

D. of Pride 181

Chapter 181: Obsidian Energy Exuder (3)

Spreading his awareness to their absolute limit across the floor, he was able to vaguely sense six powerful energy fluctuations similar to the one in front of him coming from six different areas of the floor.

'It looks like Fennel is not lying. There are indeed seven huge stones spread all across the floor' sensing the auras nearby, Simon concluded.

Although he knew that the huge black stones should be the obsidian slates, the fact that he knew that, made it all the more difficult for him to believe it.

Simon used Analysis on the stone and the result he got made him widen his eyes in surprise.

Why wouldn't he be? After all, the rank of the stone was displayed as [A] rank. Why kind of rank was [A]? it was the second highest tier after [S] rank and up until now, Simon only had one of them.

His Crimson Blazing Flame Blade was [A] tier item that he had upgraded after burning many of his [B] tier items. One could imagine the rarity of obtaining such an item.

However, this belief of his was flipped upside down when suddenly seven [A] tier items appeared on this floor out of nowhere.

Obsidian slates were by no means a high tier item and was only listed as [D] tier on the [Shop] or else he wouldn't have been able to buy them in the first place. For a [D] tier item to suddenly have become an [A] tier, what kind of ridiculous concept was that?

It was not only the rank but even the name of the object had changed. It was now called Obsidian Energy Exuder and when Simon tried to read further of its function, the result displayed made him even more astonished.

According to information he got, the Obsidian energy Exuder had many uses which his Analysis failed to pry through due to it being a Normal skill at base tier.

The only useful information displayed stated that the object was a massive construct that absorbs the mana from the surrounding and from the mystical veins underneath the ground before discharging them across the surrounding area.

It was also because of this reason that the stones were spread all across the floor. Only one of the functions of these black stones was already surprising enough but what made Simon stunned was the presence of the mystical veins on this floor.

From the incomplete memories he inherited, he at least knew that the presence of the mystical veins underneath the floor meant that the floor had reached a truly high level. It wouldn't be surprising for the density of the mana and rare items to grow on the floor.

Only the high tier dungeons [B] rank and above had mystical veins in some of their floors. For a low-rank dungeon such as the [D] tier Laplace to have mystical veins on two of its floor, the main floor being the first was completely unthinkable and defied all logic of this world.

Though Simon was surprised, he wasn't baffled by the changes that occurred on this floor. This was the place he specifically created for the Forest Spring Spirit race that were loved by the nature.

It should come as no surprise to him if the changes occur on multiple floors of his dungeon in the future. It had only been more than a week and the Forest Spring Spirits had already started to show their true powers.

One could imagine the kind of change this race would bring to his dungeon in the future. Although it was too early, but Simon had already started viewing them as one of his greatest assets that would help him and his dungeon reach greater heights.

As long as he protected their safety and wellbeing, the benefits the Forest Spring Spirit one of the ancient and rarest races in the world would provide would be momentous. He could see why Irene insisted on taking the forest spring Spirit race under his protection. She had already foreseen this kind of development coming.

Simon turned his head and looked at Irene beside him who was similarly observing the huge black stone. He could see no surprise in her eyes and her attitude seemed to tell that everything that happened was bound to happen sooner or later.

Turning his attention towards the [A] tier Obsidian Energy Exuder, Simon couldn't wait to see what kind of changes these huge seven stones would bring to this floor.

"Big brother do you want to see the other ones" Cecilia asked while tugging his clothes. She who had stayed on this floor to help her clansmen to construct their new village, had already explored the entirety of the floor and knew where the other stones were located.

Although she had no interest in them, but looking at the surprising gaze by which her big brother observed those stones she assumed that it must be important to him.

Shaking his head Simon rejected her offer and said "Its alright... I can feel the energy discharged by those stones even from here. They should be more or less like the one in front of us. There is no need to trouble ourselves by going around to each of them. That being said, it was quite the surprise to see the obsidian slates to grow... no alter by this extent. I can feel that these stones hold an absurd amount of mystical energy within them. Though even I cannot tell their exact uses now, having them around shouldn't have any negative effects".

Saying that, he turned towards the crowd and declared "These stones were something I had placed when creating this floor. Perhaps it might make some of you uneasy to have them around, but I believe that it might be useful for your village and this floor in the future".

Fennel immediately bowed his head and said "What is Lord Simon saying? These stones are something you have placed considering the wellbeing of this village. How can it be a detriment to us? None of us hold such thoughts. As you loyal subordinates, of course, we have complete faith in you".

It wasn't only his but the belief of all the forest Spring Spirits as they hurriedly sounded their opinions.

Simon looked at Irene who was calmly observing the stone and asked "What do you think?".

Silently nodding her head, she looked at all the directions where the similar energy fluctuations are coming from and affirmed "Yeah you are right. Although we are talking about a distant future, but its presence here would become an indisputable advantage for this floor and village".

Listening to Irene's vague reply, Simon understood that Irene was able to see the other functions of the stones and thus based her answer on that. Since Irene had confirmed that these huge obsidian stones would be beneficial for the Forest Spring Spirits, Simon no longer doubted it.

Changing the topic, he looked at Fennel and asked "What is the other matter you wanted to discuss with me?".

After the crowd receded, the elder nodded his head and suggested "Lord Simon would you care to come with me. This place is not ideal for discussing such matters".

With that said, Fennel hinted something with his eyes to Cecilia and she immediately ran in a certain direction.

"Hoho, she is quite the impatient girl. Now if you will please follow me" Fennel caressed his beard and started walking in the same direction.

Simon and Irene silently followed behind Fennel and after walking for a few minutes, a beautiful bamboo house soon came into view. Stopping in front of the place, Fennel turned around and smiled as he observed their reaction before speaking.

"I hope you like it. This house was specially prepared by us for you to stay in whenever you come to visit our village. It is not much but on behalf of all of the Forest Spring Spirits, please accept our gift".

Simon was surprised when he heard the fine-looking bamboo house in front of them which overshadowed all the other houses in the surrounding both in size and splendour, was specially prepared to hold him whenever he visited their village.

While the bamboo couldn't be compared to the white palace on the main floor, the house in front of him had its own charms and aspects that made it no less attractive.

While Simon was still hesitating over what to say, the deeply polished wooden doors of the house were suddenly pushed open and from within came out Cecilia.

Dancing a little in joy, she marvelled at the surprise reactions of Simon and Irene before saying gleefully "Hehe, how is it big brother, Elder sister... amazing isn't it? Let me tell you I helped a lot when building this house. Ufufu, your shocked expression tells me that my big surprise was quite the hit".

Looking at the willful her, Irene smiled gently while Simon helplessly shrugged his shoulders. He felt that from the moment Cecilia came into his dungeon, his life was never boring.. Although she was constantly unto something, Simon did not necessarily dislike it.

Chapter 182: Important Matter

It seemed that she wanted to show off the house she helped build to the two of them and thus pulled them along the way.

Simon finally understood why the girl was so excited and eager to bring them here. The request from Fennel was just an excuse whereas her real motive was to surprise him and Irene with this house all along.

While Cecilia was still being smug about her work, Fennel coughed once before reminding "How long do you plan on putting that act? Quickly invite the both of them inside... or do you intend to make them wait outside forever".

Being scolded by Grandpa Fennel, Cecilia immediately realised her mistake and made a flustered expression.

"Ah! Hehe... Big brother, Elder Sister welcome to your new home. Quickly come inside, let me show you around" right after saying that she came skipping in front of them and quickly pulled them inside.

The house was gifted to him as casually as that and it seemed that as the master of the dungeon, Simon had no say in this matter. Releasing a sigh, he went with the flow and allowed himself to be pulled inside the house.

The interior of the house was no less beautiful than the exterior and was nicely decorated using all the things that could be found around the forest.

The area was wide, spacious and had plenty of room. A staircase in the middle led towards the floor above and a balcony that gave the view of the whole Forest Spring Spirit Village. In fact, the house was not far from the pond and one could feel the refreshing sensation of the dense mana flowing with the breeze.

The backyard had many different types of plants and trees neatly arranged. From all of these, one could see how much importance the people of this clan had given to making this house. Even without Simon having to pay close attention, all these sentiments were cleanly conveyed to him.

"Big brother, Elder sister, Grandpa Fennel... you all can sit on that couch and have a talk while I make some tea for you all".

After saying that, Cecilia turned around quickly dashed towards the kitchen. Although Irene tried to stop her, the excitement of Cecilia was clearly over the top.

'That little girl was finally picking the qualities of her mother' Seeing how mâturè she was acting, Fennel couldn't but smile in satisfaction.

"Lord Simon, lady Irene please make yourself comfortable after all, from this moment on it is your house" Fennel repeated pointing at the couch.

Complying with the request, Simon sat on the couch, Irene sat beside him while Fennel took a seat opposite them.

"The house is truly wonderful, you all have my thanks" locking his hands together, Simon said in a serious tone. The house was a gift from the entire village showing how much appreciation and respect they had for him. Rejecting such a gift would be like insulting their efforts and dedication.

Hence Simon had no choice but to simply accept their offer plus the house in his opinion was truly beautiful and he could use it every time he came to this floor.

Irene too nodded her head as if appreciating the attractiveness of the house and the efforts the forest Spring Spirits put into building it.

Being thanked by Simon, Fennel hurriedly shook his hand and made a conflicted face "It is just a small gift that cannot even begin to show how much gratitude and indebted we are to you. If you say thanks for such a small matter then it will just be a source of trouble for me".

Simon understood where Fennel was coming from and thus accepted his words at face value. He was just a regular human in his previous world and now when he was suddenly regarded as their lord, Simon was having trouble acting the part.

He did not know the attitude of a lord over their subjects should be nor did he know how to act like one. It seemed that Fennel was somewhat aware of it and hence was correcting him whenever he acted too humbly.

"Coming to the main topic... there is a matter I wanted to discuss with Lord Simon and therefore I tasked Cecilia to request your presence here" Fennel's voice turned solemn as he brought out the topic.

He put one of his hands on the pocket of his robe and brought out an item that looked oddly familiar to Simon. It didn't take him long to recognize what it was.

It was the same peculiar ring he got from Laris that had a sub dimensional space similar to his [Inventory]. Simon remembered that when he defeated Laris, he found the spirit orbs of the deceased Forest Spring Spirits inside the ring.

Later when he met the surviving members of the Forest Spring clan inside the Ancient Treants territory, he had chosen to return the ring containing the spirit orbs to them. His action at that time by no means meant to win their favour, in the contrary precisely because he loathed using this kind of dirty method to increase his rank, that he chose to return it to their rightful owners.

Seeing the emerald green ring once again, the same emotions came flowing within him and he couldn't help but recall those adventurers who massacred the whole village of Forest Spring Spirits for their own profit.

It wasn't only him, even Irene frowned in contemplation when she saw the space ring. With her level of detection, it was impossible to not know the contents of an ordinary space ring with just a look.

Fennel had a pained expression as he held the space ring in his hand which trembled ever so slightly. Although there was no physical weight, knowing that the spirit orb of their deceased family and friend was inside the ring, made it quite heavy for him to hold.

Simon was tactful enough not to press for an answer and waited for Fennel to get over his emotions.

After a while, the elder stretched his hand and presented the ring to Simon with a happy yet sad expression.

"What is the meaning of this?" Simon creased his brows and asked. He did not understand the meaning behind Fennel's gesture.

Didn't the ring contain the spirit orbs of their clansmen, the last remaining memory of those they held dear? If so then what is the meaning behind Fennel passing it to him? Was it a test to see his character?

Simon stared directly at Fennel's eyes trying to find the meaning behind his action.

"There is no meaning behind it. I am already well aware of Lord Simon's character and disposition after the events that had happened back in the Ancient Treants territory. It would be presumptuous of me to say it but I quite like the current temperament of yours that is unlike any other rulers out there. Our loyalty will always lie with you and our faith in you is something that cannot be changed so easily".

Staring at the rings in his hand, Fennel stated "This ring containing the spirit orbs of our fellow clansmen is something that Lord Simon found it himself. By right it should belong to you and nobody will argue with it. You giving it back to us already showed us your sincerity and a mind that is not at all fazed by something that is regarded as a treasure all across the world".

"That in itself assures us that Lord Simon will not treat our Forest Spring Spirit clan poorly. I have already talked with the other members of the clan and they all approved of my decision to pass it to you. I am aware that Lord Simon does not want to use such a method and rely on himself to increase his strength. We believe in your ideals; theless, we still insist that Lord Simon keeps this space ring containing the spirit orbs with him. It may be of help to you in the future".

Fennel deeply bowed his head after saying his piece, trying to implore Simon to accept his offer.

Simon who was intently listening up to this point made a face that was hard to read as he deliberated over Fennel's words.

Irene, on the other hand, was shocked to see how much faith and devotion these Forest Spring Spirits had on Simon. Although she was shocked, she knew the reason why. Simon not only saved the children, the future of hope of the Forest Spring Spirit clan from the clutches of the adventurers but also swore to protect the safety and peace of their clan.

Adding this to his likeable personality and temperament, there was no way the Forest Spring Spirit clan wouldn't think of him highly.

"Elder Fennel, while I get your point, I cannot accept these spirit orbs. These are the last remaining vestiges of the people of your clan, I cannot just simply take it away from you all. Besides even without relying on Forest Spirit orbs, I can get much stronger. So you should give them to the family of the deceased".

Simon said after carefully deliberating over the words.

Fennel had an incredulous look on his face before smiling happily "Lord Simon it is truly our good fortune that we have met a Lord that is as caring towards their subordinates as you. I cannot express how grateful I am feeling right now".

"However, Lord Simon is mistaken in this matter. These Spirit Orbs while precious to the rest of the world, hold no meaning to us and it is not something we would like to keep with us as it constantly reminds us of our dark past.. We would rather offer it to our lord than be misused by other people with evil plans".

Chapter 183: Important Matter (2)

Fennel stated as he once again stretched his hand containing the space ring towards Simon.

When Simon was about to reject the offer once again, Irene's tranquil voice sounded out from beside him.

"I know that you have already felt the sincerity and honesty in his words. His decision to pass it to you represent the thoughts and voices of all the Forest Spring Spirits currently on this floor. Instead of simply rejecting it, why not keep it in your protection for the time being. That way, the spirit orbs would be in safe hands and they won't have to worry about it being misused by someone. Plus there is no disadvantage in just keeping it with you is there?".

Even Irene was insisting that he keeps the spirit orbs, giving it some thought Simon finally decided to relent and keep the ring with him.

He was aware that Irene had said all that just so he wouldn't be burdened by the ideals and convictions that he had set for himself. Simon knew that sometimes being too headstrong about something wasn't a good thing.

Though he had no use for the Spirit Orbs, there was no denying that it might be helpful to him in the future. Taking the space ring from Fennel, Simon gave its contents a quick go through.

Inside the ring, there were seventy spirit orbs, low tier equipments, rations and gold. The spirit orbs were plundered from the Forest Spring Spirits while the rest were the possessions of Laris.

Simon simply kept the ring in his inventory. When their discussion was over, Cecilia along with a woman brought the tea for them. Simon remembered that the woman was her aunt Daphne.

A scented aroma came from the freshly brewed tea and assaulted their nose. Looking at the tea, he was quite curious to find its taste as this would be his first time tasting tea after coming to this world.

He wanted to know if the tea here was similar to the ones he used to have back on earth or was it different.

"Big brother here is yours," Cecilia said serving the tea.

Holding the cup in his hand, Simon felt the familiar scent coming off from the tea and before he even knew it, he was sipping off from it. Immediately, the fatigue he had accumulated from the past week of continuous training, started draining away from his body and his tensed mind relaxed quite a bit.

To think that the tea would have such an effect, the tea leaves used would be quite extraordinary. Apart from that, Simon also felt that the water used to brew tea was from the pond of serenity whose water had the added effect of calming one's mind.

While he was admiring the effects of the tea, he soon realised that his cup had been emptied. Cecilia who saw that her brother really liked the tea she brewed, couldn't help but display a complacent smile.

She pored out another cup of tea for him before asking "Big brother, Grandpa Fennel are you done with your discussion?".

Fennel who saw how eager Cecilia was to get a compliment for her work, smiled and replied "Hoho, we are just finished with our discussion. You chose the best time to serve the tea".

"Hehe... Big brother, elder sister did you like the tea?".

Simon replied with an honest "yeah" while Irene nodded her head and silently drank her tea.

While Simon was thinking of taking some of the tea leaves they had grown back to his main floor, a window suddenly popped up in front of him.

Intruder's Alert. A group of twenty outsiders have invaded the dungeon. Race- Humans, Current Progress- Floor 1. Average Level- 180.

It wasn't only him, Similar windows had popped up in front of Irene and Cecilia too since they were assigned as the Guardians of the dungeon.

Simon creased his brows but didn't seem fazed at all. He knew that his dungeon was bound to be discovered sooner or later especially after he let those two humans get out of the forest. It wouldn't come as a surprise to him if the words about his dungeon is already circulating within the nearby city.

Irene didn't have much reaction either when the window popped up but that couldn't be said for Cecilia. The moment she read the information displayed on the window, she became panicked and her face was masked with dread.

Humans, to her who had lived most of her life within the confines of the village, the very first human she saw was a terrible bunch. With the nightmarish experience she had, it was difficult for her to not panic when she knew that humans were going to invade the place they are staying on once again.

Seeing her change her expression so suddenly, aunt Daphne who was beside her, couldn't help but speak in concern "What is wrong Cecilia? Why are you suddenly making such a worried face?".

Even Fennel noticed the obvious change in her facial expression which up until this moment was beaming with joy.

Cecilia didn't answer them immediately and instead looked towards Simon in worry "Big brother...".

"There is no need to worry. My dungeon Laplace is not that easy to conquer. Especially when I am already expecting their arrival. Although they came earlier than I expected, it makes no difference. Rest assured of them will be able to pass through the floors above and you also have me to protect you all. There is no way things are going to turn like the last time".

Hearing his confident reply, Cecilia finally dropped some of her worries and her wildly thumping heart relaxed a little. 'Big brother is here is with us, there is no way things would turn out like the last time. The adventurers have to descend down all the floors above us before reaching this place'

The fact that their village was now located inside the dungeon, gave her even more assurance.

From their conversation, Fennel and Daphne became aware that something was going on and therefore they asked "Lord Simon if I may ask... what is the matter?".

Simon pondered over it before deciding to tell them about the situation. Now that they have taken him as their lord and have established a village in his dungeon thus becoming one of its inhabitants, the matter at hand also concerned all of them.

But since he already planned and prepared his dungeon for a situation such as this, he didn't want them to panic over it for no reason.

Simon tried to describe the situation as positively as he could and reassured them that no harm would come to the Forest Spring Spirits and their village.

Fennel who was the eldest among here living for more than two hundred years, he took all of it in with a calm face. No hint of panic could be seen in his old wrinkled face.

"I see Lord Simon has already prepared for a situation such as this. Then that means that we have no need to worry. This is a dungeon after all; it is not unusual to see people delving into it. As your loyal subordinates, we are ready to help you any time if there is ever any need" his composed voice relaxed other around him and Daphne too eased up a little.

The dungeon was a place filled with riches from the perspective of the humans and they frequently delve inside said dungeons to look for opportunities. The appearance of the humans was sudden this time but it'll soon become a daily occurrence.

More than that, the Dungeon Master himself said that the dungeon was perfectly prepared to receive the bunch of them. How can they doubt his words? By now, Simon's position in the hearts of the forest Spring Spirits had already solidified to the point of blind faith.

Putting his teacup down on the table, Simon stood up. "Alright, now that the matters regarding which I came to the Forest Spring Spirit floor had been settled, it time for me to go back" saying that, he turned to leave.

Irene too silently followed suit, she knew Simon very well and thus was aware that this sudden situation had ignited the determination within him to get stronger once again.

Irene wasn't wrong, Simon right now couldn't think anything other than training himself to get stronger as soon as possible. The adventurers right now were around level 180, in the future, there might be... no, there will be even more stronger ones coming to conquer his dungeon.

If he stayed the way he is right now, then when the time comes he wouldn't be able to save anyone. Much less keep his words with Aldebaran to protect the Forest Spring Spirits.

"Big brother I'm also coming back. As one of the chosen Guardians, it is my duty to help the dungeon master protect the dungeon" Cecilia said intently, the girl that was cowering a few moments was nowhere to be seen.

It wasn't only her even Fennel and Daphne bowed their heads and pleaded "Lord Simon if there is anything we can do with our powers please let us know.. We shall do our best to manage the dungeon and protect the peace of our village".

Chapter 184: New Feature: Roles

They had already been forced to flee from their village once and had to live a life of fugitive under the protection of the Ancient Titan Treant. This time, they were not going to flee anymore and defend their village and people with their own power.

Simon carefully observed the expression of each of them and surprisingly each of their conviction mysteriously got conveyed to him. The adventurers this time were not a problem and the upper floors were prepared enough to halt them.

Just when he was about to say that there was no need and the dungeon was adequately prepared, the new feature of the [Dungeon] option came to his mind.

The new feature allows the Dungeon Master to designate aides for the dungeon called [Helpers]. The job of the [Helpers] is to assist the dungeon master in completing various small tasks that are crucial for the functioning of the dungeon.

The [Helpers] also enjoy some of the limited functions of the dungeon menu (now Main Menu) such as the teleport option, making slight alterations on the specific areas of the floors etc.

Basically, the [Helpers] assist the Dungeon master by taking off some of their load. They enjoy slightly more privilege than an ordinary inhabitant of the dungeon.

The new feature got unlocked after the dungeon ranked up to [D] but since he did not have any inhabitant living inside his dungeon at that time, the function went unused. Now though there were more than forty Forest Spring Spirits living inside his dungeon.

He could use this chance to elect some of them as the [Helpers] and at the same time see how useful the function was.

Making up his mind, he looked at Fennel and told him to select five people that have the best potential and bring them here.

"They don't need to be the best fighters, just good at using their abilities" Simon added.

Fennel quickly replied with a yes and hurriedly went to execute his orders.

Irene frowned, she thought over his actions before opening the [Main Menu] herself. Guardians were ranked second in the hierarchy after the Dungeon Master. That is to say, they were the second-highest authority inside the dungeon after the dungeon master.

Although not all, they have access to most of the functions of the dungeon menu (now Main Menu) which included the [Dungeon] function itself. It didn't take much time for Irene to realize that Simon wanted to use this chance to set up some [Helpers] for the dungeon.

Before long, Fennel brought over five individuals whom he thought in his view had the most potential. The five people entered the house and swiftly bowed before him.

Looking at all of them, Simon spotted two familiar faces. They were the two eldest children called Maya and Jared amongst all the children that he had saved previously. These two were the ones who had left a lasting impression on him when he met all of them for the first time.

One was quite mentally mature despite being just eight to nine years old while the other had the courage to stand before any adversary.

"Lord Simon as you have told, I have brought over five individuals who have the best potential from our Forest Spring Spirit clan" Fennel reported as he walked from behind them.

Nodding his head, Simon acknowledged his efforts before speaking towards the five "I know that you might have no idea as to why I have summoned you all in front of me. But know that I don't plan on being unreasonable. If you don't like the proposition I am about to put forth, you are allowed to reject it. With that being said, the reason why I summoned you all here is to assign the five of you the role of [Helpers]".

Everybody present excluding Irene, tilted their heads in confusion.

"[Helpers] is a role that is assigned to those who assist the dungeon master in various small jobs around the dungeon. Their job is to keep the dungeon functioning and become the arms and legs of the Dungeon Master. Once you become a [Helper], you will be able to teleport to most of the floors, extend command over some of the spawned monsters and more" Simon elaborated to clear the confusion masking their faces.

Everybody looked as if enlightened, the same goes for Cecilia. The little girl had even forgotten that as one of the chosen Guardians, she is able to access the [Main Menu].

"So that's why big brother suddenly asked grandpa Fennel to bring them here. Maya, you should become one of the [Helpers] that way you can come to the main floor and we can meet any time" Claspig Maya's hand, Cecilia said in delight.

At this moment, Maya had a stunned look over her face. She could hardly believe what she just heard. According to their lord, [Helpers] was someone who would aid the Dungeon master in keeping the dungeon functioning.

From what she could interpret was that it was a very important role and Simon had chosen the five of them suitable for it. The position he had inside the hearts of these Forest Spring Sprits was already above their own patriarch not to mention he was personally asking them.

Her mind had already become blank from all the shock. It wasn't only her; the same could be said for the remaining four of them.

"Does Maya not want to become one of the [Helpers]" Cecilia asked in a downtrodden manner. Being awakened by her sudden voice, all of them woke up from their daze and immediately knelt down.

"We graciously accept this offer from Lord Simon to become [Helpers]" they spoke in unison.

Being able to show their fealty so well mannerly and orderly, it must have been drilled into them by Fennel. From the corner of his eyes, Simon observed the old man. Although he did not care much about this kind of mannerism and conduct, but it seems that this was their way of showing their loyalty.

Just to make sure they are accepting this out of their own will, Simon added "Just so you know, you can deny this offer. I wouldn't mind a bit".

To his surprise, of them wanted to change their mind and insisted on becoming a [Helper]. Jared who seemed to have the most courage out of them all, replied for the rest of them "Lord Simon had already given us huge honour by electing the five of us to be at your service. There is no way we would waste this opportunity by needlessly throwing it away".

Fennel who was behind them continuously stroked his beard and nodded his head. 'The boy is quite tactful and his talent isn't quite bad, an excellent find amongst the children' he thought internally.

"Lord Simon the abilities of these two children might be lacking compared to the three adults but their talent is not bad and they excel at other aspects" Fennel stated, his voice contained a tone of appreciation.

Even without him pointing that out Simon was already aware of that. "It appears to be the case. Alright from now on I'll be assigning the five of you the role of [Helpers]. The position also allows you to access some of the functions of the [Main Menu] including the teleport function" Simon said.

He called forth the [Main Menu] and swiftly used the new function called [Delegation] and designated the role of [Helpers] to the five Forest Spring Spirits.

As soon as he assigned them the roles, the five of them felt their body heating up for a moment before a spiritual mark appeared within them. When they tried focusing on this sensation, a plain window that had a few of the functions of the [Main Menu], appeared in front of them.

Simon vaguely felt that the connection that was established wasn't that simple and there was more to it than just that. He made a mental note to experiment on that factor later.

Also from today's exchange, Simon realised that he needed to install a teleport gate inside the village that connected with the main floor. It would be quite inconvenient for them if every time they had to send Cecilia or the [Helpers] to get in touch with him.

With the installation of the teleport gates within their village, Fennel and the others would be able to traverse to the main floor whenever they needed to get in touch with him.

A circle-shaped construct made out of peculiar stone appeared near the centre of the village where the pond of serenity and the huge obsidian slate was. The circular stone slowly rotated and a portal soon formed that connected this floor with his main floor.

Unlike the teleport gates on the other floors, the one on the Forest Spring Spirit floor was many times bigger, grandeur and special since it is connected with the main floor.

Precisely because the teleport gate here was connected to the main floor, the cost of installation was also high. It took 1,000,000 DP to establish one.

As soon as the construct appeared, it caused a commotion within the Forest Spring Spirits and Fennel was forced to step out.. Rushing towards the place where the commotion erupted from, he was astounded to find a ring-shaped gate at the centre of the village.

Chapter 185: New Feature: Roles (2)

Rushing towards the place where the commotion erupted from, he was astounded to find a ring-shaped gate at the centre of the village.

Up until this point, there was no such construct here so of course all the passersby were stunned to find something so unusual here all of a sudden.

"This..." Fennel muttered creasing his brows.

"It is a teleport gate that is connected to the main floor where I reside" Simon silently appeared and answered his queries.

"As I thought, it is something installed by Lord Simon. Haha, it is embarrassing but it'll take some time to get used to things suddenly appearing inside the village" Fennel admitted after he dispersed the crowd that had gathered near the pond once again.

Simon affirmed, although it would take some time for them to adapt to it, he wasn't particularly worried about it.

Now with all the matters settled on this floor, he looked towards the newly appointed five [Helpers] behind him before stating "Right, the five of you come with me".

"Elder Fennel the services of the teleport gate is available all the time, you can use it to contact me" Simon said as he prepared to teleport. His destination was the 15th floor.

Simon along with the [Helpers] arrived onto a vast forest with tall trees and vines that covered most of his line of sight. Compared to the Forest Spring Spirit floor, the plant life here wasn't full of life and vibrant.

Even the vegetation here was mostly a single type, a clear contrast to the previous floor he came from.

The [Dungeon] function although allows him to modify the floors, it did not have many options to add. It might be because the dungeon is still a low-ranking one, but Simon hoped to have an assortment of options to tinker his floor with.

However, the reason why he arrived on the 15th floor personally wasn't to modify the topography of the floor.

"Lord Simon, why are we here?" Jared asked as he curiously looked at the floor he had arrived for the first time.

"We are here to conduct some experiment" Simon smiled as he walked ahead. The Forest was quite vast, more than fifteen kilometres in area, though it didn't take him long to find the objective he was looking for.

The 15th and the 16th floors were the same in that they are both forested areas and the monsters that spawned on these floors were Direwolves and Stormwolves. Their average level was around 80 to 130 and their numbers were in hundreds.

The last time Simon had spawned more than 50 of them from each race and since then their numbers had significantly gone up.

Opening the [Archive] function of his [Main Menu] which allows him to see the floors and all the entities on it in a three-dimensional structure, he quickly found the numbers of the wolves whose numbers had drastically increased to more than three hundred.

The rate at which they were breeding and increasing their number, even astounded Simon. Looking at their distribution and how they were spread around the floor, it seemed that there were multiple packs led by different leaders.

It was precisely because Simon had discovered that while he was exploring the eastern region of the Ghastly Winding Forest that Simon did not just spawn the Stormwolves but also the Direwolves.

Since Stormwolves are stronger than the normal Direwolves who have no skill or magic, they are also costlier to spawn. What Simon was trying to achieve by spawning fifty of each of them was to crossbreed so that more variants are born.

That way he would be able to save up some of his DP without needing to spawn them himself.

As he had expected, the number of the Stormwolves in the area had gone up slightly. Though it was not guaranteed that the born wolves would be Stormwolves every time, the probability was high enough for Simon to not make use of this method.

"Alright time to see if this works on them too" Simon approached one of the packs which had the highest numbers and took out a crimson crystal from his inventory.

The moment he took out the Crimson Mutation Crystal, the temperature of the surrounding air although slightly started rising. The crystal was something that the altered pond of serenity on his main floor had produced.

According to the description, the crystal has the ability to create a mutation on the monster consuming the crystal making it able to utilize the fire attribute of mana. That is to say, if a Direwolves or Stormwolves eat it, a new variant able to use fire magic will be born.

However, that is only if the mutation is a success. The chances of failure are much higher than it is for success and Simon did not how many of the crystal his pond had or can produce at a time.

He would have liked to experiment with more of this crystal in hand but right now he wanted to strengthen his dungeon in any way he can and so he decided to take the risk and use the crystal.

Since the dungeon had recognized them as the aides of the Dungeon Master, they have certain control over the actions of the low-level monsters.

Approaching near a small mountain, Simon saw the mouth of the cave and a Stormwolf standing in front of it. The Stormwolf was as big as two meters, had greyish fur and scars all over its body.

Just like the Direwolves, the Stormwolves also had two tails and their intelligence was quite low. They were ruled by their instincts and were very territorial.

Seeing that Simon was coming closer, the Stormwolf that appeared to be the leader of this pack, backed away allowing him to effortlessly place the Scarlet Mutation Crystal on the cave.

After completing his task, they silently left the territory of the wolves and appeared in front of a tall mountain overlooking the area. From here, Simon could clearly see the whole territory of the wolves.

He looked behind him and saw the confounding faces of the [Helpers] and asked "Do you want to know what the experiment is all about?".

Seeing them nod their heads, Simon explained "Well the reason I brought you here is because I want you guys to observe the wolves residing in this territory or more precisely the one that consumes the crystal I left back at their cave".

"The Crimson Mutation Crystal has the ability to mutate the monster allowing it to gain new abilities. The mutation will take a few days to a week of time and that is why I need the assistance of the [Helpers]. Keep a tab on them and if you notice any changes, inform me. Ah right, you can take turns to keep a watch on them. The rest of you can use this chance to teleport and familiarize yourself with the other floors of this dungeon. Make sure not to teleport where the adventurers are".

After saying everything that needed to be said, Simon was just about to teleport away when Maya suddenly asked "Lord Simon... uhm that is can I come to the main floor to meet with Cecilia more often?".

Nodding his head, he said nonchalantly "Suit yourself".

After hearing his words, Maya sighed in relief and thanked Simon incessantly even after he left. She and Cecilia were best friends ever since they were little kids back in their old village. She was used to seeing her every day before the incident with adventurers occurred.

Now that she had been given the discretion to use the teleport function however she liked, she could use it to meet with her anytime.

Arriving back on the main floor, Simon quickly went back to his previous spot near the pond of serenity and sat down. Last time he felt like he was very close to attaining the [Mana Lines] and if he activated the [Ancestral Symbol Ignition] skill a few more times, he felt like he would be able to grasp it.

Opening the [Main Menu] he surveyed the progress of the adventurers and saw that the progress of their exploration was very slow. It had only been a few hours and although the first few floors wasn't that big, it was enough to stall them for a while.

Seeing that the new adjustments and trap that he had laid on the floors were working like usual, Simon made a satisfied smile.

After the dungeon had ranked up, the power of the traps had also been enhanced making it quite effective in situations when the invaders are careless. The maze on the second floor had been enlarged and could easily stall a few adventurers team.

That was not all, the paths, the wall everything moved so as to confuse the senses of the adventurers and to make things worse, there were pin wall traps, spike wall traps and others added. Also, the monsters starting from the third and the fourth floor got stronger making the dungeon even more difficult to conquer than what it was before ranking up.

The sound of notification that Simon eagerly waited to hear for so long, finally started ringing once again as chunks of DP started being accumulated.

Chapter 186: Mishap

Although he still had quite a bit of DP stocked up, he knew that pillaging them carelessly was a foolish choice.

Seeing that his dungeon was functioning as usual, Simon calmed his mind and concentrated on the object before. In the centre of his palm lied an oval white stone releasing a chilling effect. It was other than the serenity stone that Irene had forked out from the bottom of the pond.

According to the description of the object, it can help in increasing one's focus and concentration allowing them to reach a self-transient state.

Taking a deep breath, he clenched his hand and the serenity stone made a crick noise before crumbling apart. Whoosh... a chilling wind blew in a few meters around him and soon covered him in a transparent film.

Simon suddenly felt that his breathing had become even and his mind settling down. A mysterious feeling of being able to control every aspect and reaction of his body descended onto him.

Realizing that his mind had reached a tranquil state, he quickly used this chance to enter the self transient state. Closing his eyes and focusing on this mysterious feeling more, Simon was swiftly able to achieve the state of mind he previously had so difficulty grasping.

The stone true to its effect, was able to help him achieve the best state of mind for training. Now it was all up to him how he utilized this chance to make the most out of it.

At this moment, Simon's body had been engulfed by a thin film in a few meters around him that worked as a barrier which trapped the contents of the stone within it. The thin film was in an inverted bowl shape and lasted only for two hours before silently disappearing.

However, Simon seemed to be still in a self-transient state of mind and showed no signs of realizing that the effects covering him was now gone. Soundlessly, the complicated markings around his upper body started igniting into golden-black flames.

The entire aura around Simon had spiked up dramatically and even affected the area around him. The dense mystical energy around the area started being sucked towards him and enveloped his body like a cocoon.

The tribal tattoo like markings on his body igniting could only mean that Simon had activated his one and only phantasmal tier skill the [Ancestral Symbol Ignition]. This skill was one of the most powerful trump cards of Simon, one which had saved his life many times.

It was only after Irene had pointed out, but one of the reasons behind the skill being so high tier and powerful was because the skill established an extremely powerful and intrinsic mana lines in his body which was unique to him.

Currently, it was impossible for him to fully imitate the mana lines the [Ancestral Symbol Ignition] skill created as it was too high tier and complicated for him but it did not mean that he couldn't achieve a small imperfect version of it with very less paths.

If he was able to feel the sensation and recreate even a small bit of the mana lines, he would be able to acquire the Rare skill.

Words of mouth spread amongst the adventurers and before long multiple teams arrived before the dungeon to seek its riches. Adventurers from all the neighbouring cities flocked towards the dungeon to earn their fortune, the same was also true for the adventurers from the city of mountmend.

The name Laplace rapidly spread amongst the adventurers and it quickly became the talk of every nearby town. Those that had delved inside the dungeon, came back with various monster parts, ores, herbs that serve as resources for various kinds of products.

Every adventurer whether low rank or newbies formed parties to tackle the dungeon and increase their level. They did not want the others to only be the ones to reap all the profits.

It was not only the adventurers, even some merchants who could smell the money flowing from miles away, assembled from other parts of the kingdom to buy the products brought back by the adventurers.

The economy of the neighbouring cities flourished and even attracted the attention of some of the big names of the Kingdom.

Thanks to Simon tinkering and preparing his dungeon for all kinds of contingency, the adventurers that delved inside the dungeon had to explore the floors for days to make any advancement.

That was not all, after the dungeon rank increased and thanks to the Trees of Mana slowly but steadily increasing the density of mystical energy across all the floors, many ores and herbs started growing in many of the areas of the floors.

It was not only that but even the strength of the average monsters on the upper floors had gone up and due to that killing and harvesting their monster parts became even more difficult.

Nonetheless, the dangers surrounding the dungeon did not daunt most of the adventurers as they repeatedly delved inside it. The treasures that can be found inside were enough to offset the risks associated with them.

The moment he inhaled, the mana around the surrounding surged and poured inside him like a wave. His crimson eyes seemed even more glaring as they scanned his surroundings.

Propelling himself up, Simon stretched his body feeling the rippling energy within him. "Haah... I can feel it, the mana within me has started to flow in a fixed direction periodically. I have come very close, just a little push and I can acquire the [Mana Lines] skill".

He surmised after observing the flow of mana within. Unlike before where his mana had no fixed path to follow, chaotic and rampant all the time, now though it was like a calm river silently flowing in a set path.

These were exactly the signs of mana lines being formed. Satisfied with his progress, Simon looked at the area where the trees of mana were and quickly spotted the cocoon made by the dense mist perpetually lingering around the place.

He knew that the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse was being enveloped inside that cocoon and is currently in a state where it shouldn't be disturbed.

"I don't know how much progress it is going to undergo but I'm not going to get left behind" Clenching his hands, he stated. The Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse was his partner plus friend that he had accidentally summoned from the [Gacha].

Ever since he reincarnated to this world, the warhorse was with him most of the time and had accompanied him in numerous battles. It's presence also gave Simon a peace of mind and reminded him every time that he was not alone.

He couldn't be any happier seeing that the warhorse was making progress on its own. Not only that, but seeing the warhorse trying its best to get stronger also lit a fire inside him.

"I have been holed up inside the dungeon for so long. Now that I have broken through the level 300 barrier, I should start grinding level soon" Simon said after observing that his level had been stagnant for quite a while.

He had been putting more effort towards increasing his skills because he had come across a barrier that couldn't be broken through headfirst. Since he knew that mindlessly hunting monster and grinding experience wouldn't help him cross through this obstacle that he chose to acquire new skills and increase the tier of the existing ones.

Acquiring and increasing the tier of skills also helped in improving his strength not to mention a must to break through every hundred level barriers.

As Irene had previously mentioned, to cross through some of the future bottlenecks, Simon would not only have to level up but also acquire new skills and increase their tier to a realm suitable for his level.

He for the past few weeks had been focusing only on acquiring the [Mana Lines] skill. Now that he thought that he was this close to attaining it, he also wanted to increase his level.

Simon turned around and headed for his white palace when he saw one of the newly appointed [Helpers] standing quietly in front of his palace. Changing his direction, he headed for that [Helper] and landed in front of him.

Immediately spotting him, the Forest Spring Spirit bowed his head before reporting "Lord Simon I have been waiting for your arrival back from your training. As per your orders, we have been keeping a tab on the wolves inhabiting the 15th floor and observing for any possible mutation".

From the [Helpers] report, Simon suddenly remembered that a few days ago he went to the stormwolves lair to place the scarlet mutation crystal. He was so focused in his training that it had completely slipped his mind.

"How long has it been?" Simon asked.

"It has been more than ten days" the [Helper] respectfully replied. He was one of the three adults that Fennel had chosen amongst the Forest Spring Spirits that had the most potential named Coleus.

"I see, it has already been more than ten days. So how goes the mutation? Was there any change on the wolf that consumed it" Simon asked, excited about the potential of the crystal that was produced by the mysterious pond.

"About that..." Coleus locked his brows and seemed hesitant over something.

Chapter 187: Mishap (2)

Seeing his behaviour, Simon immediately understood that he had gotten his hopes up too soon. He himself understood how low the chances of a mutation being successful were. There was no way he would be able to get the desired results soon.

"The mutation was a failure, the leader stormwolf that consumed it, died." Coleus said trying to explain the situation as carefully as he could.

"I see... thanks for letting me know. Let's go to their cave, I want to know about it in more detail" Simon opened the [Main Menu] and swiftly teleported the both of them to the 15th floor.

"Lord Simon" the five [Helpers] arrived before him the moment he teleported to the floor and bowed. The place they were on was the exact same mountain that overlooked the wolves territory.

Currently, the place looked deserted and not even a single wolf could be seen on sight.

"Tell me what exactly transpired after the stormwolf consumed the crystal," Simon asked while walking towards the cave entrance. The [Helpers] followed behind and recited the whole event starting from the day after the leader Stormwolf ate the Scarlet Mutation Crystal that Simon left at the cave.

According to them, the stormwolf seemed fine for the first few days and didn't show any signs of being affected by the crystal. It was only after three days had passed that the stormwolf started displaying some obvious changes.

Its eyes and fur started turning crimson and it showed signs of going berserk, even attacking the members of its own pack. The leader wolf was the most powerful one out of the pack hence it managed to wound many of its kin.

After tasting their blood, the stormwolf became even more agitated and started ramming its head on the cave. Its peculiar behaviour and hostility towards its pack members drove the others out of the territory.

On the sixth day, its body had grown more than three meters and the fur on its body had turned a deep shade of red. However, the behavioural pattern of the stormwolf started getting more erratic and it even attacked other packs.

Due to accumulating many wounds, the wolf died on the seventh day. From their explanation, Simon understood that the crystal wasn't compatible with the stormwolf and showed obvious signs of rejection.

Its erratic behaviour, hostility against its pack members and intense aggression showed that the mutation was a failure.

"I see the mutation was bound to be a failure I guess" What made Simon disappointed was that even until its moments, it showed no signs of being able to use the fire attribute of mana. While he was deliberating whether the effects of the crystal was too strong for a low-level creature like stormwolves when the [Helpers] reported him of another piece of shocking news.

"Lord Simon the situation has changed. Something has been eating the remains of the dead wolf and had instead undergone a change that could be said as a mutation".

The moment he heard that, Simon couldn't help but blurt out "What?!".

—

A monster spawned from the DP, does not provide any DP when killed inside the dungeon. Its remains get swiftly digested by the dungeon unless...

Entering inside the cave, the pungent smell became even more stronger and after walking for a while, they soon found the dead remains of the leader stormwolf.

Its body had enlarged by a lot since the last time Simon saw it and even its fur which was previously greyish, had turned a piercing red. The [Helpers] were right, the body was still there which could only mean that it was being eaten by another entity.

With a flip of his hand, gale magic was generated and easily flipped the three meters body of the wolf around and he could finally see.

The left side of its ribcage was coming out and pieces of flesh was dangling, evidence of something eating it. The scene was so gore that the [Helpers] couldn't help looking away from it, hands on their mouth and holding themselves back from vomiting out.

Simon couldn't blame these Forest Spring Spirits since the smell was so pungent that even he felt spewing the contents of his stomach out. However, his attention was on something else right now.

He carefully observed the gorging marks on the flesh of the wolf and the entity that could have done it. "But who could do something like that?" Simon muttered out loud.

The Stormwolves and the Direwolves are the apex predators here, who could have the nerve to eat their flesh?

"I-It was a small mouse" Maya replied in a wavering voice.

A surprised look flashed in his eyes, it was not only him but even the four [Helpers] that were beside her, were so. Why wouldn't they be? After all, a mouse was an extremely weak monster, the lowest of the low an [E] rank.

It was supposed to be the prey of higher-level monsters, how could they have the boldness to dine on the flesh of their predator? Although they found her idea amusing, they couldn't outright deny it. In any case, there might be a possibility that she might be right.

Simon pondered over what Maya said, judging from the marks left behind on the flesh it could definitely be seen as the work of a mouse. He was the dungeon master of this place and knew about the monsters inhabiting each floor.

Other than the Direwolves and Stromwolves inhabiting this place, there were few other low-level races spawned here as their prey and one of these species was exactly a mouse called Fanged Mouse.

However, just like the others, he found the thought amusing. A Fanged Mouse was an [E] tier monster with limited to no combat abilities. It was extremely weak and lived in huge numbers. This race usually survives on dirt and grass and was extremely timid.

There was no way a Fanged Mouse would be bold enough to eat the flesh of a Stormwolf. Although it was absurd, the possibility wasn't zero. Simon observed the place and soon found small holes on the floor big enough for a Fanged Mouse to pass through.

He turned towards the [Helpers] and asked "How did the mutated creature look like?". Before coming to any conclusion, he wanted to hear from them who had supposedly spotted this creature.

"It had a long serpentine tail, crimson fur occasionally blazing with fire and a body as big as one and a half meter" one of the [Helpers] said.

Just when Simon thought that the description didn't match with the characteristics of fanged Mouse, the other [Helper] Coleus contradicted the first one.

"What are you saying? The creature wasn't even a meter big, not to mention it had a brown fur with crimson stripes. It had huge fangs and claws that glimmered with an incisive light that could easily slice through a boulder".

"Um... it had crimson fur" Maya said breaking the stalemate.

"See I was right" the helper who was the first to describe the creature, flashed a confident smile towards Coleus.

"But it was very small... about this big" Maya said indicating the size of the creature with her hands. According to her, it was a small mouse with crimson fur, a serpentine tail and not even half a meter big.

It was not only her, but each of the [Helpers] gave a different description of the mutated creature and there were so many contradictions that Simon couldn't put his hand on what the creature was.

Nonetheless, there was no doubt that the creature had mutated after eating the corpse of the stormwolf that had consumed the Scarlet Mutation Crystal. What was surprising for Simon was that the mutation could occur even when the flesh of the monster was eaten by another entity.

"It seems that the flesh and blood of the monster can induce mutation on the other creatures eating it" saying that, he looked towards the small hole at the corner of the floor and squinted his eyes.

No matter what creature or which race it was from, as long as it was able to mutate, it was good news for him. Putting the corpse back to how it was, Simon exited the cave and asked "What happened to the rest of the pack the Stormwolf was leading?".

Jared who was right behind him replied "After being attacked by their own leader, some of them fled and those that stuck around, after seeing the corpse of their leader formed a new pack".

It seemed that the wolves had formed a new pack and had deserted this cave. "In any case keep a look around and investigate the creature that is eating the flesh from the corpse. If you find any clue, don't hesitate to inform me" Right after saying that Simon teleported outside of his dungeon.

He could even see some shrewd merchants setting up some small shops and selling wares to the adventurers diving inside the dungeon.. Simon believed that the place would be completely swarming with adventurers and merchants before long.

Chapter 188: High Orcs

It seemed that of the adventurers had noticed his presence since he was high up in the sky and was restraining all his aura.

He had invested quite a bit of time in remodelling the floors of his dungeon and making it more appealing to the adventurers. Seeing that his hard work had paid off, Simon flew off satisfied. His

destination was the western region of the Ghastly Winding Forest where the strongest level monsters resided.

Coming out of the dungeon, he had only one goal in mind and that was to increase his level. What better way to accomplish that than to hunt monsters in the western part teeming with strong level ones?

Although Simon was going there to hunt monsters, he wasn't foolish enough to dive inside the territory of the seven kings, lest he angered them. The way he was now, he would simply be squashed like an ant without being able to make any ripples.

The Seven Kings were the true rulers of the Ghastly Winding Forest and strength wise they were on par with Aldebaran, the Ancient Titan Treant. Experiencing that kind of strength first hand, there was no way he wanted to incur the ire of one, not before he had the strength to defend against them.

At some point, before the seven years time limit was up, he would have to fight with them to claim this domain for himself; however, right now it was still too early.

Simon zipped through the sky, utilising the full strength of his [High-Speed Flight] skill. His wide wings flapped and the force of air brushed past his body rustling his pitch-black hair. With the increase of his level, the mana he could freely pour into his wings had increased and his speed had more than doubled.

After a few hours of non-stop flight, he arrived at his destination. The place was far away from the Ancient Treants Territory and the trees around here were sparse and coal-black in colour. Even the environment here was quite desolate and dark.

Simon had dived a little deeper in search of strong monsters and wanted to experiment his powers on the high orcs. He patiently waited for some time and before long, groups of stout bipedal creatures that had a boar-like snout, fangs protruding from their mouth and a sturdy looking build appeared in front of him.

Each of them carried weapons made out of bones and hides of other monsters that they hunted and carried around as their prized possession. Simon did not even have to use analysis to know that they were high orcs.

However, unlike the ones he had met previously, the ones before him looked more dreadful and their levels should also be higher than theirs. Each of the high orcs surrounding him, in terms of strength were on par with the high orc leader that Irene had fought with previously.

That is to say, the high orcs in front of him should be above level 230. When he used Analysis on them to gauge out their levels, Simon found out that he had underestimated them a little. Far from being level 230, all of them were above level 250 and there were even some who had reached level 280.

Currently, a group of twenty high orcs had surrounded him from all corners and snarled at him threateningly. They had a keen nose that could easily smell the scent of an outsider from miles away and an unimaginable level of coordination that made them quite a difficult opponent to tackle.

The leader orc spoke something garbled before swinging its club around with its stout arm. Although Simon did not understand what they were saying even with his [language Comprehension] skill, the meaning behind the leader orcs action was quite clear and that was to charge.

As if saying that his guess was correct, the three high orcs holding a makeshift shield out of bones, came charging at him. The skill they used was [High-Orc Charge] and the momentum at which they came ramming at him was like that of a truck.

The ground trembled as they moved, however, even before they reached their target, the person had disappeared from their line of sight.

The leader orc snored looking all around before finally pointing his club at Simon who was high up in the sky. Just when it was about to give another order, a flame spear with the speed of an arrow came smashing towards its face.

"Gughii"

BOOM... The leader orcs sound was drowned by the explosion and all the high orcs hurriedly looked towards their leader. The flame spear that had hit the high orcs was the product of Simon's improvement in Flame Magic Mastery.

With the mana inside him now following a fixed path, it became much easier for him to conjure magic. Even the power each of his magic displayed, was on a whole new realm than before.

The Leader high orcs did not expect a magic to come flying at him this fast and was unable to take appropriate actions. While the high orcs were in a state of shock, Simon himself was in a similar state.

Never did he expect that the result of his training to acquire the [Mana Lines] skill would be this effective. He had not even acquired the [Mana Lines] yet but he could already see some obvious changes in his strength.

The intermediate tier flame magic [Flame Spears] that used to take him a second or two to conjure, did not even take him a second to release now. Not only that, the power behind it had also increased marginally. He felt like a completely different person before and after his training.

All of these results had only increased his expectation to obtain the [Mana Lines] sooner.

Whoosh... after the flames engulfing the high orc died down, a charred figure with minor burnt wounds came into view. Its body was continuously releasing smoke and half of its face was completely scorched. The high orc leader was staring daggers at him but other than that, it was completely fine.

Simon arched his brows seeing how tanky the leader of the high orcs was "I guess their race's high defence isn't something to sneeze at. Well in the first place I never thought one flame spear is going to do the trick".

While he was caught up in his thoughts, the morale of the high orcs surrounding him increased by a notch. It seemed that their leader coming out of the enemy's attack with just minor injuries had boosted their confidence.

"Geeegaaaahhh" the high orcs roared lifting their weapons before surrounding Simon in all directions once again. One orc after another charged at him and swung their clubs brutally, trying to smash him into pulp.

BANG... BANG... BANG... each swing was counterattacked or deflected by him and of their attacks was even able to graze him. After fighting with Laris, Simon was now aware of how important feints were and how to make maximum use of your enemies opening.

The battle with the twenty high orcs above level 250 showed how he had grown since then. Although he still had many openings in his attacks and he could hardly be called a first-class warrior, his close combat was slowly but surely being perfected.

Just when Simon utilising the opening in his enemy's attack dealt a devastating stab with his conjured flame spear and nearly finished him off an high orc with one more attack, his instinct screamed at him and he immediately stopped his connecting attack.

BOOOM... something huge with a terrifying momentum and bringing along a gust of wind, grazed past his body and smashed onto the ground immediately forming a huge crater. Just the aftershock alone displayed how much strength was imbued onto the object to create such a terrifying shock wave.

The thing that grazed past him was other than a club. "Gugha" the leader orc garbled before flashing its fangs in a wide smile.

Moments before Simon could finish one of the high orcs, the orc leader saw this chance and quickly flung its club at him with all his strength. It had used its kin as a bait to bring him down together.

Fortunately, listening to his instinct, Simon was able to dodge it at the nick of time. The club that was releasing a faint eerie aura, didn't even suffer any damage even after such a rough use which goes to say that the material used to make the club was from no ordinary monsters. Even with his high defence, he did not dare to take the force behind the club lightly.

"Hehehahaha...."

"Gugha?!" the orc leader was surprised to find that his target had started laughing all of a sudden. It was not only him but all of the high orcs were the same. Their surprise soon turned into anger as they found Simon's laughter extremely unpleasant. From their perspective, they were the ones in control of the battle and not the other way round.

Simon did not bother to control his laugh and burst out loud, he was not bothered that the high orcs would find it annoying and offensive.

It wasn't like he was trying to make them mad or change the tempo of this battle with his laughter.. It was simply that he couldn't control it, whenever he thought about how satisfying the victory would taste against opponents like them, he couldn't help being exhilarated.

Chapter 189: High Orcs (2)

Flashing an excited smile, Simon's fangs were bared before his targets. The high orcs he was facing were no weaklings, they knew how to coordinate well and cover each other openings. Unlike the other monsters that Simon had faced previously who only knew how to follow their instincts, the enemy in front were sentient enough not to underestimate him.

Whenever he showed any openings they would hit him with all their strength. A battle like that was what he was craving and also the quickest way for his growth.

Without holding back even a little, Simon burst out with an unrestrained strength and cast one magic after another towards his enemy. His newfound speed in magic gave him an edge over his enemies and his combat experience was being rapidly honed.

Not only was he able to conjure flame spears instantly, he even had the time to throw gale magic into the mix drastically bolstering the power of the flame spears.

BOOOM... BOOOM... BOOM... the power behind each of the flame spears was something that even these high orcs with their high defence did not dare to underestimate and used all of their powers to fend it off.

But even if they did, they weren't agile enough to block the other ones and were squarely hit by the spears.

Copying the actions of the leader orc, Simon grabbed one of the flame spears that he conjured and flung it towards the high orcs with all of his strength. The result was a missile that flew towards its target with an insane speed before exploding with all that momentum.

No matter if it was the high orcs or their tough hides, wherever the flame spears hit, it would shave off a portion of their body.

Simon used this chance to increase not only his mastery over flames, but also electro. His electro magic was still a novice tier magic far inferior to his intermediate tier flame magic in both power and range. It was because of this reason, that he was mostly adept in using flame magic and could feel his mastery over it reaching new heights.

Although he was also proficient with gale magic intermediate tier of wind magic, his preference leaned more towards destructive attributes such as fire and electro.

Simon mostly used his gale magic to augment the destructiveness of his flame magic and in situations where his flame magic was ineffective.

After the amalgamation magic he created using Flame and Electro to defeat the Elder Treants, he had seen how effective the magic was. The Electro magic was unrivalled in terms of speed and swiftness not to mention the Lightning magic which was the intermediate tier of Electro was even faster and fiercer.

Simon remembered his fight with Laris who was able to utilise the Lightning attribute of mana and wrap himself in it to dish out attacks lightning-fast and with enough destructiveness to severely injure even a Demon Viscount like him.

Although the man was using the intermediate tier Lightning magic imbued by his twin blades, it was still a force to reckon with. From their fight, Simon had learned many important lessons. One of them was his flame magic, while it had enough destructiveness and might, it was severely lacking in terms of speed.

Sentient enemies and those that can think for themselves, would definitely try to capitalise on that and dodge his attacks that had power but no speed. He was aware that in the future battles, he couldn't just rely on his flame magic alone to best them all.

Because of all of these reasons, Simon wanted to increase his mastery over Electro magic now that he had the opportunity.

Electro magic- [Electro Bolt], [Electro Blast], [Electro Charge] swiftly flew towards high orcs damaging and electrocuting them. However, unlike his flame magic, his Electro magic while it was many times faster, packed far less power.

The High orcs who were up until now conscious of his flame spears, did not even flinch when taking the full brunt of his attacks. The Electro magic of his wasn't able to pierce the thick defence of his enemies and since his electro magic hadn't reached the intermediate tier and his mastery over this attribute was still lacklustre, he wasn't able to willingly shape or condense them as he was accustomed to with his flame magic.

Nonetheless, he repeatedly spammed them with his electro magic hoping to see some effects, his mana was big enough to sustain that kind of expenditure.

"GRUgaaaahh" the leader of the high orcs roared. A few moments ago the demon in front of it was throwing magic strong enough to deal heavy damage to them when hit. But after a while, the magic that came targeting them didn't do much and wasn't something they should be overly concerned about.

Thinking that the demon was getting weaker, the orc leader got bolder and ordered its kin to charge forward. The high orcs raised their makeshift shield and charged towards Simon with a ramming speed.

Electro magic continuously came their way but was easily endured through or was deflected by their shields, in any case, it did not have as much effectiveness as the flame magic.

Simon's insistence to keep on using electro magic allowed the high orcs to change the tide of the battle and close the gap between. Whoooosh... one of the high orcs came crashing at him with its shield but was smoothly sidestepped by him.

However, even the wind that grazed past him due to the high orcs charge was enough to push Simon a few meter back. More attacks came flying at him before he could even stabilise his balance and forced him into defending.

From the one attacking to defending was a quick transition and the high orcs displayed that they weren't like any other opponents he had faced before. They knew when to press for more given the slightest opportunity and turn the battle upside down.

BANG... one of the clubs came flying at him with a terrifying momentum and smashed squarely on his arms that he hurriedly raised to shield himself. His body was knocked back skidded the ground and only came to a stop after hitting a few nearby trees.

Blood trickled down his arms from the wounds and from the splinters of the club that broke apart after hitting him. Flinching in pain, Simon looked at the smiling orcs and couldn't help but click his tongue.

It seemed that the enemy wasn't weak enough to let him practice his magic on them without retaliating. No in the first place, there wouldn't be an enemy who won't capitalise on such an obvious weakness if shown in front of them.

To put it bluntly, he had this coming. The current development was his fault, he had let his superiority get into his head and had underestimated his enemy severely.

"What am I doing? Since when have I become so strong to look down on these enemies? Had it been a life and death battle, I would have lost my life then and there. It's time I snap back to reality, what I don't have... I don't have. Instead, I should focus more on strengthening the things I already have".

Simon calmly thought over it before regulating his breathing. There was no way he could simply increase his mastery over Electro magic by just continuously spamming them. If things were that easy, this world would be full of people with mastery over different attributes of mana.

He felt foolish to think even for a second that he could acquire intermediate tier Lightning magic through this way.

After his mind settled down, and he came to terms with himself, Simon stopped spamming electro magic. BANG... with a loud sound, flames ignited on his hand and hurriedly engulfed his whole body.

The heat produced by the flames surrounding him had at this moment increased by a notch and just being near him, the surrounding sparse trees caught on fire.

The land burned and was scorched black and even the high orcs that were thinking of charging at him were pushed back by the heat, their skin continuously being scorched. The flames were no ordinary flames as they were the culmination of Simon's mastery over flame magic.

The scarlet flames burned with an intense fervour and there was even a tinge of golden mix with it indicating that his control over flame magic had reached an astonishing degree. This phenomenon was the result of condensing the flames to their extreme and the intensity of the heat was quickly reaching the realms of the advanced tier.

"Grugh?" Seeing that the atmosphere around Simon had changed completely, the leader orc hesitated for a while before ordering a retreat.

Without giving even the slightest chance, he bombarded them with hundreds of flame spears that manifested in the sky within seconds, each imbued with enough mana and power to flatten the surrounding lands.

But that was not all, Simon also activated his skills [Piercing Enhancement] and imbued them onto the flame spears. The result was a technique that fell on the high orcs like a rain of spears exploding and dealing massive damage.

Adding [Piercing Enhancement] onto the flame spears increased their deadliness while at the same time the momentum with which they fell onto the high orcs, was able to easily pierce through their defence.

Chapter 190: The Mutation Menace

A variation of his [Thousand Piercing Swords] that he had created.

BOOM... BOOM...BOOM... the land trembled and quaked from the might of his technique and before long all the high orcs was engulfed by the flames. However, after finishing the twenty or so high orcs, Simon did not stop there and quickly flew towards a different area in search of new prey.

He continued with his hunt for as long he could or before he became tired. Time flowed quickly while he was engrossed in his training and five days had passed in a blink of an eye.

"Huff... huff" Simon was currently deep inside the high orc's territory and a mountain of corpses could be seen lining behind. His breathing was ragged and his body tattered, evident of the gruesome battles had gone through in these five days.

Blood trickled down from all the wounds on his body and stained his skin red. Although he looked haggard and frail at this moment, the wide smile and piercing crimson eyes of his told a different story.

Even now the light in them seemed alive and raring to fight even more. Because of his demonic nature, he felt exhilarated whenever he went through a difficult battle; however, the smile on his face was for a different reason.

These past few days of constant battles had given him a newfound enlightenment and he was finally able to glance on the mysteries and obtain the skill he was so eager for. Yes, Simon had finally

acquired the skill [Mana Lines] that he had constantly trained for the past few weeks, now it was finally in his grasp.

He could feel the massive difference in the mana flowing within him in the manner that now they constantly circulated in a fixed path without having him focus on it. A new set of lines had been established within his body when he acquired the [Mana Lines] skill and the mana flowing within him instinctively followed the path created.

The changes he had undergone before and after obtaining the skill was extremely noticeable. For instance, the speed of activating all of his skills and magic had increased drastically and not only that, but even their might have increased by a fewfold.

If before it took him a few seconds to cast hundreds of flame spears, now it only took him an instant to manifest all of them. One could imagine how precious those few seconds were in a life and death battle where even a slight delay could decide the outcome.

Him saving up those few seconds opened a brand new window of opportunity and also sealed any opening his enemy could capitalise on. During the time frame of five days, Simon had leveled up quite a bit and was even able to improve on his existing skills.

Currently, he was level 311 after defeating many high orcs, a stark difference from his previous level. Deciding that it was time to head back, he swiftly unfurled his wide bat-like wings before flying across the sky.

From his viewpoint, he could see multiple groups of high orcs rushing to the place he was moments ago trying to pincer him with their numbers. In these five days, Simon had dived quite a bit deeper into the territory of the orcs and by now they were naturally aware of his existence.

They had quite the keen nose and were very sentient even amongst the multitudes of monsters residing within the western region of the forest. It would be quite unusual if they didn't feel his presence even after he cut their numbers by so much.

While he was observing them on his way back, one group of high orcs that seemed to be different from the normal high orcs, also spotted him and stopped their march. The colour of their skin, height and even their weapons and aura had a different feel to it.

Leading them was a orc more than three meters tall, red skin and wearing various accessories on its body. The extremely intelligent light in his eyes appeared to be observing Simon until he was out of their territory.

Midway through his flight, Simon felt an extremely piercing stare on him and hurriedly turned his head only to find that the feeling had swiftly receded. Locking his brows in a frown, he looked at the direction where he felt the stare from before discarding it in the back of his mind.

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Dungeon Laplace, on the main floor inside one of the halls of the white palace.

Cecilia and Maya were happily chatting when the door was knocked and Simon came in. Cecilia delightedly sprang up from her seat while Maya bowed her head and greeted him.

"Hehe... welcome back big brother" Cecilia happily chirped. Patting her adorable head, he nodded his head and replied "Im back".

Opening the [Main Menu] he sat at the head seat and inquired "Did any problems arise while I was gone?".

Cecilia puffed her chest and replied excitedly "Rest assured big brother, I looked after the dungeon as you had asked me and watched over the progress of the adventurers. The dungeon big brother created is amazing, they still weren't able to breach the 10th floor yet".

Simon observed with his [Main menu] and saw that everything was working well with the dungeon "I see you did a good job".

Hearing his praise, it immediately went into her head and she haughtily said "At first it was very difficult to understand all of these options but elder sister Irene had taught me how to use the [Main Menu] and everything became easy".

Seeing that the little girl wanted to brag, he helplessly went along with her antics before asking "So where is Irene now?".

"Ah!!" Cecilia made a face as if she suddenly remembered something.

Maya made a helpless face before replying "About that my lord... Lady Irene went to the 15th floor".

Simon frowned, there could only be one reason for Irene to go down the 15th floor. "Did something happen on the 15th floor? Was it the variant?" he asked.

Nodding her head, Maya replied detailing the events that had transpired while he was gone "As per your orders, we thoroughly observed the floor for the traces of that creature and two days ago we finally found the one that was eating the flesh of the stormwolf. However, it seems we were mistaken, the creature wasn't the only entity eating the flesh".

When he heard the last of her sentence, Simon couldn't help squint his eyes, confusion evident on his face.

"I came here to report our discoveries and the peculiarities to Lord Simon but it seemed that you were away for a while. Hence Lady Irene decided to come and investigate it herself" Maya added.

Simon slightly nodded his head, he was finally aware why Irene was on the 15th floor while Maya who was one of the [Helpers] was here. After hearing the report, he could no longer sit still without knowing what the actual situation was on the 15th floor and thus Simon decided to check on it.

"Big brother I'll come too. It's boring without elder sister Irene here" Cecilia said tagging along.

"Then allow me to guide you all there since the topography had changed quite a lot and also Lady Irene has tasked me with bringing you there upon your return" Maya stated appearing calm and collected.

It appeared that she no longer acted nervous and tense in front of him or maybe it was because of Cecilia presence. In any case, it was a welcoming change.

Opening the [Main Menu] he used the teleport function to swiftly teleport onto the 15th floor. Arriving on the floor, Simon immediately understood why Irene sent Maya to guide him. the entire topography of the floor had changed since the last time he came here.

The Forest was no longer verdant and lush, mountains had crumbled and flames ignited as far as the eye could see. The place was so in contrast to what he was used to seeing that he couldn't help but be at a disbelief for few seconds.

The entire floor had changed drastically in the span of just five days. Although the dungeon was doing its best and mending all the destruction, it just couldn't keep up.

Cecilia opened her mouth wide 'O' surprised by the scene in front of her. Her face looked embarrassed and she couldn't help but scratch her head. Just a while ago, she confidently said to Simon that no problems had arisen while he was gone.

Now looking at the condition 15th floor that was experiencing an absolute disaster, she could only avoid her big brother's questioning gaze.

'Well, it was not like I was being lax or anything. To my defence, it's just that I'm still not accustomed to using all the functions of the [Main Menu]' She thought nervously looking at the mess that was the 15th floor.

Simon glanced at Maya and beckoned her to guide him where Irene and the other was. He couldn't leave the situation be and must find the culprit behind all of these before it gets out of hand.

The place to have become a disaster zone, what exactly happened here? Simon quickly spotted the two [Helpers] and Irene observing and inspecting the mess.

"What happened here? Did the mutated creature go out of control?" he asked while looking at them.