

The First Legendary Beast Master #Chapter 74 All Day Long - Read The First Legendary Beast Master Chapter 74 All Day Long

Chapter 74 All Day Long

After the break for lunch, with both Rita and Alice eating in tense silence at his table and scaring the other students away, it was time to go to the Mixed Martial Arts class for his physical training.

Tank was back again, ready to continue his lesson, while Daniel, Alice's partner, was sitting on a blanket at the edge of the training ground, waiting for the others to arrive.

"Come on over and get comfortable. Good to see you again, Rita." He greeted them, then waved at Karl and gestured for him to join the class as usual.

Karl wasn't the only one who could tell that Rita was annoyed at this point, but there wasn't much that she could do. There was no rule stating that the people from the government couldn't come sit and watch the class, and they weren't interfering with anything but Rita's development plans, which was within their operational authority, Karl assumed.

"Karl, you will be training with Tank today, while everyone else trains what they learned. Sorry about your luck, but you're the odd one out, and Sergeant Rita is busy at the moment." The professor informed him with a smirk.

Sergeant Rita would much rather be training than 'busy', Karl was sure. But Tank turned out to be an excellent combat instructor, with a profound understanding of both martial arts and armed combat.

Today, the big man had a wooden training sword in his hands, while Karl wore the training gauntlets that he had obtained from the train.

"Those should be good enough to block, but be aware that my strength is far above yours, so you don't want to try to overpower my attacks, just deflect them so you can counterattack.

If you can do it with your abilities, that's even better, just keep the power level down so that you don't chop through the training weapon. After some time, you will be used to the sparring limitations, but it is best to err on the side of caution for now." Tank explained.

"Alright. Are we having Hawk rest for the afternoon?" Karl asked.

"For today, yes. He got his training in the morning, and a growing beast needs a lot of food and sleep. But he will be watching, so you can consider this a theory lesson for him. For now, the two of you can fight together, but once his power level goes up, it is unlikely that your body will be able to keep up. Not many classes can claim the physique of even the more fragile Magical Beasts." He explained.

"So my job in the future is what? To train the beasts about combat and let them go at it?" Karl asked as they exchanged blows.

"Dunno, that's above my pay grade. But I would assume that for a class that focuses on monsters, making them stronger and teaching them all the things that they wouldn't naturally know will be a big part of your job.

How many Windspeed Hawks are familiar with Martial Arts? How many of them even understand the intricacies of various magic spells? It might not seem like much, but your Hawk already has a massive advantage over other beasts."

Tank emphasized the word 'beasts' with a chop of his sword that Karl barely deflected as he spun out of the way. It was easier to start an attack from the side or the back of the Berserker, as he would be facing Karl before it was finished, and the extra time would allow Karl to prepare a defence that would allow him to keep moving.

Hawk was impressed with the huge man's understanding of animals. As a Windspeed Hawk, there were numerous things that he didn't know at birth. Normal Hawks would have to survive their first learning experience to begin to understand things like mage attacks, but he had gotten to practice dealing with them every morning.

Plus, the Berserker Man advocated for naps and food, so he was definitely wise.

By the time that they finished, Karl was exhausted, and even Tank had broken a sweat, which impressed the other students far more than Karl thought that it should. Sure, he was a monster in combat, but he was also still vaguely human, so a three-hour training session of that intensity was sure to work him at least a little.

Karl might not be as powerful, but he was fast enough to keep the Berserker moving, a technique that Tank advocated for, as most of the berserker type opponents would have a time limit. Enraged magical beasts usually burned through their energy reserves at an incredible rate, so if you could hold out for five or ten minutes, they would exhaust themselves.

Even most of the drug induced berserker states wouldn't last more than half an hour before the user would crash and be left in a far worse state than when they started. For that reason, they would go all out while they could. They knew that they had to win within the time limit, and they would get desperate as it got close.

So, the agility type fighters could string them along and wear them out, then finish them off once they crashed. Cardio was incredibly important for agility fighters, who couldn't always finish a fight with a single strike.

"Alright, that's it for the day. See you all tomorrow." The instructor called, and the group began to disperse back to the showers, or to their rooms to shower and change there.

Karl was one who preferred to shower and change immediately, which left Rita and the pair from the Bureau of Elite Development waiting for him to come back out of the crowded locker room in the small building beside the training field.

"Do they always hold this class outdoors?" Daniel asked.

Rita nodded. "Unless the weather is bad. The grass is softer than the gym floor, and the mats aren't a realistic footing scenario. Most of their fights will be outdoors, so it's better to train in the field than on the hardwood."

"Understandable. Alright, I think that we learned what we needed today. I will see you both tomorrow." Daniel agreed, then waved as he left, with Rita glowering at his back.

Chapter 75 Early To Rise

It looked like being up at the crack of dawn was going to become a regular thing, Karl decided, as Sergeant Rita and Jill were at his door first thing the next morning. Rita had a book with her on monster biology, but this one was different. It focused on the innate skills of various monster skills, instead of just giving an overview of the species.

It was written from the perspective of a researcher who was trying to develop more ways to strengthen the skills of the elites with similar abilities, and for Karl, it was much easier to understand than the vague descriptions in most of the other textbooks.

"By the end of the week the Bureau of Elite Development will probably have a plan to bring you before other juvenile monsters, either newborn or still in eggs, for the avian and reptile species.

I don't know what they will find you, or if they'll even give you options other than the ones they prepared, but now that they're convinced that you can bond a second pet, they are determined to try. What you need to do is understand the skills that they have so that you can build a proper team out of your tamed monsters.

You can focus on a specific skill set, like stealth and scouting, or a generalized combat team that can take on most threats, but you don't have much time to make the decision before the next step happens." She explained.

They were seated at a table in the cafeteria, which was still almost empty so early in the morning, but that gave him nearly two hours to go over the various species in the book before he needed to get to his first class.

"These Tortoises, exactly how large do they get? I think that the text is incorrect." Karl asked.

Rita looked at the book and shook her head. "No, that's right. They grow between eighteen and twenty-five metres long. They're a saltwater species, but they can happily live nearly anywhere.

If all your pets grow as fast as Hawk, I wouldn't recommend that option if you are given it. There aren't many situations where you will have room for a twenty-metre-long turtle. It's too wide to even fit down most city streets without damaging the buildings on either side."

The thought made Karl laugh. A massive roadblock of armoured shell, just blocking an entire roadway to prevent a target from fleeing.

Then there was the Demon Croc. Technically, they were an alligator, but at an equally impressive twenty-five metres long and able to run at over a hundred kilometres an hour in short spurts, Karl imagined that the shape of its snout was the least of anyone's concerns when meeting it.

Then there was the Red Gold Panda. At a maximum height of twenty centimetres high, it was adorable, but its innate skill was Vampirism. If it bit you, it could drain a human of blood in a matter of seconds.

"If we knew what they were going to bring, it would really help." Karl sighed as the time ran out, and it was time to go to morning accuracy training.

"Best to be prepared for anything. The more you know about monster skills, the better that you will be able to plan for the skills that the ones they do present can use." Sergeant Rita replied with a shrug.

Rita's mood only got worse as Daniel and Alice came to watch the training all day long. By the time that the day was finished, she was visibly annoyed, but the other two seemed to be enjoying the show, and they were happy to give training hints to the other students who were training near Karl and Tank.

Originally, Karl had assumed it was the fact that they were here from the Government that had annoyed Rita, but some of it seemed to be personal. They obviously knew each other from before this week, and were close enough in age that they should have been in the Academy together.

The number of Elites was small enough that it was a bit like a small town, everyone knew everyone in their age group. It was a strange thought, as Karl had always viewed the Elites as a sort of untouchable existence that was above the common people like the mine workers, but now that he was here, it had a similar vibe to the mining town, but with a different sort of hard work and less of the black lung.

The daily training became predictable, with Tank increasing the difficulty every time that Karl thought he was getting better, while the evenings of that week all went the same. Eat, train, then Dana would come over in the later evening so she could actually sleep, as her neighbours had realized that she was torturing them back with the Golem which didn't have to be summoned all the time.

But what they didn't know was that while the Golem had been practising his line dancing until the small hours of the morning, Dana had been asleep on the balcony of Karl's room.

Her daily training had also intensified now that she had Jill as her personal tutor, and she was so exhausted that she had to be literally carried out of bed some days to get ready after Karl had left with Sergeant Rita.

Unlike Karl, who just hurt everywhere from physical training, her mind was completely frazzled from the requirements of her mana expansion training, leaving her feeling sleep-deprived even in the middle of the afternoon.

Perhaps that was what the Colonel had meant when she said that Sergeant Rita went easy on him. He hurt everywhere, even in places he didn't know could hurt, but he was still functional, and it was clear that Dana wasn't going to make it much longer at this rate when the Saturday training session rolled around and Colonel Valerie was the one that met them at the door in the morning after breakfast.

Chapter 76 Hold Position

"Good morning, Colonel. We are ready to go." Karl greeted her at the door, then winced as she patted him on the shoulder in greeting.

Dana was awake, but in a daze, not in any shape to be vocal, so Karl was doing the speaking for the both of them. Colonel Valerie seemed to recognize that, and she didn't push for more speech out of them as she led them to the car and back to the same training warehouse from a week ago.

The teams all smiled as they saw the two bedraggled students stumble in, leaning on each other to remain upright. Karl, because he could barely walk, and Dana because she was half asleep.

"Well, they made it through hell week, but I'm not sure if they're in any shape to make it through one more day of training to make it to the day off." One of the mages laughed.

Alice, the dark-haired mage that watched Karl's training every day, smirked at him and gestured toward the pair.

"Try them, I think you will find that they're in better shape than they look." She suggested.

The teams moved closer to begin an attack routine, and the two students responded in unison. Dana summoned a Golem and Karl called Hawk out, letting the giant bird fly freely around the warehouse.

Colonel Valerie gave a rueful chuckle, and the team members backed away with a smile.

"Well, that might not be the ingrained response we were hoping for, but it works, I guess." One of the warriors agreed.

"I can still fight, just not as energetically as usual, unless you've got some painkillers. I swear that my bruises have bruises right now." Karl replied.

"Good thing that you can fight a ranged battle, then. Should we wake Dana up and get this started?" The man asked.

Dana didn't open her eyes as she answered. "I'm awake. What's our first activity?"

"This week is not as bad as last week. We want to see how the two of you work together to defend a spot in the middle of the warehouse against multiple attackers. But we will have to call Hawk back because there isn't enough terrain set up to sneak up with him hanging out in the rafters." One of the warriors explained as he began to equip a set of training armour.

The helmet had a face shield, and a neck protector, giving the attacking team full coverage as well as the shielding from their mages, so they shouldn't get hurt no matter what Karl and Dana did to them, but in the eyes of the attacking team, there wasn't much they were likely to do in that state.

This was an essential part of the first week's training, learning to function on limited sleep and while exhausted. It wasn't as severe as the military put the regular soldiers through, at least not in the physical sense, but the students were also younger, and the mental exhaustion was undoubtedly just as great.

Alice led Karl and Dana to the centre of the impromptu maze, while a group of the warriors scattered through the crates that made up an approximation of either narrow alleys or an office building's maze of walls.

Karl wasn't sure which it was meant to be, as he hadn't personally seen either, but it was going to make it easy for them to get close before they were detected.

Karl's eyes were much better than human, but his hearing hadn't changed much, nor had his other senses, but his eyes could only see for a few metres around them.

"Set the Golem to guard this spot and I will set up traps. Then you start spreading fog, but in random banks around us, it doesn't have to encompass our position." Karl whispered.

The random fog banks might confuse the attackers, and Karl would set traps using Rend, as they had taught him last week.

They didn't have much time, as the warehouse was not a huge place, but Karl worked quickly to get traps set up on most of the routes into the centre by putting them just into his line of sight. There were a few routes behind him that he couldn't keep visible, so the Golem would guard those approaches, and that would have to be enough warning for them.

The team approached silently, for the most part. The sound of someone bumping into a wall in the fog alerted Karl to their approach, but he couldn't be certain if it was an accident or a deliberate distraction.

Then there was another from off to his left, and a sharp intake of breath as the warrior stopped short just before he would have run into the trap. Karl carefully added one more trap, down by the ankles and a half step further than the first, which was at chest height in the fog.

There was a full second of silence as the warrior checked the trap in the dense fog, and then a crash as he ducked under it and hit the second line, falling out into the open only a few steps from the central area Karl was guarding.

Karl sent a Shred attack his way, and the warrior raised his hands as the attack slammed into his helmet. That should be the signal for 'out' because after that, he lay on the ground and played dead.

There was another footstep and a soft chuckle from behind him, as the next man in line assumed that Karl had gotten the drop on him, then a loud cuss as he stepped on the trap line and retreated around the corner.

That made the others much more careful, and Karl nearly missed the next one until the Golem surged forward to attack down a corridor.

It was going to pursue the target, but Dana called it back to them, waiting to see what the warriors would do, and smart enough not to let the Golem out of her sight where they could trick the simple reactions of the automaton.

A few seconds later, they came all at once, making Karl and Dana both lash out with spells as fast as they could for the next few seconds as the warriors dodged and parried, until they found blades at their necks, marking the end of the defence.

"Not bad. We have one chased off by the golem, three downed by traps, and four more downed in the final rush. Now, grab an energy drink and something to eat, we're going to go over some more effective defensive measures using the skills that you both have." Colonel Valerie congratulated them with a nod of appreciation for their effort.

That was the best praise that they had managed to get out of her yet, and Karl was sure that it was a good sign that she was warming up to them a little bit.

Chapter 77 Pet Suggestions

Karl sat down with the warriors, one of whom was still nursing a sore foot with his boot off.

"As you can see, the most effective strategy against many targets is actually the feet and legs. They're not as protected, and while the target will be careful what they step on, that also means they will be hesitant to approach you." Daniel explained, taking on the role of the spokesman after having watched Karl in his regular classes for a week.

"That makes sense. The boot has to have some feeling, or you won't be able to walk as smoothly, but that also means that the armour is limited. I wasn't expecting someone to actually step on the trip wire, though." Karl agreed.

That made the other warriors chuckle.

"Thin wires in the fog is a great combination technique, and it was what we were initially planning to suggest. There are only so many different ways to use Rend, but if you treat it like wire, then you should be able to make a number of quality traps, as well as set up ambushes.

Our discussion today will be less about new ways to use your technique, and what we should be finding you for a second pet attempt. If you had someone who could fight at your side in that situation, like the Golem, you would have increased your potential defences by a lot, and it might have been enough to deal with all the attackers.

The official position is that we should have you try with more newborns or eggs, as that was how Hawk started. If you try to bond a larger, aggressive monster, there is a strong possibility that it would remain hostile to you and waste your talent until it is put down.

There is also the chance that a lost pet might not be able to be replaced. The classes that can summon a Familiar or helper pet are like that. Once it's gone, it is gone and they can't do it again.

Your class is unique, and you can bond with actual monsters, not use magic to summon a mouse or cat level common animal, plus you can bring them into that space in your mind, that nobody knows the limitations of. But that is why we are being cautious, there is a lot of potential there, and we don't want to make a fatal error." Daniel explained.

Karl nodded slowly. The explanation made sense, but the space felt more like it was a nest, a home for whatever lived there. It didn't stop existing when Hawk was outside, and the second space was just sitting empty, waiting for Karl to build a nest for something else.

"Alright, what did you have in mind? Is there like some strategic reserve of monster babies for study or something?" Karl asked.

The team laughed and shook their heads. "No, what we're going to do is go for a little adventure. There are a few tame species of monsters that the scientists study, but those aren't what we need for an Elite that cultivates combat pets. Instead, we are going to head to the southern plains and go find you a proper monster.

The place is infested with them, and they're all brutal killers. They have to be to survive there among their own kind. So, the initial plan is to drive around until you find one that feels promising to your class, then hunt it.

We have surveillance, and we've marked nearly a hundred nests and infant monsters, so there is a good chance that we can find what you need.

Look at the hawk. He started out as an egg in the kitchen, and now he's one of the largest birds of prey that I have ever seen. Most birds his size, even the monstrous ones, are flightless, but his body is light and powerful despite his size. If another pet went through a similar advancement, we could be looking at a whole new strain of monster that is more deadly than any other on its level."

Daniel was clearly excited as he finished his speech, and the others were preparing to bring out the maps to show Karl the possible matches that they had found.

"We've got everything from snakes to badgers to a Crystalline Mammoth cub tracked. So whatever you think would be best can be available." Daniel added.

A crystalline Mammoth would be a nightmare for anyone to fight against. They were supposed to have incredible magical powers according to folklore, but the book said that it was a result of their hide reflecting and changing any attacks sent against them.

Plus, they stood over five metres tall and could crush armoured cars with just their feet. Having one would be cool, but feeding one could be much more difficult than keeping Hawk happy.

One of the others gestured to spots on a map they unrolled. "We have also prepared for the possibility that your skills only allow you to bond with birds, so there are six different powerful potential avian partners who have eggs in their nests.

Now, actually getting the eggs won't be easy, but that's why we're here. We will send two teams with you to gather the new pet, and then we will impose a full blackout on the information so that it doesn't leak out until you are ready for others to know.

If it is a baby, you will need time to help it grow, and nobody wants everyone to know their true power if they have the chance to hold a secret skill back for emergencies."

Daniel smiled at Karl's hesitation. "We're all on the same team, but we're all competing for the best jobs, the next promotion, that special chance that will give us something that we want. Having a little something in reserve can help impress people at just the right moment."

Karl smiled at the warriors as he understood the logic. "Alright, when do we leave?"

"Now. I will go get Alice, and we will take Jodi and Anise as well, so that Dave and Jill can stay to watch over Dana as she recovers. They will likely spend the night here, resting and practising through the off day. The Academy is too loud to really focus, so having a night to just sit in silence should be appreciated." Daniel explained.

Chapter 78 Begin The Search

Jodi was the stereotypical blonde, handsome ladies man, while Anise was a short but muscular ginger woman, and both were among the military half of the Bureau of Elite Development agents. That seemed to be a deliberate choice by Daniel as he led them all to a military vehicle which was far better suited to off-road use than the car that they had taken from the Academy.

"How long will it take us to get there?" Karl asked as they got in the truck.

"Not long, we're close to the region that we want to start the search in, so we will drive a few hours and stop at a way station for the night. It would be better to search for the targets when we're all fresh and rested. Mistakes happen in the dark, and I despise writing incident reports." Daniel replied with a teasing smile.

They didn't wait for any long goodbyes, they just headed out and followed the highway south, intending to make their destination in time for dinner.

That was still going to be difficult, Karl realized as the sun set, and they were still driving, but a few hours after that, they were pulling up to a walled town that opened the gates for them and let them in to park next to a small motel, with a row of units in two levels, and gun turrets on each end of the roof.

"I take it that this place is a bit more dangerous than it is at home." Karl commented with a gesture toward the guns and the spotlights that were mounted on every building near the wall.

"A little bit, but mostly it is a precaution against larger predators trying to break into the city. Nobody wants to run to the wall for every emergency, so they build turrets on their workplace instead." Alice explained.

Daniel checked them in, and Karl found himself alone in a small room with a single bed and a television. It wasn't anything special as far as hotels went, but it was quiet, so he spent the next few hours meditating and working on the new Beast Space to prepare it for occupancy.

[Get something cool.] Hawk demanded.

[And what do you think would be good? If you say a messy eater so you can steal the scraps, I will have to remind you that you mostly eat in separate spaces.] Karl replied.

[Something that will scare targets. Maybe a huge snake. Everything is afraid of snakes, even if they're easy to chop with Rend.]

Karl thought for a second. [I think that it would be best to get another smart species. We work well together because we can communicate easily. If they can't follow the same instructions, it will just make it harder to fight.]

[That rules out snake monsters. They're dangerous, but not intelligent. What about a Warbear? They're smart. We should get a Warbear.]

They were also seven metres tall when standing on all four feet, covered in heavy natural armour and infamously ill-tempered, Peak Overlord Rank monsters. A Warbear would take on anything without fear, from a juvenile Dragon to a main battle tank.

[I don't think we will be in a mood to celebrate if mama Warbear finds us trying to steal her cub.] Karl reminded Hawk.

The Windspeed Hawk and the Warbear actually got along well, as the Hawks liked to chirp for assistance when they wanted a partner to take down prey, and the Warbear would happily kill anything that walked on its territory. But it didn't consider birds a threat, as they stayed off the ground unless they were hunting, and they were smart enough not to hunt anything that the Warbear liked to eat.

Karl drifted off to sleep a few hours later, and woke up to the sound of a warning siren.

He quickly threw on his uniform and got up to see what was going on. As an Elite at the Awakened Rank, it was part of his duty to respond to these sorts of emergencies, even if the town was prepared.

They had the four escorts from the Bureau as well, so he wouldn't be in any real danger, but if it was a monster attack, there was a chance that it might lead him to an opportunity to find his second partner.

As soon as he stepped out the door, there was a man in a police officer's uniform pointing at him.

"You're an Elite, right? Ranged or Melee." The policeman shouted.

"Either. Where do you need me?" Karl asked.

"On the wall. It's a locust swarm."

The officer was obviously panicking, and Karl wondered why a bunch of tiny insects were causing so much panic to people other than the farmers.

Jodi and Daniel were outside a few seconds behind him, while Alice and Anise were up in the tower on top of the hotel, and were already preparing to start casting spells.

[Hawk, stay inside. They're shooting at anything that moves.] Karl warned his partner, then ran to the wall a few metres from the hotel.

The swarm was hundreds of metres wide, and behind them, there was nothing. Not branches or grass, nothing but bare dirt and locust droppings. That explained why the villagers were terrified of these things, and they were much larger than Karl had read about in the book.

These were a Common Grade monster species, and larger than his forearm, instead of the size of his finger.

Nothing was trying to eat the locusts, as Karl had expected of this insect buffet, and he quickly realized why. Every one that the locals shot was instantly devoured by those around it, leaving nothing behind. With that sort of cannibalistic instinct, not even Hawk would want to attack and have most of his food stolen before he could retrieve it.

Karl shook himself out of his reverie and sent a constantly widening set of [Rend] attacks into the front of the locust swarm, tearing dozens apart with each of the four attacks.

That wasn't even close to enough firepower to slow the tide, but the power consumption was low, and Karl was throwing them out twice per second.

The mages were the ones that made the first real change in the tightly packed ranks of the swarm, by using fireballs to burn huge holes in the pack that quickly filled with other locusts eating the bodies and caused the front line to waver as the insects were distracted by the prospect of food left behind.

That made for an even more densely packed group, and Karl changed to creating a net with two Rend attacks, and stretched it into a thin wire, which took a bit more power, but which tore apart a large patch of the locusts.

The more of them that were destroyed at once, the slower their progress got, buying time for the locals and their guns to get in position and begin defending their homes.

The buildings would likely hold up against the swarm, Karl assumed. But the gardens and everything else would not. The land would be left completely barren after the swarm passed, and they would have to start over from nothing.

"Welcome to the South." A man with a rifle and a cart full of equipment greeted Karl as he made it up the ramp.

"Quite the morning. What do you have there?" Karl replied as he continued to attack.

"Automated flamethrower turret. If we have to retreat to the bunkers, they will burn most everything that tries to get into the town. Bloody locusts will even eat the metal when they get close, not much else you can do."

Chapter 79 Locusts

Karl kept up the low-power attacks as the locust swarm began to dwindle under the combined firepower of the town and the efforts of the Elites. Jodi and Daniel were currently using rifles, as they were close combatants, but they were highly skilled with them, and every shot counted against the pure numbers of locusts.

"How long can you keep that up?" The man beside Karl asked as another fence of four rend attacks tore apart the front lines of the swarm.

"Long enough. They're going to be here before I'm worn out." Karl replied.

"Perhaps not, lad. Just wait. Once they're close enough we will start with the explosives, and that should thin them out quick, fast and in a hurry." The man informed him with a smile.

The first explosives were a line of landmines that the swarm set off, tearing apart the entire front line of insects, and then the one behind it as they reached the second row of mines. That was over a quarter of the insects in a few seconds, but they were leaping into the air now, flying over the minefield.

That made them easier targets for Rend, as now they were right at Karl's eye level and the attack would tear through multiple ranks of them before dissipating.

Then the city's police force began firing grenade launchers into the swarm, hitting some in the air, and others on the ground. The rifles were having a harder time against the

flying insects, but Karl and the mages were not. The exploding magical fireballs and crimson streaks of energy were stopping everything that the grenades didn't, and the flying portion of the swarm began to descend to in order to eat the bodies.

That set off more of the landmines, and the number of attackers began to fall to the point that they hardly seemed like a threat anymore.

But even a few could run amok through the town, and each of them could kill a human, then use the body as nutrients for more locust eggs.

Karl began to sweat with exertion, and Hawk was pushing to come out and assist, even if he was standing beside Karl on the wall.

[It's alright, buddy. We're almost done here. One more minute and they'll be all gone, then whatever cleanup the town does can start.] Karl replied, placating the bird for a moment as he slowed his attacks to avoid overtaxing his stamina.

The locusts made a field of green blood and body bits in the distance when the alarm finally sounded again, marking the official end of the battle, and the start of the cleanup effort, which would ensure there were no survivors or viable eggs left behind.

"Thank you Elite. Might I know your name?" The man beside Karl asked politely.

"Karl, Awakened Rank Student at the Academy." He replied, and the man chuckled.

"I must say I'm a bit jealous. You did an impressive job here today. Your skills are well suited to town defence against the swarms of weaker monsters. Come back again sometime and drinks will be on us."

Daniel laughed as he came over to the pair.

"No getting the students drunk so young." He reprimanded the local.

"Bah, you city folk are too uptight. Out here in the sticks, we start drinking beer with breakfast as soon as we can walk."

Karl chuckled. That was because the water was no good, so you had to filter it, and beer came ready to drink. His own family had done the same thing, though they thinned the cheap beer with the more expensive drinking water for the kids.

"Still, we're headed out into the long grass, so no drinking this morning, even if the beer is free with breakfast." Daniel cautioned Karl with a frown.

"Got it boss. No drinking before we go monster hunting."

It took a few minutes before things had calmed down enough that the staff returned to the restaurant next to the motel, but there was hot coffee in the pots, and the four agents were happy with that until the cook returned to take their orders.

Alice was the first to address their plans for the day. "As we've all been vividly reminded. The South is not a safe area, and it belongs more to the monsters than the people. So, we will have to watch every move that we make as we travel further from civilization. The first spot that I want to stop is here, by the river.

I don't know if Karl gets some sort of calling to his potential partners, or if it will be a conscious decision every time, but there should be a wide variety of options along the riverbank. Most monsters need to drink, so they will have to go there eventually.

The optimal targets would seem to be the Stoneskin Rhino, the Golden Dire Bear, the Giant Crocolisk and the Armoured Ape."

They were definitely aiming to get Karl a tank for the next pet, but they were right, those would all be great options. The Stoneskin Rhino could spread its armour over nearby targets, the Golden Dire Bear had an extremely impressive strengthening ability, the Armoured Ape also had armour magic, and the Crocolisk was basically a living tank.

Karl would put it at the bottom of his list as it didn't have innate magic that he would be likely to learn, but as far as combat power, it was certainly near the top of the list.

"Since I gained Hawk's [Rend] skill, I think that another innate skill would most likely be passed on as well, so it might be just as important to pick a good skill as it is to pick the toughest of monsters." Karl suggested.

"We could go a bit further and try to find him a Giant Cerro?" Daniel suggested.

"You think that a giant armoured lizard with Rhino horns is what anyone would want as a pet?" Alice asked.

The warrior shrugged. "It's a herbivore, so easy to feed. It's huge, armoured, and it has the [Rapid Regeneration] innate skill. When it activates that ability, it will heal from the most egregious wounds in seconds. How would that not be useful?"

Jodi smiled. "I just think it will be amusing to see someone try to fight an ancient lizard the size of a small elephant."

Karl had never heard of such a creature, but it sounded terrifying.

Chapter 80 Down By The River

Their drive took them out of the grassland, and down a road that led through a marshy area, where the Crocolisk could be found. There were other magical beasts in the area,

ones that hadn't been flagged as the most likely ones to build a strong team with Hawk, and some of them were not shy about being around the roadway when they passed.

For example, a large antlered animal roughly the size of their truck, with long legs, and a thick neck that promised those broad antlers weren't just for show.

"What exactly is that?" Karl muttered as they passed it by.

"Southern Moose. They're not a magical beast, but most of the Common Grade beasts won't mess with them." Alice replied.

That was understandable, the beast was massive.

Up ahead they spotted a few smaller magical creatures, and the others watched Karl carefully to see if he had any sort of response to them, but Karl was just in wonder at all the scenery, unlike anything he had ever seen before.

"First up, there should be a Stoneskin Rhino nest around here somewhere. It is further back off the road, so we will have to walk in to find it. One team will come with you, the other will stay to guard the truck so we don't have to walk home." Daniel informed him seriously.

"Alright. Let's go see what we can find." Karl agreed.

According to the map, they would have to pass by a bit of the marsh, then they would be back at the river, and that was where they were likely to find the Rhino nest, as well as many other predators.

"Stop. Don't leave the truck. It looks like we found one of our options early." Alice ordered, and Daniel abruptly, but silently, pulled his door closed again.

Off in the trees, there was an enormous furry creature with a mottled pattern of golden spots through jet black fur. That should be the Golden Dire Bear that they had informed him of, and it had a small cub with it.

The problem was that they were together, and the mother was paying close attention to her young cub, which meant they wouldn't be able to sneak up on it and see if Karl could bond it.

"The mother is Commander Rank, and she doesn't look impressed to see us here. How about we go a little further along?" Jodi suggested.

Karl considered the options for a moment. The Golden Dire Bear would be a good team member, especially as they grew so naturally powerful, but getting into a fight with one on the off chance that the cub would forgive him and work together seemed risky.

"We know where they are now, we can come back later, perhaps with some meat, and see if that puts her in a better mood." Daniel agreed, while Jodi began to slowly drive until the bear decided that they were no longer a threat and went back to watching her cub.

"It's a bit further from the river, but up ahead here there are some survivors of the Giant Lizard breeds. There aren't many of them left, at least not outside the breeding farms in the west, but any of them should be a viable option.

They're not dragons, but there are some Drakes among them, and almost every species has some sort of innate skill." Jodi explained as he turned down a dirt path.

They drove for another ten minutes, when Jodi stopped the truck and pointed to the far side of a clearing where there was a large group of animals, roughly the same two metres tall as the Golden Dire Bear had been on all four feet, but with thick scales and three horns on their wide heads as the Cerro were described. They were happily munching plants with beaked mouths, which made Hawk happy, and they seemed to be nonaggressive unless threatened.

"Those are a subset of the Cerro. They're less than half the size of the ones we were looking for, and they lack the full extent of the healing ability, but they have a rather unique racial skill that you might like. These beasts can coat themselves in magical lightning. They use it both as armour and as a weapon when they charge." Jodi explained.

"There are eggs in the nests, and they're closer to us than to the beasts. Do you think that we should take a little trip out and see if we can get one to test?" Daniel asked.

Karl agreed that they looked like they would be a suitable option, and they had heavy scales all over their body that looked impenetrable, as well as the three long horns and the armoured head.

[Let me. I will be in and out in seconds.] Hawk suggested.

"I will send Hawk." Karl informed the others, then opened the door a crack to call the bird out into the open.

Hawk streaked through the trees, and as soon as he grabbed an egg, alerting the herd to a predator in their midst, Karl called him back into the Beast Space.

He could feel the egg, the life form inside of it, and it had been pushed to the other space when Hawk entered his home, but it was not ready to hatch. There was something missing for Karl to form a bond with it.

"I think it's a possibility, but I need to do something, and I'm not sure what." Karl informed the others, as Jodi began driving again. Slowly, as if the bird had nothing to do with them.

"Then we will keep looking. Place the egg here in the padded bag, and we will hold on to it in case it's the best option." Alice explained.

In the taming space, Hawk shook his feathers, and something else moved to the secondary space.

[Did you get something on you?] Karl asked curiously.

[Not sure, what happened?] Hawk asked, unable to see the other space or its contents.

[There is a tiny egg. Like miniscule.] Karl explained as he examined the egg.

"There is another tiny egg there as well. I think that it was on Hawk when he came back. I'm not sure what it is yet." Karl informed the others.

"Can you bring it out? Or is it too fragile to move easily?" Alice asked.

"It looks very soft, not like a bird egg, but there is something alive in there for certain, I can feel it." Karl explained, then moved the egg to one of the padded bags.

The others looked at it in horror, and Alice opened the door.

"Get that thing out of here. That's a Bloodbath Spider egg."