

D. of Pride 111

Chapter 111: Intruders

Laris had the [Dual Wielder] class, a rare class even amongst the warrior classes which allows him to wield two swords at once and completely forgo defence to dish out lightning-fast attacks.

He smiled at the demon who had managed to dodge his attacks in the nick of time and said “That was quite the fast reaction, but will you still be able to dodge my attacks if I close the distance?”. After saying that, Laris finally moved from his original place and disappeared with a flash of lightning.

The next time he appeared, he was already behind Simon and slashed his twin blades sideways “Hell Lightning Slice”.

Lightning arced around the blades making them appear completely blue as they closed in on Simon’s unguarded back.

Simon hurriedly turned around and used gale magic to distance himself from those blades. CHIIIIII... like a paper being torn, the hurriedly conjured gale magic was shredded in half.

BOOM... the aftershock of the attacks blew the surrounding adventurers far away. Picking themselves up, the adventurers hurriedly distanced themselves from the two.

“Hahaha, what happened is dodging all you could do?” Laris dished out one lightning attack after another. Simon met the attacks head-on with his own intermediate-tier flame magic.

BOOOOOM... RUMBLEEEEE... the ground quacked and the surrounding land was flipped outside down.

Devastating flames and lightning wreaked havoc and obliterated everything in the surrounding. All the adventures were forced back more than hundreds of meters as they watched their leader and the demon duke it out among themselves. Magic met magic and wreaked havoc everywhere. The scene was truly pandemonium. This was the first time they saw someone fighting toe to toe with their leader.

ZIP... ZIP... ZIP

Laris encased in blue lightning zipped around the surroundings and used his high-speed attacks to clash with the demon. To their surprise, the demon ignited everything into flames and stopped all the attacks that came from Laris. The intensity of the flame generated by the demon was so high that it looked just like a setting sun from the distance.

Flames devoured lightning, the lightning devoured flames in an unending circle. Simon was concentrating on his battle with Laris when suddenly a window popped up in front of him.

Intruders have entered the dungeon. All monsters have been cleared on Floor one.

Intruder Numbers:- 25

Current Progress:- 89% percent of the second floor has been cleared.

Reading the message, Simon got distracted for a second, and Laris wasn't someone who would miss this opportunity.

Immediately ceasing it, he delivered a lightning-fast attack "Hell Lightning Lunge". Lightning raced out of the blades and lunged towards the unguarded Simon.

BOOM... this time Simon was unable to dodge the attack in time and was hit squarely by the attack in the chest. His body was blown back and smashed into the ground, the momentum of the attacks was great that his body dug a ditch along the ground before coming to a stop. He puked out a mouthful of blood and hurriedly stabilized his wounds.

Simon somersaulted back and got on his feet before the connecting attacks could come from Laris.

"That hurts dammit" he clicked his tongue and just when he was getting ready for round two when all of a sudden an azure light flashed in the distant sky.

Simon stared at Laris who had a smile plastered on his face and couldn't help but knit his brows in annoyance. He turned around spread his wings and flew into the forest. Utilizing his [High-Speed Flight] which had advanced from his [Flight] he was able to quickly disappear into the forest.

Right now he had other important things to focus on rather than fighting with the adventurers. The azure light that flashed in the distant sky previously was a signal from Irene that their plan had gone accordingly.

The adventurers who were pushed back far into the distance looked at the ongoing battle with wide eyes. They finally realized that when the demon was battling them, he was not being serious at all.

The demon was able to go toe-to-toe against their leader who ranked amongst the top twenty in their guild. They could feel the might contained within each attack of both parties even from hundreds of meters and couldn't help but shudder.

Just when they thought that the battle was pretty even, their leader delivered a devastating blow towards the demon and sent him flying back. BOOOM... the demon pummelled into the ground and his body dug a long ditch before coming to a stop. One could imagine the might behind that attack.

"Heh, the demon is nothing in front of our leader," said one of the adventurers after the demon was hit by the attack.

"Of course, did you really that demon stood a chance against leader?"

"That demon dared to kill one of our teammates look how sir Laris teaches him a lesson he will never forget".

"Hahaha, you are right. That demon dug his own grave by showing up here".

The adventurers remarked among themselves after seeing that the situation was in their favour. "What? The demon got back up again" their thoughts were stopped short when the demon got back again. They looked at the demon and were stunned to find that the injuries he suffered after taking on that attack were not that big and he looked was mostly fine.

Right when they thought that there would another big clash, the demon turned around and quickly flew away from the scene.

The atmosphere became completely silent as all the observers had a dumbfounded look on their faces.

“Pfft,” the silence didn’t last long before all the adventurers erupted into a burst of thunderous laughter.

“HAHAHA... that demon just ran away from the fight”.

“He is fighting sir Laris after all. Running from him was quite the clever choice for that demon”.

“Yeah, you are right. I guess that last attack did quite a lot of damage to him and he felt that there was no hope of winning”. The adventurers laughed and snickered merrily after seeing that the demon made himself scarce after clashing with Laris.

After the battle was over, they approached Laris and congratulated him. “Sir Laris, congratulations on your splendid win against that vile demonkind” one of the adventurers flattered. At this moment, Laris had a confused and doubtful look on his face. He didn’t believe that the demon ran away because of his last attack.

“There has to be something else” he deliberated for a while before suddenly he recalled that peculiar azure light flashing in the distant light. Fighting head-on, he realized that the demon wasn’t weaker than him. Even though he was not using his full strength, the demon was able to match him.

Aside from its strength, the way the demon appeared amidst the flames that engulfed the little girl was clearly unusual.

No matter how many times he thought, he couldn’t figure out how the demon had appeared amidst those flames unless... Pushing aside his chaotic thought, he looked at the area where the Forest Spring Royal Spirit had been engulfed in flames and made an irritated face. Squinting his eyes, he ordered the adventurers to thoroughly search the area.

The adventurers immediately executed the order and fanned out to search for any clues for that little girl. Even they felt that the way the little girl disappeared and the appearance of the demon was unusual.

However, no matter where or how many times they searched, they ended up with no clue about the girl. “Isn’t she dead? I mean we all saw the flames engulfing her” one of the adventurers said. The adventurer near him quickly hushed him into silence “Shh, don’t you know that the leader is very distressed right now? Trust me, you don’t wanna stick your head in this matter right now”.

Laris looked at the area where the demon had suddenly appeared. The scene repeatedly played in his head before a bad premonition struck him. He did not know what but he felt like something was awry.

The sudden appearance of the girl, her ridiculous agility that completely contrasted with her race that had low combat potential, and her disappearance amidst the flames. Up until the mysterious appearance of the demon, everything was unusual.

The more Laris thought, the more he felt like he was missing something. The foreboding feeling was starting to thicken and thicken. ” Why would the girl who was able to escape from them once decide to show herself once again?”

Chapter 112: Intruders (2)

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The more Laris thought, the more he felt like he was missing something. The foreboding feeling he had from the beginning, was starting to become thicker and thicker. ” Why would the girl who was able to escape from them once decide to show herself once again?”.

No matter how he thought about it, it didn’t make sense. To her, they should be a source of her trauma and given her age, there was no way she would be able to overcome that come in front of them once again. He was missing something... something very crucial.

“Even the way she reacted when she saw us again was unlike the time she ran away crying. Was she really the same girl?... ” Laris recalled the appearance of the girl which was exactly the same as back when he was subduing their village. Even her description met with the records from the ancient times so there was no way she was fake.

However, he was starting to feel that something was amiss about the girl. "Assuming that the girl was still alive before the attack consumed her, what is her objective for leading us all here?". Even though the Ghastly Winding Forest was located on the Demon continent, it was a vast forest unlike any other.

Usually, when one delves deeper into the Western or crosses over the southern region of the forest does the chances of meeting a Demon Noble on the way increases. Though if you are extremely unlucky, it was not uncommon to meet a Demon Noble inside Forest but they hadn't delved much deeper. There shouldn't be any demon loitering at the edge of the western region of the forest

Suddenly he thought of a possibility that he didn't wasn't to believe and everything started making sense. The sense of foreboding he was feeling from that time, he felt like it was all pointing there.

Without delaying for even a second, he shouted out the order to return back. Laris didn't wait for anyone and rushed back towards the Forest Spring Spirit village at a speed that broke all his previous records.

He didn't want to believe that the objective of that girl was the enslaved Forest Spring Spirits in the village. Yet all the peculiar events that had happened up until this point left him with no choice but to think of the worst-case scenario.

Simon continuously flew across the forest at a high speed and swiftly approached the area where the azure light shined from. Before the execution of their plan, they decided to meet up in a place after their plan succeeded and he told Irene to signal him with something after they arrive at that place.

Utilizing his [High-Speed Flight] skill, it didn't take him a lot of time to arrive at the place. "We are here" as soon as he arrived, he could hear Cecilia's spirited voice as she continuously waved her hand towards him.

Landing past, he unfolded his wings and looked at the entourage of Forest Spring Spirits. He was surprised to find that they were all children and their numbers were only about twenty or so.

Though he didn't ask, he could guess what happened to the rest of them. The adults who could be troublesome if they resisted were plundered of their Spirit Orbs, and the children whose spirits were quite easy to break were enslaved.

Sighing out loud, he looked at all the children who had a mixture of terrified, anxious, and uncertain aura around them. Some of them even looked at him with caution and maintained some distance from him.

Simon didn't blame the children for displaying such emotions after all they had gone through a terrifying experience. Of course, they would be cautious of a stranger that came to their rescue out of nowhere.

Observing all of them, Simon didn't mask his words "You all must be terrified right now and will be looking at everything with a disbelieving eye. You have every right to be cautious. However, let me tell you one thing, I am not after your Spirit Orbs.

"You guys must be already aware but I'm the dungeon master of the dungeon we would be heading to right now. What I want from you guys is to become my subordinates and help me manage my dungeon. If you are willing to help me with that, then I promise to protect you all with everything I have".

Simon's words rang across the whole area. There was no lie in his words and everything he said was clear and the truth. The forest spring children who had suffered so much were on guard against deception. And Simon's words which weren't masked with any deception or lie, made them see him in a new light. Though there were still some who had their guards against him, the majority of them didn't have their previous cautious and distanced look whenever they gazed at him.

Cecilia watched the emotions of her clansmen who had been awed by Simon and couldn't help but reveal a bright smile. The forest Spring Spirit have the unique ability to influence the nature and that goes strongly for Cecilia who was a royalty amongst the Forest Spring Spirits born every thousand years.

The moment she smiled, Spring bloomed across the whole area.

The trees rustled in delight, flowers bloomed and thrived, grasses swayed in joy. It was as if the flora and fauna came to life at that moment, a mystical scene.

Simon looked with wide eyes stunned at the powers of the little girl. Irene who was beside Cecilia didn't find the scene too shocking after all she was aware of the potential of Forest Spring Royal Spirit.

Though the Forest Spring Spirits weren't born with high combat powers, they were blessed with the power to manipulate and influence the nature that no other species could. Influencing the area was like taking a bucket of water from the ocean, it wasn't even once percent of her power. Once she grows up, the abilities she could display would outright be called heaven-defying.

Snapping out of his daze, he patted the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse that was carrying Cecilia on his back and said "You did quite well protecting her". NIEEGH... flames came out of its nostrils when it neighed as if saying 'She is perfectly fine in my protection'.

"Haha, is that so" as if understanding what the demonic warhorse said, Simon laughed and patted him again. Looking at everyone, he nodded and said "The dungeon is still a little far from here. We need to cover some more distance before I could use the dungeon function to teleport us all inside".

With that, he started leading everyone towards the dungeon. His [Mental Map] skill which had mapped out all the surrounding area generated a safe route where the monster was less prone to come out.

While they marched forward, Irene came up to him and asked "What is with that wound in your chest? Did you engage in a battle with those adventurers".

Listening to her clear and beautiful voice, Simon was honestly surprised a little. It wasn't like Irene to start a conversation first and from her tone, he could detect traces of worry and concern. He didn't know why but the moment he sensed that Irene was worried for him, he felt happy and all pain disappeared in an instant as if it was never there.

Giving a bright smile, he looked at Irene's crystal blue eyes and said "Yeah, I let my guard down for a second and got hit from their attack. But you don't have to worry the wound isn't deep and would quickly heal after some time".

Irene Didn't know why but she moved her gaze away the moment she realized that Simon's bright eyes were staring straight at her. "If it's light then it's good, it should heal away in no time given your recovery skills," she said in an impassive tone.

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Simon locked his brows in surprise because given the way Irene spoke previously and now, there was a huge difference. If previously her ice-cold voice pushed others far away then now it no longer had that distance feeling whenever she talked to Simon.

It might be him imagining things too much but he felt like he had closed the distance between them ever so little.

Though her voice still had that coldness that pushed people far away, it might be because of her inborn powers. Given how even Simon was able to tell the difference, it seemed that Irene herself was unaware of the drastic change she had gone through a few months after coming in contact with Simon.

Cecilia riding on top of the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse looked at Simon and Irene from behind as they walked side by side. A cute smile bloomed on her face as she watched the two discussing something. To her, they looked just like a couple.

Irene was the most beautiful woman she had ever met and although Simon was a demon, he was far better than any human and coupled with his courage and headstrong attitude made him a perfect match for Irene.

The thoughts of the five-year-old girl spun as she observed the two of them and smiled. Maya who was beside Cecilia was also staring at the two of them. Simon's honest speech earlier struck a chord in her, he had not only helped her best friend when she was being chased by those adventurers but also risked his own life to save them.

A sense of gratitude rose from the bottom of her heart as she said "Thank you for saving all of us master and mistress of the dungeon".

“Eh?” Simon was walking at the forefront almost fell onto the ground when he heard what she said. Looking towards Irene who for some reason was avoiding eye contact, he couldn’t help but laugh awkwardly.

He didn’t know what had transpired after he had left nor the reason behind them calling him and Irene in such a way. Of course, he didn’t take the words of a child less than eight years old seriously

“Don’t think too much about it. Cecilia is one of us now, that being said saving you all who are her clansmen is a given. Anyways we are gonna approach near the dungeon soon” saying so, he hurriedly changed the subject.

However, Maya still bowed her head deeply in gratitude, it was not only her but all of the forest spring sprites were the same as they bowed towards Simon and Irene. To them who had lost all hopes of surviving, Simon did a huge favour by not only saving them but even rescuing Cecilia, the daughter of their patriarch from the evil clutches of those adventurers.

Even if Simon did not see it that way, as the eldest here, Maya clearly knew how big of a debt they owed to him.

Seeing their serious and haggard expression, a strange feeling that even he couldn’t put into words welled up within him. ‘Dammit, kids should be more carefree and free-spirited’. One look and anybody could tell that they had gone through a terrible experience. He could see in their eyes worry, anxiety and defeat.

All of this was because of those adventurers who had discarded their humanity. Whenever he thought about those humans he met back near the ancient treants territory, he erupted with a belly full of anger.

Unbeknownst to Simon, the pride fragment within him started to affect his emotions ever so slightly and his eyes glimmered with an unknown light

After marching a while, they finally approached near the vicinity of the dungeon from where he could use the teleportation.

Turning around Simon observed all of the Forest Spring Spirits and said “Get ready everyone. From here, I’m gonna teleport every one of you to my dungeon. Once inside, you all will become the inhabitants of my dungeon. As long as you help me manage the dungeon, I promise to protect you all with all my strength”.

Looking at the Forest Spring Spirits who became awed by his spirited speech, he nodded and opened the teleportation gate. Space became distorted and started rotating, a wide warp hole appeared that connected the outside with the inside of the dungeon.

Just when he was about to lead everyone inside, a boy who appeared to be one of the eldest among the children there came up to him and asked.

“Why did you save Cecilia... what notice do you have behind helping her?” without cowering, Jarred looked straight at Simon’s crimson that looked like they could devour one’s soul.

Looking at the boy who was staring straight at his eyes without blinking, he could see the boy’s strong determination to seek the answer. Giving it some thought in his mind, Simon sighed and said “I don’t know what kind of heroic answer you were expecting but I’m not your hero, I’m a demon after all. Even though I’m a demon, I chose not to abandon a girl who had lost all hope and whose eyes sought help”.

Simon put his hand on Jarred’s head and continued “I don’t know if this answers your question or not but I decided to live my life to its fullest. At that time I decided to save her and so with you all, I’m a selfish demon after all” a wicked smile plastered on his face.

The boy seemed to be stunned as he continuously looked at him. Simon thought ‘Did I say something weird?’ as he looked around and saw that everyone present had a stunned face.

Unsure, he turned towards Irene and was bewildered to see her laughing while covering her mouth with her hand. Cough... with a forced cough, he decided to become thick-skinned and ignore the situation.

“Let’s get inside” Simon couldn’t delve into this any longer as he had other matters to look after. With that, all the Forest Spring Spirits went into the portal.

SPLASH... with a wide swing of his longsword, Chuck killed one of the wind wolves that jumped at him from behind the mist.

CLANG... CLASH... scenes of battles continuously rang out inside the wide cavern covered in thick mist. And after a while, the cavern seemed to become completely silent and only the footsteps that echoed could be heard. “Leader we have cleared all the monsters on this floor and I contacted the other team it seems they found the entrance to the next floor” one of the adventurers leading a team of ten people came up to Chuck and reported.

Currently, Chuck was seated on top of a large rock as he listened to the report, his hand was continuously fondling an object.

It wasn’t long before the other team also joined them. Lina walked towards Chuck and with a cheerful smile, she reported “Hehe, leader we found the entrance to the next floor”. She acted as if she wanted to get praised before she took something out from her ring and presented it to Chuck

“Look leader I found something and there is a lot of them in here”. The object she had in her was a small crystal glimmering with a silver light. Silver crystal, a material used by blacksmiths all over the world to forge weapons and artifacts.

Though it is not a rare ore, it is still in high demand as all the blacksmiths and apprentice blacksmiths require a huge amount of these crystals every month to craft.

Not only that but the appearance of Silver crystals means that there would be a chance for Whitesilver, Blacksilver, and other such rare minerals to appear.

Chuck looked at the Silver crystal on her hand and that beautiful smile on her face. He couldn’t help but tease her “Do you mean this crystal? The other team found them a long time ago”.

“Eh?” Lina looked like she received the shock of her life. She glared at one of the warriors who was the leader of one of the teams and pouted. Snort, she thought that since the mist restricted their vision, nobody would be able to spot the Silver crystals growing on the walls.

However, it seems that wasn’t the case as the other team was also able to spot them.

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Seeing her pout, Chuck couldn't help but smile. "Alright cheer up, I was just joking. Other than me nobody else was able to spot these crystals that are growing everywhere on this floor". It was as he had said, nobody else was able to find these crystals other than him and Lisa due to the thick mist covering the floor and obstructing their vision.

The mist was so dense that it made their surrounding field of vision quite narrow. Fortunately, they had skills such as [Trap Detect], [Location], [Mental Map] and were able to explore through the mist.

However, since the Silver crystals were naturally growing minerals and not a trap, they weren't able to detect it. If it was not for him and Lina accidentally stumbling upon it, they would have missed it entirely.

Although the Silver crystals are not that precious, given the quantity of them growing around and the size of the floor, there would be tons of crystals to harvest.

In addition to that, the Silver crystals were growing inside a dungeon. They could harvest the crystals every few days after they are replenished by the abundant mana inside the dungeon.

Up until floor five, it was smooth sailing as the monsters were weak and the traps could be easily avoided by their skills. On the fifth floor, they were besieged by Stormwolves. Though these monsters were stronger than the ones on the upper floor, they were still no match for their team.

Pondering over his options for a while, Chuck asked " Did you guys find that chimaera?"

when asked such a question, all of them shook their head and replied with a no. After the three chimaeras charged at them, at the southern region of the Ghastly Winding Forest, a fierce battle erupted that went on for a while.

Though the Dark Wing Tiger-Python and the Elephant Snout Wild Boar chimaeras were strong, they were still overwhelmed by Chuck's group of twenty-five adventures as they beat them off with a rock-solid formation. After all, they all had a fair share of their own adventurers and were quite the veteran.

Magic and skills continuously flew from the backlines healing the allies and damaging the Chimaeras. The warriors surrounded the chimaeras and cut off their escape all the while the [Wizards] supported them from the backlines and bombarded the enemies with their spells.

After a while, only the Falcon Wing Bull-Ox remained which managed to escape deeper inside the forest. Thinking that the chimaeras could be the reason behind the disturbance that led to an outbreak of monsters out of the forest and towards the border of their city of Mountmend, they pursued the Falcon Wing Bull-Ox.

The chimaera flew through the forest and ultimately disappeared near a tall spiral tower. Even when they searched all around, not even a trace of its presence could be found. But that was not the only thing weighing in their minds.

Given the aura and demonic presence oozing out of the tower, one look and the adventurers were able to see that the spiral tower was no ordinary tower but a dungeon. A demon's lair.

"Was this dungeon always here?" Chuck asked the question, the answer of which he already knew.

One of the adventurers from his party gave a deep look at the tower and the mysterious carvings on its walls before saying "I came to the eastern part of the forest a few months ago to hunt some orcs. But at that time there was no signs of such a huge tower being there. If something so conspicuous was there, I definitely wouldn't have missed it".

"I see... that is to say..." Chuck knitted his brows and murmured. He could already guess that the tower, the dungeon to be more precise was a newly emerged one. After all, if there was a dungeon this close to the city of Mountmend, as the branch manager of the Sea God's trident guild located at the city, he would have already known.

If the dungeon was not there previously, then there was only one possibility that it was a newly emerged one.

“Earlier it was the Chimearas and now this... seriously what is going inside the forest” one of the adventurers spoke in concern.

Now that they had seen a dungeon, as adventurers they couldn’t just ignore it. The dungeon could also be the one behind the disturbance and even the chimaera they were chasing disappeared around it.

Everybody was convinced that the chimaera went inside it and must be one of the minions of the demon that was living inside. The adventurers deliberated whether to explore the dungeon or not.

They did not have the necessary equipment and items to tackle the dungeon plus they had a pretty solid reason to believe that the dungeon was behind all the monsters running out of the forest. If they relayed the message back, they would have already completed the mission assigned to them by the mayor.

However, since they were adventurers the best of the best the city of Mountment had to offer, they naturally wanted to explore it first. Who knew what kind of monsters and treasures was waiting inside, their sense that have been refined after years of adventuring, started tingling.

Chuck deliberated for a while before deciding on exploring the dungeon. He was the leader of the party and the branch manager of the guild thus his words possessed the most authority. Their party could have gone back without entering the dungeon and relaying the message back to the mayor.

But given the strength of this team, Chuck believed that even if they explored a newly emerged dungeon they would be fine for a while. Plus he didn’t want to leave a potentially dangerous dungeon without knowing it a little.

On the fifth floor of the dungeon, Chuck played with the Silver crystal in his hand before ordering “Take out your equipments and harvest all the ores growing on the walls. We will mine this floor before descending, rest of you be on alert and protect the one’s mining from any monster that may have survived”.

They have already collected all the valuables from the monster that they killed up until now. Chuck looked around the floor and the amount of Silver crystals being harvested before walking towards the adventurer who previously said that he came to the eastern part of the forest a few months ago.

Seeing that their leader was coming towards them, the adventurers thought if there was something wrong.

“Don’t mind me, I’m just here to look at the quality of the crystals” Chuch grabbed a chunk of Silver crystal that was bigger than his palm and inspected it. The purity of the ore could be said quite good, heck it was even better than some of the Silver crystals that are available in the market of their city of Mountmend.

It made him think even more. ‘How can a newly emerged dungeon produce Silver crystals... not to mention of this purity?’.

All the adventurers were mining the Silver crystals with high spirit but they all forgot that the dungeon they are mining is a newly emerged one. The Silver crystal was one thing but the size and length of each floor that kept on increasing was another. Even the density of manas inside the dungeon was many times higher than any lower rank dungeon Chuck had ever delved into. The dungeon was clearly unusual.

After a couple of hours, the adventurers finished mining all the ores from the fifth floor and stored them inside their space rings. All the adventurers kept their instruments back and were in high spirits as they gathered near the entrance to the next floor.

When Chuck saw that all of them had gathered, he instructed “Alright we shall descend a few more floors and end our exploration before retreating back”.

“Ehhh?” all the adventurers made confused and discontent faces before throwing out complaints “

Why are we retreating so fast leader?”

“That’s right it’s only been a day since we delved inside the dungeon”

“We have plenty of rations and can easily hold on for as long as a week”.

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Lisa looked at Chuck’s serious expression before making up her mind “We will do as the leader said. Is there anyone who still has any complaints?”. She stared at everyone with a smile that wasn’t a smile.

Nobody dared to make any more complaints after her threatening gaze. Lisa knew that Chuck wouldn’t have come to this decision if he didn’t have something on his mind. Additionally, He was the leader of the party, she had complete faith in him.

When the crowd settled down, Chuck asked Lisa “Don’t you want to know why I ordered to withdraw all of a sudden?”.

Lisa turned towards Chuck, gave him a cheerful smile, and said “I trust you and I know that all the decisions you take are for the party’s benefit and I believe nobody here would doubt it. Plus If there wasn’t something bothering you, you wouldn’t have ordered a retreat”.

Chuck was stunned by how percipient Lisa was and couldn’t help but shake his head in defeat as he said with a smile “You are right. I have had this bad feeling plaguing me ever since I stepped foot

inside the dungeon. It might be only me but... have you noticed something unusual about this dungeon?"

Lina tilted her head by this sudden question and asked in confusion "Something unusual?". She pondered over it for a while before replying "do you mean the chimaeras?".

Chuck nodded he wasn't surprised by her reply since he knew that the girl was an airhead. "That too but don't you feel that the density of manas is quite thicker than what a newly emerged dungeon is supposed to have".

He couldn't blame her since all of his party members were the same and seemed to have not detected anything unusual about the dungeon yet. Chuck was the leader of their party and was responsible for their life and death hence he was more prudent and cautious than the rest of his team.

He took out a large chunk of Silver crystal from his space ring "These Silver crystals too, they are not supposed to grow in a newly emerged [E] rank dungeon. Not to mention the purity of each of these crystals are much higher than those crystals circulating in our city of Mountmend".

After listening to his explanation Lisa finally became aware of the peculiarities surrounding the dungeon a little. Now that she looked around, she could feel the density of the mana. Thinking back, she noticed that each floor was starting to get wider and wider the more floors they descended.

"Is leader trying to imply that..." she turned towards Chuck and asked.

"Yes, I believe that it's not a [E] rank dungeon but instead a [D] rank" Chuck said confirming her suspicion.

"But how can that be... wasn't it a newly emerged dungeon?" Lina asked shocked at what she heard. It wasn't only her but Chuck himself felt quite shocked at this revelation; after all, the dungeon must have formed not more than Six months ago.

It was common knowledge in this world that it takes a couple of years or even decades for a newly emerged dungeon's rank to go up. Not to mention the span of time increases the higher the tier of the dungeon.

Now he was inside one such dungeon that defied the common sense of this world. Lisa was finally aware of the true nature of the dungeon she had just entered with her guild. To her, it looked just like a maw of a sleeping beast.

She now understood why their leader looked so serious, he had this suspicion plaguing him and that was why he ordered the end of their exploration after a few more floors and decided to retreat.

“What should we do Chuck?” Lisa was quite shaken after she became aware of the peculiarities of the dungeon.

Chuck lightly smacked her in her head and said “You are supposed to call me leader and not Chuck. There is no need to worry, though it’s no ordinary dungeon we are adventurers after all. As long as we don’t break our formation, nothing will go wrong”.

Lisa finally relaxed after Chuck assured her. “That’s right we are the strongest guild in the city of Mountmend, even if it’s an uncommon dungeon with all our team here we have nothing to worry” her voice became cheerful once again after she said those words to boost her morale.

Chuck looked at her who was back to her usual cheerful self and nodded his head “Alright, go and regroup with your team. We shall start descending the next floor”.

With that said, Chuck’s team descended a total of two floors and reached floor seven. It took them more than a day to reach the seventh floor. However, it wasn’t because of the mist that eternally surrounded the seventh floor nor was it because of the Albino Spiders and White Horned Rabbit that assaulted them on some of the floors. It was because of the large quantity of ores that was growing on these floors

His team mined as many Silver crystals as they could until their space rings were filled to the point where they had to throw some useless items they had been storing in their rings.

Chuck looked at the content faces of his team before commanding “Alright, you all listen up. In these past few days, we had more than enough haul and were also able to complete our main mission to find the reason behind the outbreak of monsters from the Ghastly Winding Forest. Therefore, I am ending our exploration here. We will start ascending out of the dungeon and head back to the city”.

Everybody nodded and no one voiced their complaints this time. They have mined a large number of Silver crystals and hunted monster parts till their space ring was full. The adventurers were

starting to get tired after spending a few days inside the dungeon killing monsters and mining the ores.

They were starting to miss the sunlight and wanted to head back to the city and exchange their loot for money.

Three moons lit the dark forest with their beautiful moonlight. Hurried sounds could be heard coming from the forest as a group of ten people darted forth. Their destination is the Forest Spring Spirit Village hidden at the edge of the Ancient Treant territory.

Leading them was a brawny man who had a bald head, it was none other than Dale from the Seven Swords guild. He and his team were sent here to assist Laris with the task that was assigned to him by the guild. He was to distract and lure the adventurer team sent by the Sea God's Trident branch guild located at the city of Mountmend.

Dale was eager and delighted to report back to the guild that he had successfully lured the Adventurers from the Sea God's Trident inside the dungeon. The three chimaeras he had painfully gathered from the guild, worked marvellously and were successful in leading the adventurers towards the guild.

Though he felt pain when he saw two of the chimaeras being killed by the Sea God's guild, the last one Falcon Wing Bull-Ox was able to come out of this alive.

Each of these chimaeras was not cheap and cost a fortune to prepare one even for their guild. The guild had provided him with three chimaeras which goes to say that their guild was using all their reserves for the success of this mission.

Although two of the chimaeras ended up getting killed, the remaining was able to successfully come out alive. But what mattered most wasn't the safety of the chimaeras but the mission itself.

And that is why Dale was pleased as his mission had gone exactly as he planned. After he saw the adventurer team heading inside the dungeon, he was preparing to camp in a distant peek and observe how long the dungeon was able to stall the elite adventurers from the city of Mountmend.

However, a few hours ago he was contacted by Laris with a transmission shell to urgently come to the Forest Spring Spirit village.

Chapter 116: Insane

Dale was pleased as his mission had gone exactly as he planned. After he saw the adventurer team heading inside the dungeon, he was preparing to camp in a distant peak and observe how long the dungeon was able to stall the elite adventurers from the city of Mountmend.

However, a few hours ago he was contacted by Laris with a transmission shell to urgently come to the Forest Spring Spirit village.

Though he didn't like to take orders from someone who was not superior, he felt that something was wrong on the other side and hence decided to rush towards the village.

On his way, Dale felt that Laris's tone sounded quite urgent and he couldn't help but think of the worst-case scenario of Laris messing up and failing the mission. "He better not sabotage the mission or else..." he cursed Laris while quickening his pace even further.

If Laris failed the mission, it would end up also affecting him and he didn't have any powerful backer inside the guild like Laris' brother. That is why he couldn't mess it up or else the consequences would be more dire for him than what it is for Laris.

Before long he arrived near a gigantic dead tree, a wide hole inside the trunk led towards the hidden village of the Forest Spring Spirits. According to the intel, this was the hidden entrance that the forest spring spirit clan used to travel around.

Even before reaching the village, a cold burst of wind assaulted him and his team. They all shuddered as the extremely cold wind brushed past them making them feel as if they were in the snow valley.

The scene inside was more abrupt than what they have imagined. Everything inside the village was covered in a thick layer of ice, the bamboo trees, the houses, the land. It was as if the land was encased in a layer of ice for thousands of years.

A man with an ash pale face came to greet before leading them towards the centre of the village where the cold was more extreme than the rest of the village. Sat at the centre of the village was the

only house that wasn't frozen. The atmosphere around the house was completely silent and none of the adventurers inside dared to even let out a peep.

Heading inside, Dale saw the gloomy and lost face of Laris and immediately knew that the situation was more dire than he thought. He sat opposite Laris and asked, "What happened? What is the situation?"

There was no point in hiding it anymore and thus Laris decided to reveal everything from the moment he was made aware of the Royal spirit and up to the events where he came back to the village to find it encased in ice and the Forest Spring Spirit children missing.

"Dale, I ask you one more time. Did you see that little Forest Spring Royal Spirit running towards the eastern part of the forest?" Laris looked right into Dale's eyes while emphasizing every line.

"How many times must I say that I saw no such girl. Did you really think I would miss something so unusual as that little Forest Spring Royal Spirit girl?" Dale asserted. He grabbed Laris by the collar and shouted "You bastard, you wanted to hoard the achievement of catching a royal spirit all to yourself and hid the fact from all of us. And now that you have made such a huge blunder, you want my help?. Isn't it all your fault to begin with, neglecting the security of the enslaved forest spring spirit and even falling for the trap".

Laris broke free from Dale's and roared back "It's not my fault. Who wouldn't want to hoard the achievement of catching the royal spirit to himself? You can easily join the ranks of the seven swords with that achievement in the guild. If you were in my place you would have done exactly the same".

"Y-you..." Dale became speechless and couldn't refute the reasoning put forth by Laris. Changing the subject, he snorted and said "Not only were you not able to catch that Royal Spirit, but you even lost the twenty or so Forest Spring Spirits that were to be enslaved and sold in the auction. Do you even know what kind of consequences you have brought forth upon yourself? Because of your greed, not only have you failed but you have sabotaged the whole mission. Even if it's your brother, he cannot save you from this blunder".

Laris ground his teeth as he listened to Dale, if he could he would have silenced this man, but he knew that it wasn't the time to think like that.

Laris calmed his mind which was about to erupt in rage and said "It's not the time to fight among ourselves. Do you really think I will be the only one held accountable for all of this? Nope, you too

shall face some of the consequences and I believe that you don't want to shoulder something you didn't do right?".

Knitting his brows, Dale asked, "What are you trying to say?". A crafty smile crept up to Laris's face as he said "It's simple I want your cooperation in finding those Forest Spring Spirits back. If we work together then I'm sure that we can make the situation so that this blunder never happened. What do you say?".

Dale observed the arrogant smile on Laris's face that said that he was in control of everything and couldn't help but get annoyed. "You really believe I will fall for that childish trap? Fine then, let's report it to the guild. I'm ready to face the punishment for something I had not done, but mark my words the punishment you gonna face will be far worse than mine".

"Tch" Laris clicked his tongue as his smile became sour. He thought that he could manipulate Dale after that coercion but it seemed that didn't have any effect. Tapping his finger on the chair, he pondered for a while and finally made the biggest concession he could offer to salvage the situation.

"How about this, if you help me find the Forest Spring Spirits and that little royal spirit girl I'm willing to share this achievement fifty-fifty".

Dale deliberated at this offer and carefully observed Laris as if to see through any deception before finally making up his mind and saying "This better not be one of your ploys. We share this achievement fifty-fifty regardless of whether we find the royal spirit or not. If you can't accept that, well then you should find somebody else to salvage this situation for you".

"Alright, but I will not have you giving up on the Royal Spirit girl that easily" Laris made sure.

"Fair enough, but do you where those Forest Spring Spirits are?" Dale asked the main question that had been on his mind for a while. If they didn't even know where the forest spirits had disappeared to, then there was no meaning for them to join hands.

However, even he didn't expect to hear something this ridiculous from Laris. "I have got a clue as to where they might be?" Laris said after he organized his thoughts for a while. "Ooh, you have a clue you say? Do you know who the perpetrator is?" seeing Laris nod, he hurriedly asked, "Who is it?".

Laris hesitated for a while before saying “It’s that demon that I confronted at that place”. Dale made a face that seemed to be saying ‘you are joking right?’, it was not only him but all the adventurers who were listening to their conversation made a similar stupid face.

“That demon? Why would that demon do something like that?” Dale couldn’t help but ask as he held the laughter that was trying to burst out of him. Laris knew what he was saying and going to say would sound ridiculously stupid and would even make others question his sanity but he was pretty sure that his conjecture was the real answer.

“It is the demon, or you could say it was the demon all along. He made us fall into his trap and he was also the one who took away the Forest Spring Spirits while our focus was diverted”. Everybody present made a dumbfounded face as if questioning his sanity, some of them even became red due to excessively holding onto their laughter.

Dale made an amused face as he asked “Alright, assuming that it was the demon all along, then where did that royal spirit girl go? And if he was in front of you, then how did he steal those forest spring spirits?”.

The more they thought, the more ridiculous it sounded.

Chapter 117: Insane (2)

Laris knew what he was saying sounded ridiculously stupid and would even make others question his sanity but he was pretty sure that his conjecture was the right answer.

Dale made an amused face as he asked “Alright, assuming that it was the demon all along, then where did that royal spirit girl go? And if he was in front of you, then how did he steal those forest spring spirits?”.

The more they thought, the more ridiculous it sounded.

“I’m telling you it was that demon all along. He led us by our nose, I don’t know how he did that but I’m sure that the Royal Spirit girl we were after was that demon” Laris said as he thought about all those unusual events starting from meeting that girl in the forest up until that demon’s appearance.

Pffttt... Hahahahaha... none of them could hold out any longer and burst out in a peal of laughter. Even the adventurers who were with Laris at the scene, held their stomach as they laughed loudly until tears started glimmering in their eyes.

The only one who was not laughing was Laris himself as he expected this scene to play out. He looked at Dale to ascertain what the other party thought.

“So are you saying that little royal spirit girl was that demon all along? Are we after the demon or the royal spirit girl” holding onto his laughter, Dale tried to make sense of what the other party was trying to say.

“It’s not that... how do I make you believe. There was no royal spirit girl there at that time, we were all running after that demon. Seizing this opportunity, he might have sent his subordinates to the village to bring the forest spring spirit away” Laris tried his best to make sense of the situation.

“I don’t get it. Have you lost your mind after committing that blunder? Wasn’t it you who said that you were chasing after the royal spirit girl and now you say that there was no girl there and it was the demon all along?”

Dale laughed at laris’ speculation before saying in a mocking tone “are you saying that the demon took the form of a little girl and led you around the forest?”.

All the adventurers laughed after what Dale had said but not Laris, at this moment it was as if lightning struck him straight out of the heavens as realization dawned upon him.

Thinking this way everything made sense, that agility of her that was in contrast to her race, even the mysterious disappearance of the girl and that peculiar entrance of the demon amidst the flames.

It all started making sense to him and at the same time, he became frustrated when he thought about how the demon led him all around the forest by the nose.

“Right... you are exactly right. It is as you say that demon took the form of that little girl and lured us out of the forest so that his subordinates could sneak in while we are away” laris looked as if he solved something incredible.

All of the adventurers became speechless after what they heard. If earlier they were laughing because of how absurd this all sounded, but now they weren't laughing anymore and looked at Laris as if he was a madman.

Some of them even started pitying him thinking that he had lost his mind. "SIGH... all this is a big waste of my time. It sounds like nonsense you just cooked up" Dale spat those words and was just about to leave when what Laris said next made him stop in his tracks.

"Are you aware of some mysterious items and skills that can change one's form? In the ancient records and rumours, there were some artifacts that could allow one to freely morph into someone else".

Dale turned around and asked, "Are you saying that the demon you encountered is in possession of one such item?".

Laris looked at the adventurers who were with him at that time "Don't you all find it strange that Forest Spring girl was able to outrun us despite being one of the weakest races in this world? How did the demon appear in the exact same place where the little girl was engulfed in flames?".

All the adventurers appeared as if they were digesting what he said and Laris took this opportunity to solidify his words "What if the demon used some artifact to morph into that girl. It would explain that ridiculous agility of hers that was in contrast to her race. And when she was hit by that [Fire Pillar] and engulfed in flames, it could be that the effects of the item wore off and his true form was finally revealed".

This time nobody laughed at Laris as they intensely listened to what he had to say.

Though it still sounded ridiculous and there was a possibility that it was just them thinking too much. However, they couldn't deny the possibility that the demon might have been in a possession of one such item that led to all those unusual events.

Dale was silent as he listened to him before asking "If it's as you say, then there is the possibility that demon is in possession of one such item. But there is also the possibility that you have gone insane and it's all in your head. Do you have any proof to convince us all?".

Laris knew that it was very difficult to believe him right now and all of these sounded like speculation for them however it was a lead he had found after thinking so hard. He wasn't going to give up on it that easily.

“I don’t have proof but I saw the demon retreat right after an azure light flashed in the distant sky. And when I rushed back to the village, all the enslaved Forest Spring Spirits were gone. It couldn’t have been a coincidence”.

Dale felt that it wasn’t like Laris to insist on something so much and therefore he finally relented “Alright since you insist so much. Assuming that it was the demon, where did it come from in the first place?”

Laris stared at a certain direction of the forest before turning towards him “There is only one place from where that demon could come from and also the place they most likely have taken the Forest Spring Spirits”

Looking at the direction where Laris was looking at a few moments ago, a thought flashed in Dale’s mind and he couldn’t help but ask “You don’t mean that...”. “Yes, the dungeon” his words were completed by Laris.

“There is no better place to hide the Forest Spring Spirits than the dungeon and I believe it is the dungeon of that demon that messed with my plan”. Seeing that Dale made an apprehensive face, Laris asked “Is there anything wrong?”.

“The guild sent me here to assist with your mission, our task was to lure the adventurer team sent by the Sea God’s guild towards the dungeon and distract them long enough so that your team gets out of the forest” Dale explained.

Laris looked shaken and his entire mind became blank for a moment. He repeated, “The guild sent you to lure the other adventurers coming here towards the dungeon? I wasn’t made aware of anything about that”.

“By now the Sea God’s guild might have delved deeper into the dungeon and might even be able to conquer it” Dale said as if stating the obvious.

Laris denied his thoughts saying ” They cannot conquer the dungeon that easily after all the dungeon master is a Demon Viscount”

This time it was Dale’s turn to get surprised. He asked “A demon Viscount?... are you sure that demon was Demon Viscount?”.

“Yeah, there is no mistaking it. He was Demon viscount, it was able to exchange blows with me so its level must be quite high” Laris said as he recalled his fight against the demon.

“Though it was Demon Viscount, I was still able to injure it. We must immediately head towards the dungeon too. I don’t want those adventurers from the Sea God’s trident guild to get their hands on the precious Forest Spring Spirits I have painstakingly captured”.

Laris was eager to immediately head towards the dungeon but was stopped immediately by Dale. He said “The Sea God’s guild is inside the dungeon, we cannot go in there carelessly lest we risk the word of us capturing Forest Spring Spirits gets out. Even the guild will not be able to save itself from destruction much less us who will be immediately disowned by them and hunted across the whole continent”.

Chapter 118: Insane (3)

Laris was eager to immediately head towards the dungeon but was stopped immediately by Dale. He said “The Sea God’s guild is inside the dungeon, we cannot go in there carelessly lest we risk the word of us capturing Forest Spring Spirits gets out. Even the guild will not be able to save itself from destruction much less us who will be immediately disowned by them and hunted across the whole continent”.

“Then are you suggesting that we do nothing and let the Sea God’s guild get to those Forest spring Spirits first?” Laris snapped back and asked. He still couldn’t believe that the guild didn’t inform him of something so important.

“Calm down, it’s not like I’m saying that we should give up on those Forest Spring Spirits assuming that they escaped inside the dungeon. What I’m saying is that we wait and see what happens”.

Realizing that Dale was planning something, Laris asked “what are you trying to suggest?”.

Dale clenched his hand into a fist and said nonchalantly “I’m suggesting that we wait and see what the Sea God’s trident guild does. If they are able to conquer the dungeon and return above ground with those Forest Spring Spirits, then we kill them and snatch those forest spirits back. As you said earlier if that demon is a Demon Viscount then those Sea God’s guild members would be quite exhausted after their fight and snatching the Forest Spring Spirits from them would be as easy as taking candy from a child”.

Laris heard Dale's plan and felt that it was quite plausible, he said "Wouldn't killing them spell trouble for us? Even if those adventurers are from a branch guild, the Sea God's Trident guild is still one of the top five guilds in the Kingdom".

Dale sneered at Laris and pointed "Did you forget where we are right now? We are in the Ghastly Winding Forest of the Demon continent. Even if those adventurers died here, the Sea God's Trident would never suspect our guild and instead, all the blame would fall on the demons. This is their land, after all, it wouldn't be too farfetched to think that they were killed by the demons".

Laris deliberated for a while and felt that the plan was quite good but suddenly he remembered something and asked, "What if they don't conquer the dungeon and return without the Forest Spring Spirits?"

Dale caressed his bald head and slowly said "We kill them regardless and conquer the dungeon ourselves. We have to take in the possibility that those Sea God's members might take out their Spirit Orbs rather than bringing the Forest Spring Spirits out alive".

Saying that he turned around and addressed his team "You lot get ready we are gonna ambush those people as soon as they come out of that dungeon".

Laris gave a similar order to his team before the surrounding adventurers started all scurrying around and making their preparations.

Dale looked around at the village which was now encased in a thick layer of ice and lazily asked "What the hell happened here? From the looks of it, somebody had used an advanced magic here". He looked at the broken ice statues that were scattered around and smirked towards Laris.

Laris on the other hand could only endure the mockery after all it was his team that let the other party successfully cast an advanced tier spell that had a long cast time.

"Those fools they deserved this" he cursed and shattered a frozen head that was on the ground with a stomp of his foot. It was common sense in this world to target the one that is trying to cast advanced magic and disturb their flow before they pull off their attack.

Once the advanced tier spell is successfully cast, it can quickly turn the tide of the battle however, it takes an equal amount of time to cast one. Laris even in his wildest dream wouldn't have imagined that Irene had pulled off advanced tier magic in nearly an instant.

After a while, all the adventurers gathered near the centre and were ready to set off. The adventurers looked at the two leaders who ranked amongst the top twenty in their guild team up and couldn't help feel excited.

If they could successfully accomplish this mission, then the ranking of their leaders was sure to rise and even they would bathe in some of the glory.

On the main floor of Laplace, inside the white palace, Simon was comforting the Forest Spring Spirit children as he played his piano for them. The atmosphere around them was dark and gloomy so he decided to play some light and uplifting music.

The tune was very soothing as it rang across the whole room quickly snatching the attention of all the children towards him as they listened to him with bated breaths. The music helped them put down their wariness as all the mental strain and exhaustion faded away and they quickly fell asleep.

Cecilia who was sitting beside Maya caressed her hair when she fell asleep. She was aware of how much pain and sorrow they had suffered as she had gone through the same thing. Looking at Simon who was silently playing his notes, she couldn't be anymore thankful.

Not only had he saved her, but he even risked his life to save her clansmen and got hurt in the process.

Though the wound had already recovered, she still felt a tinge of pain and guilt whenever she thought that it was because of her selfishness that he got hurt.

She came near him and gave him a deep bow "Thank you very very much... because of you I was able to save my clansmen. My mother and father will now be able to rest in peace knowing that their clansmen are safe now, it's all thanks to you... thank you... thank you..." Cecilia choked up on her tears and repeated the same words again and again.

Simon caressed her small head and gave his best smile which frankly looked wicked "You don't have to thank me anymore. I had my own selfish reasons for saving your clansmen".

“Even then master you got hurt...” as Cecilia was about to say he got hurt because of her, Simon quickly cut her off saying “I got hurt because I let my guard down for a second, it won’t happen again”.

He clenched his hands and declared but suddenly he remembered something.

“You... what did you call me?” Simon asked pointing at her. Cecilia tilted her and repeated “Master! Should I not call you that?”.

Simon scratched his cheek and said “Master is bit...” how can he allow a five-year-old girl call him master. Though he was not even a year old after he got reincarnated in this world and theoretically that made Cecilia older than him, but his soul was still more than forty years old.

“Then what should I call you?” Cecilia looked at him with her bright emerald green eyes and asked. Simon deliberated for a while before replying “How about big brother? That way we would be a family and you wouldn’t have to feel indebted to me all the time”.

Seeing that Cecilia was looking at him with wide-open eyes which were about to erupt in tears, he hastily said “If you are not willing then leave it, call me in whichever way you want”. Cecilia wiped her tears and said, “Uhuh... Im happy, big brother is too good to me. Is big brother really a demon?”

Chapter 119:- Ambush

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wiped her tears and said, “Uuh... Im happy, big brother is too good to me. Is big brother really a demon?”

“....” Simon was stunned and didn’t know how to answer that. Hurriedly forcing a cough, he changed the subject “Alright from now we are a family, and I’m your big brother... so stop crying already. As your big brother, it is only natural that I save the clansmen of my little sister”.

Cecilia continuously nodded her head as her heart warmed up and she did her best to hold back her tears. She didn’t want her big brother to see her as a crybaby.

Seeing that the knot in her heart has finally opened, Simon sighed in relief. Just when he turned around, from the corner of his eyes, he saw Irene silently standing there smiling.

Irene was an otherworldly ethereal beauty and when she smiled, Simon felt like the whole world became radiant for a second. He didn’t know why but to him it seemed like Irene had changed quite a bit.

“Was she always like this?” Simon wondered. When he summoned her first time, she was cold and detached from everything around her and had an air of icy cold beauty. Now though she was still an icy cold beauty, there was still some warmth to her.

“Why are you smiling?” he couldn’t help but ask. “Why can’t I smile?” his question was met with a question of her own. Seeing that he had no answer, Irene’s lips drew a slight curve but she quickly concealed it.

Changing the subject, Irene said “It looks like the intruders have stopped descending after the 8th floor”.

Simon nodded and opened the [Main Menu]. He could see a group of humans on the 8th floor and apparently, it seems they have decided to stop their exploration and ascend back outside. He didn’t know why and how the adventurers have spotted his dungeon, but he knew that this group of people was not connected to ones that had subjugated Cecilia’s village.

After these adventurers entered the dungeon, they resided more than four days inside his dungeon which had netted him a significant amount of DP. Each of these adventurers was more than level 200 and the amount of DP each of them provided was quite large.

They didn't seem like they were here to conquer the dungeon and were here just to explore. This group didn't care about their pace and was just mining and exploring the dungeon leisurely.

The twenty-five or so dots represented in his screen seemed to gather near the entrance to the 7th floor "They are retreating back".

Irene nodded and said, "It appears so".

The dungeon had already recognized her as one of the guardians, hence she is able to use some of the functions of the menu. On that note, a few days after he brought Cecilia to his dungeon, he got a message from the dungeon saying:-

Name- Cecilia

Race- Forest Spring Royal Spirit

Has fulfilled all the conditions for a Dungeon Guardian. Do wish to add Cecilia as one of the Guardians of the dungeon?

YES/NO

Bringing out the message once again, he swiftly pressed YES and Cecilia became the second Guardian of his dungeon.

The role of the Guardians is to protect and manage the dungeon on behalf of the dungeon master. Though Cecilia was unable to protect the dungeon with her strength, her abilities lied somewhere else. It was to the point where even Irene had praised her, Simon couldn't wait to see the full potential of a [S] rank Forest Spring Royal Spirit.

Chuck and his team descended till the 8th floor. Unlike the previous cavernous floor, the seventh and eighth floor was a wide mountainous area. Even the monsters lurking around such as the battle bears and warring mandrills were much more stronger.

After the rank of the dungeon goes up, the level of the spawned monster also rises which makes even the weakest monsters on a high-rank dungeon difficult to kill.

Therefore the stronger guild usually decides to tackle the higher rank dungeon to earn more treasure as well as to level up.

Whenever a strong guild like the top five guilds of the Ellesmere kingdom decide to send adventurer teams on a high-rank dungeon, the expenditure of mobilizing the manpower, resources, equipment, and such is very enormous.

Hence if they do not tackle a higher rank that gives higher rewards, they wouldn't even be able to break even the cost they incurred.

“Alright, you guys pack up. Leave all the items we cannot store in our space rings or bags behind. I don't want you all to let your guard down until we get out of the dungeon. The monster on the above floors might have spawned again, we shall maintain our formation and ascend up” Chuck quickly gave out orders.

The adventurer quickly did as they were told and hurriedly kept the things they needed and discarded the ones they had no space for.

It took them one whole day to ascend back up to the first floor. Though they already mined the Silver crystals on the 4th, 5th, and 6th floor, the crystals had already started to grow back again.

The adventurers maintained their formation and swiftly dispatched any monsters that attacked them on the way. After reaching the first floor, they rested for a while before deciding to exit the dungeon.

Feeling the fresh air and sunlight through their skin, they shouted in delight.

“Hehe, we are finally out. I missed the sun and the fresh air” Lisa exaggeratedly said as she spread her arms to feel the warmth of the sun and the blowing fresh air.

Looking at the girl who was happy to see the sun once again, Chuck couldn't help but shake his head "Don't be melodramatic, we have only been inside the dungeon for less than a week".

Lisa pouted when she heard what he said and angrily pointed at him "Leader please don't ruin my fun. The dungeon was so dark and we always had to be on alert all the time. Compared to that the outside world is so better, ah how I longed for it".

All the adventurers laughed as they heard their exchange.

Chapter 120: Ambush (2)

Looking at the girl who was happy to see the sun once again, Chuck couldn't help but shake his head "Don't be melodramatic, we have only been inside the dungeon for less than a week".

Lisa pouted when she heard what she said and angrily pointed at "Leader please don't ruin my fun. The dungeon was so dark and we always had to be on alert all the time. Compared to that the outside world is so better, ah how I longed for it".

All the adventurers laughed as they heard their exchange.

He sighed in exhaustion and stopped bickering with her 'There is no winning against her'. Even though he said all that, Chuck couldn't deny her words about the outside world being better which even he was starting to miss.

The adventurers who were on guard all the time since entering the dungeon, relaxed their guard as they conversed

"Miss Lisa is right the outside world is the best"

"Of course did miss Lisa ever say something wrong?"

"Hey stop trying to sweet-talk her, she wouldn't even give you a look"

"Are you saying that because you failed to court her? Hahaha".

Conversation filled with laughter and glee rang out amongst the adventurers as they made their way out of the forest in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Even Chuck who was their leader and the branch guild manager relaxed his guard and let them be.

Just as they reached a valley overlooked by a cliff on the side, mana started convulsing and swirling as they gathered on top of the cliff. Dark clouds swarmed over and blotted the sun, Chuck and his team were perplexed by the sudden change in weather.

As they were confounded over the situation, the answer soon arrived. Spells and magic conjured by dozens of level 200 [Wizard] and level 150 [Magician] rammed down on the cliff above.

BOOOOooooooooMMM... the sound was so deafening that it could be heard from miles away. Chuck had a bad premonition, they were right under the cliff, and if the cliff... without thinking any further, he roared out the command to retreat.

“RETREAT” however, his voice was drowned by the rumbling sound that came from above the cliff.

RUMBLE... RUMBLE... the entire cliff started trembling as chunks of earth and dirt started falling off from the cliff. Huge cracks started appearing before the entire cliff came falling down on the valley.

Turning around, he came bolting towards Lisa and shielded his team with the skill [Gaurdian Halo] using all his strength and power.

Chuck was a level 359 [Gaurdian Knight] and his class boasted high defence and strength which could even keep people higher level than him in the bay. However, no matter how high the defence of [Guardian knight] was, he alone wasn't enough to defend all of them from the cliff that came barreling down towards them.

When the falling debris was right in front of them, the adventurers finally became aware of imminent disaster and hurriedly used their skills to protect themselves, but they were a step too late.

BOOooooMMM...the land trembled and a huge cloud of dust rose as high as few thousand meters.

On the other side of the cliff, a few distances away were Laris and Dale who looked at this scene with indifferent eyes. There was not even a hint of remorse or mockery, it was as if they had done something inconsequential.

Behind them were groups of [Wizard] and [Magician] who had cast intermediate and novice tier magic on the cliff a few moments ago.

“Most of them should have died after this, let’s go and clean up the mess,” Laris said as he and Dale walked towards the place where the adventurers from the Sea God’s guild got buried under the debris.

“Haaaaaaaaaaah” Chuck used all his strength to move a huge chunk of earth away. Behind him were Lisa and two other adventurers who looked mostly unharmed. Dust obstructed their vision and he couldn’t tell if the other survived or not.

He was able to barely react in time and put up a shield however, his right arm got dislocated by the heavy impact that he had to endure.

Looking around, he hurriedly called out the names of the adventurers. Some of them reacted still stuck inside the debris barely alive, some were fortunate enough to survive and get out of the wreckage but with heavy injuries, others died from the impact.

Out of twenty-five people that he had brought, only thirteen of them survived including him.

Chuck clenched his hands in frustration and swiftly went to help the others get out of the rubble. All of them had aghast and lost faces, they were merrily enjoying their return from their exploration inside the dungeon when disaster struck all of them.

The people they were talking with a few moments ago were now dead, their corpses inside the debris. Most of the adventurers that survived were mainly warrior classes as for the mages, only two of them survived and one of them was Lisa.

Before they could understand the situation, clapping sound started sounding out from somewhere amidst the dust as if adding insult to the injury.

After the dust settled, Laris and Dale walked towards the injured members of the Sea God's guild. Dale continuously clapped and said in a mocking manner "As expected of the branch guild of one of the top five guilds in the entire kingdom. To have survived that, I must say I am truly impressed".

Chuck gave him an enraged stare and snarled out "It was you guys who bombarded the cliff?".

Enjoying his reaction, Laris said languidly "Oh! Impressive, you truly are as the rumour say branch guild manager of the Sea God's guild Chuck Remington. You are truly extraordinary. Indeed, it was us; however, even we didn't expect you guys to be so defenceless to fall for that. I must say I am disappointed".

"You shameless people, to think you would set up a trap for us and even have the audacity to laugh, I won't forgive you all for that" Lisa said in anger and disbelief.

Chuck ground his teeth hatefully as he stared at them and asked "Who are you people? Why did you do all of this? I don't ever recall having any grudge with you?".

"Hehehe, you are right. We have no past grudges nor any resentments. If you want to blame something, then blame your luck for encountering us" Dale ridiculed.

"You... do you think you can just get away after doing something like that" Chuck was completely enraged after being mocked and ridiculed by them. Even though he was injured, he could still fight with the both of them even if it meant discarding his life in the process.

However, just as Chuck was getting ready to wrench the both of them of their life, he realized that they were surrounded. Those two were not alone and had brought many people along with them.

Laris gave him a derisive smile and taunted "What's wrong? Didn't you say that you wouldn't allow the both of us to get away with this? Why don't you come now or was the talk earlier just some false bravado? Hehehehehe, don't make me laugh... who isn't going to allow who to get away. Now then be obedient and handover your space rings before I make your death even more miserable".