What should we do Ashley?!”

“Calm down! They don’t seem to have any intention of attacking us. I think that they’re running away from something, but . . . o-oh my god!”

As she raised a voice of shock, Ray turned to see what she was looking at. A giant snake with several heads, the so-called Hydra, was raising its arched heads.

Once the Hydra’s five heads were brought up above the ground to a height of roughly three mertos, it fixed its red oblong pupils at them.



“A Hydra . . . Ray, we need to get out of here! That’s a third rank monster, it’s

impossible for just the two of us to bring it down! Let's pull back!"

"How are we supposed to do that! Our surroundings are completely flooded with toads! The moment we try to escape, we'll be done in by their poison once we're swallowed into their swarm!"

The giant toads around them were panicking as they run about, trying to escape the Hydra.

It was as Ray said, if they wanted to escape, they had no choice but to push through the crowd of toads. However, in their panicked state, the toads were constantly releasing paralysis poison. One wrong move and the poison would touch them.

Even worse, the Hydra seemed to have changed its target from the toads to the two humans before it. Its five pairs of red eyes dangerously glinted as it rapidly drew towards them. In spite of its large size, the Hydra nimbly crept and crawled across the earth at a speed comparable to the two humans who were sprinting with all their strength.

"I'm going to try to pin it down! Support me with your magic!"

Feeling agitated, Ashley shouted those words to him as she raised her sword up and rushed forward.

"One minute, I need you to stall it for only one minute!"

Although Ray felt hesitant about letting Ashley fight at the forefront by herself, he knew that he had no choice but to use his most powerful magic, "Thunderbolt", if he wanted them to survive. While gathering light spirits into his left hand, he slowly retreated towards the back.

Ashley also felt that they needed Ray's magic to get out of this situation.

In order to buy him the time he needed, she closed the distance with the giant five headed snake and moved nimbly left and right, trying to gather its attention on her. Each of the Hydra's five heads moved independently as they headed towards her, launching their respective attacks one after the other.

Even as she evaded the middle head which attacked her by swinging down from above, the right head immediately came, opening its mouth wide as if to

swallow her whole. As the head on the left end crept on the ground and attempted to bite down on her leg, the rightmost head attacked in the same way. Against the onslaught of their splendidly cooperated attacks, Ashley didn't have any chance to use her sword, only able to focus all her attention on evading.

Although she somehow managed to continuously evade several dozens of more attacks, her breath was becoming haggard from the constant movement and her actions were beginning to lose their responsiveness.

“Are you still not done yet!? I'm already at my limit here!”

As she struggled to contain her impatience, Ashley's shout resounded throughout the forest. As if on cue, Ray responded,

“I'm almost there . . . alright! Jump aside to the right!”

Obedying his instruction, Ashley jumped with all her might towards the right. Immediately, the sound of air ripping apart boomed as lightning passed through right next to her. The thunderbolt beautifully hit the the base of the Hydra's center neck. Once the sound had completely faded away, the neck that was so thick you could barely wrap both arms around was now mostly torn apart.

“We did it!” Ray shouted, in a brief moment of joy. However, the Hydra's neck was beginning to regenerate at a rapid pace right before their eyes.

It was as if they were watching a videotape that was being rewinded. After merely a few dozen seconds, the Hydra was perfectly restored to its original state.

“Such a thing . . . Ashley! What's the weak point of a Hydra!? There has to be a weakness somewhere!”

“I don't know! At any rate, it shouldn't be able to regenerate itself forever. The only thing we can do now is to continue attacking it while looking for an opportunity to escape!”

Upon hearing her words, hopelessness spread out within Ray.

*We wouldn't be able to move again if we receive even a single one of its attacks . . . and yet, it can regenerate so easily like that . . . even if we manage*

*to run away, that thing is definitely going to catch up to us with that kind of speed . . . however, we can't just give up without doing anything. We need to do everything we can while it's still possible . . .*

Unable to come up with a way out of the situation, the two of them continued to unceasingly pile up attacks on the Hydra. Even as he fought the Hydra, Ray's mind was rushing to find a solution.

*Restraining that thing with a "tree spell" . . . that's impossible. That giant thing is going to rip apart a tree root in an instant . . . what would be a Hydra's weak point? . . . since it's a water type monster, I have a feeling that it should be weak against fire magic . . . however, this is also no good. I don't have any fire magics that can burn this thing to death in one go . . . cutting down all of the heads before it's able to regenerate might work, but how are we supposed to do that . . . to stop it from regenerating . . .*

As he skillfully evaded the Hydra's attack, Ray suddenly came upon an idea.

*If its regeneration ability is related to water magic, then at the very least, wounds that are caused by fire should heal at a slower speed right? Since Ashley said that when I rescued her, my spear was covered in light, shouldn't I also be able to wrap it in flames? . . . I need to try this.*

With his spear held in his right hand as he continued to dodge the Hydra's attacks, Ray began to gather fire spirits into his left hand.

After several seconds, fire had begun to materialize in the hand. Ray immediately gripped his spear with both hands while imagining the fire shifting to the spear. At that moment, the tip of his spear began radiating a red light.

"Yes, it worked! Ashley! I'm going to attack! So could you divert its attention for me!"

Although Ashley didn't know what he was talking about for a moment, she immediately understood when she saw his spear.

*When did he use magic on his spear . . . the red color probably means that fire element has been applied to it . . . something like this might just work . . .*

In order to restrain the Hydra, Ashley piled up more attacks on it while making large taunting movements back and forth. Rather than dealing any

actual damage, her slashes were as numerous as possible in order to make the Hydra direct its attacks towards herself.

Lured in by Ashley's movements, the five heads all began to move in her direction at once.

Not letting that chance escape, Ray quietly circled around to the Hydra's right side and forcefully struck out his spear at the rightmost head.

The spearhead that was covered in magical flames cut into the Hydra's hard scales, not stopping until the its neck was half-way severed. The head collapsed helplessly onto the ground.

Enraged by that attack, the Hydra's remaining four pairs of eyes glared a bright red, their eyes now turned on Ray. However, the neck which he had severed continued to lay on the ground, unmoving. No matter how much time passed, the rapid regeneration which they had witnessed just moment ago did not initiate.

"We can do this! You sure have a knack for magic! If we can put down two more heads then we'll probably have a chance at escaping!"

Rejoiced that the fallen head did not regenerate, Ashley shouted those words in a loud voice even as she continued to restrain the Hydra with her attacks.

The Hydra was uncertain of who to attack, its heads swinging left and right as it looked between the relentlessly attacking Ashley and the one who had just dealt them a major blow, Ray.

"I'm going to do it one more time! Ashley, cover me!"

"Alright! However, don't try to do anything unreasonable!"

Having now seen that there was actually a chance for success, vigor had returned to the two humans' voices.

## Part 5

Ashley once again swung her large sword at the head on the left side. However, she didn't remain in the same place as she did so. Anticipating that the Hydra was going to attack, she jumped to the left, throwing her body into the air. With excellent control over her body, her stance didn't crumble as she fixed the position of her sword and released a thrust at the pursuing snake's head.

Ray glared at the head that was rushing in his direction, the one located immediately to the right of the center head. Immediately after Ashley finished her attack, he drove his spear at the right head with all his might. The head swung its head away, in an attempt to evade the attack. Nevertheless, the snake head couldn't completely dodge the cross-shaped blade of the spear head that jutted out to the left and right, and ended up having its face torn open. Reeling from the pain, it threateningly hissed at him and raised its arched neck up high. And then, as if awaiting a chance to attack, it flicked out its long tongue while glaring at him.

Immediately after the right head had its face torn apart, the center head swooped down towards Ray who had extended out his body. Not having any time to pull back his spear, Ray flipped his spear 180 degrees and slammed the butt of the spear towards the rapidly approaching head. Betrayed by its own momentum, the spear penetrated deeply into the center head's open mouth.

It squirmed and wriggled as it tried to steal away the spear. However, Ray immediately back stepped and managed to regain distance.

Although the center head agonized from the pain, the damaged area seemed to have immediately been regenerated as it also lifted up its arched neck just like the right head. It then assumed a posture that was poised to bring down an attack on Ray at any moment.

*It immediately recovers from attacks that don't involve any magic. We're going to run out of stamina at this rate if we continue to try bringing them down*

*one by one . . .*

As for Ashley, she was wondering if Ray had actually found a way for them to get out of this mess.

*His movements have become even sharper. Although he's still not at the level of when I first met him, he's become much better at "reading" his opponent's actions . . . I wouldn't be surprised if he could handle this fight by himself . . .*

In addition, she was also beginning to feel agitated by her own powerlessness.

*. . . Even if I wasn't here . . . even the attack I put all my power into earlier ended up being mostly ineffective . . . we have to consider the toughness of this thing's scales together with its recovery abilities . . . how are we supposed to bring it down before Ray exhausts his magical energy? . . . if I stop thinking so much about running away and only focus on cutting apart this thing then . . . even a single blow from me might . . .*

It was unusual for Ashley to lose her calm. She had come here with Ray expecting a relatively safe hunting trip. Now that it had turned into this perilous situation, she felt as if this whole mess were her fault.

*Gathering intel in advance is the most basic of basics. And yet, despite that . . . it's my fault for forgetting it . . . I might forgotten myself as I had fun with Ray . . . no matter what it takes, I have to let at least Ray escape . . .*

Ashley turned towards the leftmost head that was heading in her direction and in order to unleash her most powerful attack, concentrated all of her senses on the quickly approaching head. However, despite seeing the head that was rapidly descending down upon her from above, Ashley merely readied her sword and then as if waiting for something, didn't make even the slightest movement.

Right when the head was about to close its mouth down on her, she lightly stepped to the left and then vigorously swung her sword down. The large sword deeply dug itself right into the back of the Hydra's head, who with it's mouth still wide open, collapsed with a thunk onto the ground.

"Yes!"

The moment Ashley's face beamed with a triumphant expression, another

snakehead bit its mouth around her right thigh.

It lifted up high the body that was built more solidly than would be expected from a female, and then as if it were a child toying with a doll, slammed her roughly against the ground.

Upon hearing Ashley's piercing shriek, Ray's gaze instantly jerked in her direction. He was then greeted with the sight of a woman who had her right leg held deeply within a snakehead's mouth, being forcefully struck against the rough earthen ground.

"Ashley!"

He immediately tried to run over to her. However, two snakeheads stood in his way.

"Move!"

He raised a shout of angry and tried to lunge at the center head with his spear. However, the attack of the man who had lost his calm didn't reach the Hydra. On the contrary, the right head which had sustained severe damage from Ray swung over to him from the side and rammed into him with its whole body.

Having not expected an attack from the right head, his body received the full extent of its power. He was blown away, flying a distance of approximately three mertos before his back crashed into the bark of a white birch tree. (TL: average christmas tree has height of  $\approx 2.3$  m)

The air in his lungs was forcefully dispelled out by the collision and his consciousness was nearly also blown away from the intensity of the pain. However, for the sake of saving Ashley, he gritted his teeth and rose back up, using his spear to support himself. Ray once again faced the Hydra for a second confrontation.

"Release Ashley, damn it!" he shouted, thrusting his spear at the left head which had her in its mouth. Although he was on the verge of losing his sense of reason due to his anger, he desperately struggled to suppress his raging emotions.

*Stop. Calm down. There's no way Ashley is dead yet. The attacks from my*

*spear are effective against this bastard. By bringing these heads down one by one . . .*

He poured his magical energy in the spear, causing the spear tip to once again regain its dazzling radiance. When he forced even more power to flow in, the cross-shaped spear head stretched out to more than twice its previous length. At that moment, the Hydra's eyes seemed to falter for an instant.

Without missing the Hydra's hesitation, Ray closed distance with it in one go and began swinging his spear in all directions. If anyone were to have witnessed this scene, the figure of a knight attacking a giant snake while wielding his shining red spear as if it were a pinwheel would have probably reflected into their eyes as a legend.

In the face of those attacks, the hard scales which previously couldn't be cut through were sliced apart without much resistance, as if they were the soft belly of a giant toad.

Aiming for the left head which had Ashley in its mouth, Ray unleashed a series of continuous stabs that sliced it apart from the base of the Hydra. With Ashley still in its mouth, the head which had been severed from the main body fell onto the ground with a thump.

Even if it was second earlier, Ray wanted to rush over to that head and pull Ashley out immediately.

However, there were still two more heads remaining. He forcibly shut in that thought and continued his attacks on the Hydra.

The remaining two heads opened their mouths wide and simultaneously swooped down on the formidable enemy before them. In an attempt to knock him over, the center head utilized the center of rotation for its body to swing at him. The right sided head tried to swallow him whole and directly approached him in a straight line.

Ray was able to easily predict the attacks of the Hydra who had lost itself in anger, lowering his body against the center head's attack and matching the timing of the remaining right head's attack, coolly drove his spear in its mouth. The spear pierced the head from its widely open mouth and continued all the way out of the back of its head. It convulsed several times and stopped moving.

The last survivor, the center head, sensed the imminence of its own defeat and tried to flee. However, hindered by the other four immobilized heads, it couldn't move very far.

Now that the last remaining head's movements had dulled, Ray was able to easily decapitate the head and send it flying without any trouble.

His mind numbly froze in absentmindedness towards the fact that he "had won". However, he immediately regained senses and rushed over to the unconscious Ashley, irritatedly tearing off the Hydra who still had its mouth closed around her right leg.

## Part 6

Small holes had been punctured in the leather armor protecting her thigh. Despite the holes being small, it seemed like the Hydra's fangs had pierced clean through leather.

Although Ray was an amateur in these things, he couldn't any serious injuries such as bone fractures on her. It seemed like she had only lost consciousness due to being struck against the ground. However, her breath was ragged and her face had attained unnatural red blush.

*Is the Hydra poisonous? If that really is the case, healing magic will likely not have much of an effect . . .*

Ray was worried over what he should do as he remembered that in things like games, "healing" and "detoxification" were usually different magics. Although agitated, he was still able to recall the first-aid procedures for poisonous snake bites that he had seen on TV once.

*If I remember correctly, the poison needs to be sucked out and the flow of blood needs to be stopped? After that, an antidote . . . I'm certain that there was an antidote potion somewhere in Ashley's bag . . .*

He unfastened the armor covering her thigh and sliced apart the cloth of the pants underneath. After confirming the small wound on her skin the Hydra's fanged had pierced, he brought his mouth to it and proceeded to draw out the poison. After turning his head to suck and spit several times, he binded a rope around the upper part of her thigh to stop the flow of blood.

He retrieved an antidote potion from Ashley's backpack and held it near the entrance of her mouth. However, possibly due to the fact that she was not conscious, her body refused to drink the potion.

"Ashley! It's okay, please, you have to drink this . . ."

In the end, he had to hold the potion in his mouth and force open her mouth, making her drink the potion through mouth-to-mouth feeding.

Although Ray had succeeded in making her drink the potion, he wasn't able to determine whether or not it was effective. He wasn't sure what actions he should take now that he was finished.

*Should I try using magic . . . detoxification should be a water elemental magic. What kind of image does it need . . .*

Even as one, two minutes slipped by, Ashley's condition didn't improve.

He watched as she softly groaned from the effects of the Hydra's poison. Having no other choice, Ray decided to try detoxifying her with water elemental magic.

*Eliminating the poison . . . I'll try asking the water spirits to purify the components of the poison within her bloodstream . . . imagining the purification process is difficult though . . . maybe I should try decomposing all of the poisonous components until they've become harmless compounds? Do I have enough magical energy for this? . . . no, what am I saying. I'm going to do this even if I collapse from magical exhaustion!*

He imagined the water spirits gathering at his left hand and then once a sufficient amount of spiritual energy had accumulated, he placed his hand on Ashley's right leg. As the blue light flowed from his left hand into her body, the only thing he could understand was that something seemed to be happening.

Although he didn't have much confidence in himself, he knew that right now, he had no choice. In order to prevent the poison from spreading, he unfastened the rope that was bound around her thigh and moved his left hand around her whole body.

After using his magic continuously for approximately one minute, Ray felt as if Ashley's expression which was warped in anguish had loosened up a little bit. After he forced his magic to run to the limits, right before the edge of total exhaustion, he once again took a look at Ashley's overall condition.

*Although her expression looks more relaxed than before, I can't tell if the poison has been removed or not. If I go back to Molton, there should be a healing mage or maybe a doctor there. Even if her consciousness has not returned yet, not bringing her back will likely be a matter of life or death . . .*

He decided to observe her condition for ten more minutes and also collect the Hydra's magic stone during that period.

The symptoms of magical exhaustion were already beginning to appear as his body staggered towards the Hydra's corpse. He held out his hand over its body and proceeded to collect its magic stone. The stone that sparkled a light blue was roughly five centimeters in diameter. (TL: Gold Tee is 5.4 cm tall)

"This thing is huge. Well, it certainly is befitting of a monster so strong . . ."

Ray tiredly mumbled out those words as he gazed at the magic stone. And then as if his mind and body had finally caught up to the full situation, cold sweat began flowing down his back as he recalled his struggle to the death with the Hydra.

*That was such a close call. Although I hadn't panicked like I did it with the lizardmen, this was only because I knew Ashley was here with me. If I had been alone . . . I would have probably died . . .*

Ray's face showed an expression of fear as his memories of the near-death experience rushed back to his mind. However, he quickly reassumed a tight expression.

*It's okay. I've won against a formidable enemy. I should have some more confidence in myself . . . however, I still can't understand how Ashley got caught by the Hydra. Normally, it would be unthinkable for her to be taken like that unless there was some kind of accident . . .*

Ray occasionally checked Ashley's condition as he put their bags in order and collected the magic stone. However, she showed no signs of waking up at all. There was a high possibility that her head had received a concussion when her body was struck against the ground. Because of that, Ray was hesitant over whether or not it was safe to move her body carelessly. In the end however, there was no way he could just have them continue to spend the night like this, and he decided to return to town.

He stored both of their belongings in the item box and placed the unconscious Ashley on his back, steadying her with his spear. Fortunately, there was no need to abandon anything since everything had been placed in the item box.

He hesitated over whether or not to remove all of her remaining armor in order to reduce her weight. However, when he thought over how they had to move as quickly as possible and the possibility of being attacked by monsters en route, he carried as she was and began walking into the forest.

It was currently around two o'clock in the afternoon. Even as he carried the large-bodied Ashley on his back, Ray had to spur on his body which was staggering from magical exhaustion while advancing through the forest.

*I'm really begging that nothing comes out. With me in this condition, I wouldn't even be able to protect us against small fry . . .*

He had left behind the banks of Carbide lake and entered into the hilly forest. Under the overcast sky, a cool April wind blew against him. However, as you would expect, moving while carrying one person by himself was gruelling experience.

He had to cover a distance of more than four kimels before he would reach the safety of the road. Although he managed to progress approximately one kimel after one hour, the fatigue and the numbness in his arms caused him to have no choice but to take a rest.

Ray took deep breaths as he sat down and leaned his back against a large tree.

Ashley who he had sat down beside him still showed no indications of her consciousness returning. His desire to bring her back to town as quickly as possibly grew even stronger as his impatience boiled.

*It should be around three o'clock right now . . . the town's still quite far away. Although the gate is open until eight, I don't even know if my body can make it there . . . no, rather than that, if I don't show her to a healer soon, Ashley is going to . . .*

After resting for about ten minutes, he once again placed her on his back and resumed walking in through the forest. Although the growling of various beasts were occasionally heard, they showed no signs of approaching his current location.

While taking periodic rests, he moved forward for another two hours.

However, he still hadn't been able to even get out of the forest yet.

At around five o'clock in the afternoon, darkness began to descend upon the deep forest. His steps became more uncertain as visibility worsened.

*This is bad. Although I can somehow see my way right now, there's not even going to be another thirty minutes before it becomes pitch dark. I won't be able to walk any further once that happens . . . there's close to half of the distance remaining. What do I do . . .*