

D. of Pride 251

Chapter 251: Underground Space (2)

There were more than hundreds of said boulders placed in an unusual pattern. When Simon reached a distance that was only a few meters away from the area and was intensely observing the boulders when suddenly one of the boulders started shifting.

When the boulder that was more than 3 meters big moved from its place, a wide dark tunnel that could easily allow more than two people to walk side by side appeared. Intermittent sounds of conversation could be heard coming from the tunnel from time to time.

When Simon saw the tunnel and heard the conversation coming from inside, he couldn't help but reveal a surprised expression for an instant.

"Adventurers? No, they are... bandits" while these people had armours and weapons donned, they clearly gave a more rough and bloody atmosphere.

"So these boulders are used to hide the tunnels which lead to their hideout?" Simon mused, the peculiar flow of the mana around here was finally solved. From the looks of how these bandits were eyeing their camp, it didn't take a genius to understand that they did not have any good intent.

Simon felt into deliberation, now that he had found out the bandits, should he leave them be even while knowing their objective? Or should he engage them with no benefits to gain?

He did not want to get involved in a fight that gained him nothing but then again if he left them be, who knows what might happen to the convoy. It might even hamper with his plans to reach the capital.

While Simon was intensely contemplating his actions, the conversation of the bandits reached his ears.

"Hey do you think we should call the other two leaders?" one of the bandits with a bald head asked.

"What are babbling about? Our leader clearly said that he is more than enough to handle the members of that convoy" the bandit beside the bald head man replied.

"But even the leader of the southern brigade was easily killed? Do you think we stand a chance alone?" the bald bandit worried.

"Don't worry, Boss told us that the other leader must have been killed because he underestimated the people on the convoy and brought a very small team. From the investigation of their corpses, it seems that they were assassinated when their guard was down" replied the other bandit.

After saying that, he patted the bald head man and walked back into the tunnel.

"You stay here and observe them, I'll go and report to the boss that we have found their campsite. It is likely that we will make a move today".

When the bald head man nodded, the other bandit swiftly disappeared into the darkness of the tunnel. The bald head bandit observed the distant campsite for a while when he suddenly felt a presence reveal itself not far from this place.

"Haa, screw it, I might as well bring them down now that I am already aware of them" a voice that sounded exasperated, sounded out.

"Who is there?" the bandit took out his weapon that was a large spiked club and roared.

Seeing that there was no reply, his look became even more cautious as he surveyed his surroundings. He just moved his eyes to the tunnel from where they came from, when suddenly he spotted a man wearing a simple back robe appear out of nowhere.

His instincts immediately warned him and he swiftly utilised his skill to dish out a [Wide Slash] towards this unknown person.

BANG... before the attack could even come closer, it was swiftly dissipated by the man who utilised his Electro magic.

The moment the bald head bandit realised that the back robed man was a mage, he immediately closed the distance between them and was about to make this a melee combat when...

PSSH... he noticed a hand that had easily penetrated through his armour and came out from his back. To his surprise, the enemy appeared behind him as if teleporting without even him noticing.

"Wha..." the life-force from his body swiftly dissipated and the bandit listlessly fell down.

Simon shifted his attention towards the tunnel and stepped forward.

The tunnel was long and wide and there were even a few torches lighting the area along the way. At the end of the tunnel that spanned for more than a dozen kilometres, was a wooden door with bad craftsmanship and seemed hurriedly made.

One of the bandits that was with the bald head man, entered through the door and was greeted by a large cave that had many small tents made of clothes and wooden carts lining up the walls filled with rations and other various things.

Clearly, these were all the things that these bandits have plundered from the people, adventurers, and merchants that had taken this route to travel.

"Oi, Cloy why are you back so soon?" a bulky man with a protruding belly asked. Behind him were many bandits that were busy investigating the loots that they had plundered from somewhere.

"Ah, boss I came back with a report. We have found the campsite of the convoy" the bandit henchmen replied.

Hearing his reply, the bandit leader put the mug containing alcohol down and got up from his seat. A fiery heat blazed in his eyes as he clenched his hands.

"Everyone get ready to act, we have caught a big fish today... hahaha".

The rest of the bandits cheered loudly when suddenly a voice that dampened their mood like a cold bucket of water rang out from the tunnel.

"I say it is quite regrettable that you won't be able to enjoy going after this big fish today".

After that voice sounded out, the bandits who were lazing around, became alert and gazed at one of the many tunnels.

"Looks like you brought some unwanted guests with you Cloy" the bandit leader narrowed his eyes and stated.

The bandit henchmen who was referred to as Cloy, immediately became flabbergasted.

"Eh? But that can't be I have stationed Dross to guard the tunnel. If there was any signs of fight, I would have heard the sound".

"Hmph, the intruder is already here".

The moment those words landed from the boss leader, the wooden door was kicked open with a bang. A young man with handsome features, slowly walked out through the tunnel and observed his surroundings.

The atmosphere around him and the way he carried himself, was so casual that it was like he was out here on a stroll. The attitude instantly pissed off the bandits who were looking at him with murderous eyes.

Simon who had entered the bandit's hideout, lazily strolled his eyes all across. From his observation, he could tell that the place was just like an ant's nest with many tunnels interconnected here and there.

Without even counting, Simon could feel the presence of at least fifty bandits currently gathered in this hideout.

"Oi, do you think this is someplace you can casually stroll in?".

While he was busy delving into his thoughts, a supercilious voice that came from the bandit leader sounded out. Ignoring his call, the young man lazily walked and checked the numerous wooden cargos that were filled with the loots plundered from others.

That attitude that disregarded his presence, rubbed the bandit leader the wrong way and he motioned with his hands to the henchmen to attack the black-robed man from behind.

SHIING... immediately, the sound of a weapon being unsheathed rang out before a bandit came attacking Simon.

The bandit's smile widened when he saw that the young man did not even notice him. Just when the sword was a few inches away from the young man, the scene before the bandit blurred for a second and a fist came smashing down on his face.

BANG... his teeth shattered and blood overflowing from his displaced nose, the bandit was sent flying towards the wall where he smashed towards the many wooden cargos before coming to a stop.

The moment when Simon had sent one of the bandits flying with a fist, another bandit that seem to have utilised this opportunity when his focus was somewhere else to sneak behind him. The bandit brought down his sickle-like weapon on top of the young man's head only to be stopped midway by a sword.

No matter how much weight the bandit put behind his weapon, the sword did not budge. Although the ordinary sword in his opponent's hands that he picked up from the ground, had many dings, it was just like a boulder that refused to move.

Realising that his attack had failed, the bandit was about to retreat back when purple sparks suddenly started erupting out of the sword and travelled towards his body.

"Aaaagghhhhh" in a swift motion the spark engulfed the entire body of the bandit causing him to issue a miserable scream.

THUMP... the scorched body of the bandit fell onto the cold hard floor and stopped moving altogether after a few seconds. The atmosphere inside the hideout had descended into a disturbing silence as all the gazes focused on the black-robed man.

At that moment, they all realised... No, they all saw with their own eyes that the young man's eyes were glowing a piercing crimson as he revealed a wicked smile.

All of them felt their body tremble for a second and a feeling of foreboding rose in their heart.

"Dammit, you bastard do you think you can just act as you wish in my hideout? All of you surround him and attack together. Let me see how long his stamina lasts".

The bandit leader said in an unpleasant tone.. He tapped the space ring on his hand and a wide butcher blade appeared.

Chapter 252: Gains

Simon was in no state of mind to pay attention to the actions of these bandits as he was too caught up in his own thoughts. Just a few seconds ago when he had defeated the two bandits, a notification rang out and a window displaying a pleasant message popped up in front of his eyes.

[You have levelled up].

Simon stared at the message with a blank expression, it was not long since he levelled using the mana crystals and after that, he did not have any opportunity to hunt monsters, dive inside the pond, or use the remaining mana crystals to increase his level.

Naturally, he had quite the gap to reach the next level. Each increase in level after reaching level 300, was very tedious and hard and one needed to constantly defeat strong beings to even see minor changes.

However, these past few days other than hunting some weak monsters and the battle grizzly, Simon did not deliberately hunt strong monsters to level. So how come he levelled up so abruptly?

The only answer he could think of was the experience that the two bandits had provided him after being defeated.

These bandits weren't strong and were only around level 150 and only a handful few were above level 200 not including the bandit leader. Was the experience provided by the humans after being defeated different than ordinary bloodline monsters?

While he did fought with Laris a human adventurer, it was a battle with his life on the line. Other than being superior in terms of pure stats, he was lacking in every aspect. At that time due to being under the influence of the pride fragment, he did not have enough presence of mind to pay attention to his level.

He couldn't come up with an answer but what he did know was that defeating the two bandits had allowed him to gain enough experience to level up. Simon couldn't imagine what would happen if he were to defeat these fifty or so bandits.

An excitement and a nature that had been deeply suppressed by him, fully flared up at that moment.

An opportunity to level up like that doesn't come that often. The enemy were bandits that have committed many heinous crimes and whose bodies were leaking with bloodlust, he naturally had no reason barring him to take them down. Especially when their target was the convoy he was travelling with.

His eyes were back to their crimson colour and a feeling to trample on his enemies rose within his heart. Other than the bandit leader who was around level 298, the rest of the group were of no concern to Simon.

His Demon Viscount body with its high Defence and Endurance, would easily be able to endure through any of their attacks. This meant that he could let loose without worrying much.

"Let's get this party going shall we" the black-robed young man said flashing a wicked smile.

The three moons hung up high in the sky and lit the place with their beautiful moonlight. However, this part of the forest was still covered with darkness due to the looming clouds that had arrived who knows when and the thick canopies of the trees.

A distant mountain that was covered with many tall trees and was a thousand meters big, stood mightily across the forest. However, the peculiar thing about this mountain was that there were many small and big tunnels craftily covered with bushes and foliage to hide them from view.

If one followed any one of these tunnels, they would be led to a wide underground space that is or was the hideout of one of the four brigand leaders.

No, it was not deserted, on the contrary, it was still being occupied up until a couple of minutes ago. Then why it WAS a hideout of one of the four brigand leaders? The answer could be found at the scene that lay inside of that very mountain.

Many corpses littered the place everywhere, their blood dying the ground a shade of black. These corpses were none other than the bodies of the bandits who had encircled and attacked Simon.

Currently, the place was completely silent with a nauseating smell that had spread everywhere. A young man could be seen sitting on a wooden cargo that did not have a trace of blood smeared on it. His clothes were a little tattered and burnt, scars and cuts covered his body nonetheless, they couldn't hide the brilliant shine of his eyes and his excited smile.

Even when a gory scene laid out in front of, the man seemed unaffected.

"With a span of few hours, I levelled up a total of ten times. This speed can be considered quite scary compared to the slow growth I had been having inside the Ghastly Winding Forest for the past few weeks".

This experience today had told Simon how important it was to roam around and not be holed up in a place. While it may be true that the Ghastly Winding Forest is the best place for him to train and level up due to the strong and overflowing presence of the monsters, it was precisely because the level of monsters there was quite high that Simon was having difficulty defeating them.

Now that he knew that humans too gave him experience when defeated, he couldn't get this feeling out of him. After this experimentation, Simon was clear that humans and monsters each provided a different amount of experience that is mystical energy when defeated.

An ordinary bloodline low-level monsters provided way less mystical energy to him when defeated than an average human who had trained their skills ardously and had gone through a few class changes.

This theory of his might be flawed and he needed to defeat a few more evolved monsters and humans with more class changes to truly make a correct comparison. But for now, Simon was quite happy with the gains that he had.

"Hmm? What was that silvery light that flew out from this small conch" grasping a small conch which had complicated patterns that looked like runes inscribed on it, Simon spoke out his thoughts.

He remembered that in between his fight with the Bandit leader, the person had suddenly taken out this conch when he saw that he couldn't gain an edge. After taking out this conch the man spoke a few words before the conch lighted up with a silvery light that swiftly disappeared into space.

The fight with the bandit leader was quite boring compared to the time when he fought with Laris the adventurer. Since the bandit leader did not have a battle rich experience and a good weapon like the latter, Simon did not feel the excitement and the only thing that caught his eyes during the battle was this silvery light that flew out of the item that was currently on his hand.

While he pose the question in a low voice and did not expect an answer from anyone, a small voice that had a tinge of anger rang out to clear his doubts.

"That light was a voice transmission that flew out from that transponder shell. It is most likely that bandit used this to send some message to someone" Adalinda folded both her arms across her chest and said.

Sensing her sudden presence behind, Simon freaked out for a second. The feeling of her presence evading his senses, was something he wouldn't get used to.

"You scared me there for a second. When did you appear?" he inquired.

"Hmph, I was already here before you started massacring these bandits. If I don't want to, nobody here can sense my presence. There is no need for you to get surprised each and every time. But that is not important... how dare you ruin my fun?" Adalinda asked in a foul mood.

The sudden question startled Simon and he couldn't help but utter an "Eh?".

The little girl's ponytail waved like two whips when she saw that he did not even realise what his actions meant.

"Kuhh... seriously why did you have to go and kill everybody? I was so waiting for them to conduct their ambush on the campsite. Now you have done it and destroyed all of my fun".

"What?"

This time, Simon rolled his eyes at Adalinda. What did she mean by ruined by fun? Was she already aware of the presence of these bandits hiding inside this underground space? Didn't it mean that she was looking forward to convoy and these bandits clashing with one another? And all of that was just because she was bored.

His face showed a dreadful appearance when he thought how devious the plans of this little girl who had an innocent angel-like face was. Simon smiled bitterly unable to even laugh or cry.

Adalinda kept on throwing him a hateful glance when suddenly, she revealed a gloating smile towards him and mockingly asked.

"Do you know what the content of the message passed by that bandit was before he died at your hands?".

He simply shook his head, his eyes looked at Adalinda questioningly since he knew that she was aware of something to have asked this question.

"Kfufu... you deserve this for foiling my plan. Next time I'll prepare myself to enjoy the show thoroughly" the little girl laughed at his blank expression.

Simon did not mind, from her words he was at least able to understand that the bandit leader deemed it necessary to send a message to someone during his last moments. That alone gave him some idea.

He could guess that this group wasn't the only bandits around and there were more of them.. Guessing from how Adalinda was acting, it seems that his action here has been reported to the other bandits and they would more likely be aware of him if they met the next time.

Chapter 253: Idle Talks

Getting up from his seat, Simon turned around and walked towards the tunnel from which he came from.

"Eh? You are not bothered by it? Don't you want to know what the content of that message was?" seeing him simply walk off without pressing her for answer, Adalinda became startled and buzzed him about it.

When the two of them reached the tunnel, Simon manipulated his mana and created a huge fireball [Flare Sun] before throwing it towards the ceiling of the wide space.

BOOOM...

An enormous explosion rocked the walls and the ceiling instantly collapsed burying everything within this wide space. The mountain trembled and a small earthquake shook the surrounding area disturbing the inhabitants of this forest.

It didn't take long for Simon and Adalinda to exit the tunnel and reach the peak where their campsite was located. No disturbance occurred for the rest of the night and the convoy started moving again at the first rays of sunlight.

The adventurers and guards moved around in formation and protected the wagons in the centre. The group was full of energy as they conversed and marched forward all at the same time maintaining their guard.

It appeared that last night's peace had bolstered their vigour. The journey inside the northern outlaw forest was filled with unexpected dangers and monsters at every corner. But due to the spirited reactions of the members, the journey wasn't very rough.

Inside one of the wagons that was on the front, Simon was lounging on his seat, his hands held a small bead the size of a thumb and azure blue in colour. It was the very same gem that Irene had condensed and given to him before his departure from the dungeon.

The motive behind him taking out the crystal was to figure out what it actually did. Knowing Irene, Simon knew that she wouldn't give him something that wouldn't come to his use. He knew that the gem had more to it than just being pretty and hence he tried to incur some reaction from it.

However, no matter what he did the gem did not elicit any reaction. "Am I doing something wrong?" Simon brooded.

"Isn't that... hehe, that girlfriend of yours indeed cares a lot for you to have created something like that" Adalinda remarked from her half- asleep state. The routine of this little girl after coming to the trip had become quite monotone and lazy with sleeping and eating comprising most of her time.

"You know what this is?" seeing her nod her head matter of factly, Simon pressed "Then do you know how to use it? Even the [Analysis] was unable to display anything".

Straightening the bed hair that came in front of her face, she scoffed "Hmph, what do you expect from a Normal base tier skill, this level of examination is beyond it. To answer your question, yes I do know how to use it however...".

Adalinda closed one of her eyes and stretched out her hand.

As this was not their first time conversing, Simon immediately knew what she was getting at and hurriedly put the food that she wanted in her hand.

"Umu, seeing that you are being tactful enough, I don't mind telling you how to use it. Nom... nom... it's quite simple actually, you just need to put a few droplets of your blood into the crystal. Though I advise you not to try it here since there would be a huge commotion when that gem activates".

Saying everything that she needed to say in a single breath, Adalinda concentrated on her food.

Something that needed his blood to activate, just from this alone, Simon could see how precious the thing Irene had given him was. From his inherited memories, he knew that something that needed one's blood to activate, was by means anything but simple and could even be considered an extremely precious treasure.

Simon caressed the crystal in his hands for a while before deciding to keep it in his inventory. Although he was curious to know what the thing Irene had given him was, he knew that this was not the place to open it.

After travelling for a few more hours, the convoy decided to take a break and give rest to the Bane Moose. The adventurers and guards that came back after performing their duty, switched with others before taking their meal and gulping down on it.

They made a circle around a place and started striking a conversation with each other.

"Hey, a few months ago I heard that there is a newly emerged dungeon near the city of Mountmend? Have you ever delved there?" a guard who had become quite accustomed and opened with the adventurers asked.

The topic that he chose to discuss, was a hot subject back in the city amongst adventurers and even some ordinary humans. So there was no way these guards wouldn't be aware of it even though they had nothing to do with adventuring.

All of the guards perked their ears wanting to know more about it, the adventurers who clearly had more in-depth knowledge about it, puffed their chests.

"Of course, we do know about it. In fact, some of us even delved inside it. The place currently is filled with resources, monsters and treasures that periodically pop up. The quality of the good that can be found inside, is far better than what is available out in the market. Most of us delve inside the dungeon to increase our levels and earn some extra money".

"You are right. Honestly, if I didn't owe the old man back at the adventurers guild a favour, I would have likely been delving inside the dungeon instead of being here" Another adventurer chipped in.

Simon who was lazing in his seat after a night of guard duty, couldn't help but eavesdrop on their conversation.

"So how many floors have been explored yet? Since it is a newly emerged dungeon, I bet it only has a few floors and will soon be conquered by somebody" the guards asked while having their lunch.

"Haha, since you haven't dived inside it, that's why you don't know but the dungeon is quite peculiar in that the floors are quite big the more you dive in and filled with traps and monsters that are very difficult to deal with. It won't be easy to conquer a dungeon like that even if it's a low-rank one" the adventurer seated near the guard explained.

"Well, we will have to see if the dungeon is conquerable or not. Have you forgotten which guild is currently tackling the dungeon". The adventurer with the highest level present among the group dropped a clue.

The adventurer who have been suddenly reminded of something widened his eyes in realisation "You are right, the team from the Blinding Arrow Guild is the one that has conquered the latest floors, at this pace they might even be able to reach the dungeon core".

"Wouldn't the dungeon disappear if its dungeon core is destroyed or conquered?" the guards who were not too familiar with dungeons, asked.

"Right, that is why I believe that the Blinding Arrows Guild is hesitating over mobilising their entire members to conquer the dungeon. Once conquered the dungeon will be gone and there will no longer be a place to farm these treasures".

At this moment, their conversation suddenly came to a stop when they noticed a familiar face coming over. The man wore a grey armour shining with a golden tinge and carried a shield and broadsword on his back.

"You don't have to mind me, I'm just passing by" Chuck said before taking his share of the meal from the fireplace and walking off.

The adventurers sighed, looking a little guilty. They were all aware of how sensitive this topic was for Chuck who had lost his entire party in that exploration.

After the short break was over, all of them scattered and started performing the job they were assigned and before anyone knew it, evening had arrived. A campsite could be seen in an area covered with rocks, sounds of water flowing could be heard from a nearby brook.

Members of the convoy were gathered around a table looking over the map. Cynthia placed her finger on one of the red markers that was on the northern outlaw forest and stated.

"At this pace, it will take five more days to get out of this forest. However, we shouldn't let down our just yet. As you all know this place is filled with dangerous monsters and is also the hideout of the bandits. Frankly, it will be difficult to get out of here unscathed. Therefore I want all of you to not be complacent until we are out of the forest".

The signs of no bandits trailing their convoy made her all the more concerned about their objective; nonetheless, she did not mention it to them. Alvara who was beside her, knew her concerns and hence did not leave her side for even a moment.

they just need to hold on for a few more days and once they are out of the forest, they will be inside Duke Montford's territory which was relatively a much safer place.

All of the members scattered after the discussion was over, Bignosio whose body had healed mostly thanks to the potions and medicines, was just about leave when an old man in butler's attire approached him.

"What do you want?" Bignosio turned his head and asked irritably.

Jeeves did not seem fazed by the former's attitude and simply told him to follow along.

Bignosio hesitated for a while before following the butler and exited the campsite on his behest. His insights were telling him that something was up with the latter.

Time flowed endlessly like a river and two more days passed by without anything notable happening.

Chapter 254: Choice

On the night of the seventh-day Tents were erected in the centre with guards patrolling in a perimeter around the campsite. Inside one of the wagons lined up in a corner, Jeeves sat in one of the seats; in his hands was a small conch inscribed with many complex runes.

"Initiate the attack, we cannot allow them to travel any further," he said looking towards the conch.

"Tch... don't give me command, I know what I have to do. Since you have already prepared an opening amongst the sentries and guards patrolling the area, I won't be able to call myself a Brigand Master if I can't even exploit that" mysteriously a voice travelled through the conch and sounded out inside the wagon.

"Remember there can be no mistake or else..." a weird glow flashed in Jeeves eyes before he cut the call.

A small distance away from the campsite, in the darkness of the night, Simon and Adalinda who were assigned as guards, patrolled the area. From time to time, he would see other guards or adventurers pass over, similarly patrolling the area.

"Why do I feel like something bad is going to happen from that grin of yours?" he suddenly asked noticing the little girl flashing her pearly white teeth.

"Hehe, get ready to see something interesting, the fun is about to begin" Adalinda said not trying to hide anything.

Simon mused, his line of thought was suddenly disturbed when multiple presences showed up in his detection range. Their appearance was abrupt and swift just like a deadly snake that was hiding in its burrow ready to strike.

With his senses, he could easily tell that their numbers were in the hundreds and even more. However, what confounded Simon was how did this many people manage to approach so close to them without getting detected by the sentries.

"The direction where they are coming from... is assigned to that guy's team" Simon had an amused expression when he realised that they had been had. The area from where these multiple presences were oozing out from, was assigned to Bignosio's team to guard.

BOOOM...

a loud explosion rocked the area around the campsite waking the sleepy residents of the tents awake. The explosion also attracted the attention of all the guards and adventurers as they swiftly ran back to the campsite.

Simon did not immediately rush back and instead looked at the little girl with glittery eyes. The expression on her face seemed to display that she was having an absolute blast watching a soap opera.

Shaking his head, he audibly sighed and followed behind the others rushing back to the campsite. All of the members of the convoy at this moment had an ugly expression when they realised that they had been ambushed once again, this time by a group... No, it would be right to say by an army of bandits.

Without even counting, it was clear to everyone that, they were absolutely outnumbered this time.

"Why did nobody inform the camp and issued an alert when this big of a group was approaching? Who was assigned to monitor that area?" the guard commander shouted in a bad mood.

"Hehe, the guard commander does not need to be so much revved up, it was our team that was monitoring that area" Bignosio said slowly walking out amidst the bandits.

"You?!" all of the people of the convoy showed faces of disbelief when they saw one of the veteran adventurers team walking side by side with the bandits.

"How dare you betray us?" Alvara screamed in frustration.

"Hahaha, there is no point in saying any of that right now. Anyways I have already chosen which side I will stand on. I also want to make this clear to everyone that they should think about this carefully as to which side they should choose to side with. You can already see that we already have a great advantage over you all it is meaningless to fight a battle knowing the final outcome".

Bignosio spread his hands and preached grandly. Hearing his words and looking at the numbers of the bandits encircling them, many people over on the side on convoy started having second thoughts.

Can they even win a fight when they already have such a big numerical disadvantage? Wouldn't their outcome be extremely bad if they were to choose the wrong boat; worse their life might even be forfeited?

During emergencies or during bad times, it was in human nature to choose the best for survival.

"You beast..." Alvara couldn't help but curse when she saw many of the members on their side have their minds swayed by those words.

"Kukuku... I must say you are quite the spiteful man. Swaying the minds of your former comrades to join us instead, can't say that I dislike it" a man wearing a heavy and well-crafted armour standing in front of the bandits said.

He had a thick beard and unkempt brown hair, his body brimmed with muscles and he was a head taller than Bignosio who was beside him. The man was the Brigand Master of this group of bandits and also the strongest man amongst them.

Behind him were two men with lanky builds releasing a strong aura that could overpower any veteran adventurers from the convoy.

"Don't forget out deal, I must be the one to deal the death blow to that man" Bignosio said grinding his teeth in hatred.

"Hahaha... that will not be a problem" the Brigand Master laughed before glancing at his two subordinates.

"Where is that other bastard that killed my men?".

The two subordinates behind him squinted their eyes looking for the perpetrator that had killed two of their Brigand leaders and many subordinates.

"According to the message that Whitman sent before his death, the person was a young man wearing black casual clothes" one of the Bandit leader named Osbin said.

"You nincompoop how will be able to find the person with just the description of his clothes" The Brigand Master barked. At this moment, Bignosio also perked his ears to listen.

"Other than that... Yes, Whitman also said that the man had handsome and striking features" The other bandit leader named Grime chipped in.

The Brigand Master had a somewhat peeved face listening to their description.

"I know who the person you are talking about is..." Bignosio said, although he hated to admit, there was only one person that matched the description on this convoy.

"Heh! I didn't think you would be this useful. So who is this man that has the guts to kill all of my men in their base?" the Brigand Master asked, his voice containing a smear of bloodlust.

"He is the same person that I told you about" the adventurer claimed.

"What?!" the two bandit leaders, Osbin and Grime were startled whereas the Brigand Master narrowed his eyes.

"Heh so it's him, no wonder you are so eager to want to remove him from your sight". He then directed his gaze and surreptitiously threw a glance at the butler who was standing on the side of convoy.

His gaze roamed the members and finally stopped on the two beautiful women, especially the purple-robed one whose charms was enough to make men go crazy. A nefarious flame started to rise within his lower abdomen and an impulse to push those women down spawned in his heart.

"Kukuku, obediently surrender while this master is still feeling generous or else the ending of you lot won't be good. Although the answer is already clear, I'm giving you a few minutes of time to decide which side you should join, after this time limit is over, do not blame my men for going overboard" The Brigand Master licked his lips declaring his intention.

"You!! There is no one here who would discard their pride and submit to a bunch of thieves like you. Those who do so should be ashamed of themselves" Alvara declared while unsheathing her long sword.

However, from her tone, one could see that the guard commander was no longer confident. She was aware that other than the silver guards, the adventurers were only here because they were promised a hefty sum of reward in return. They had no loyalty towards the Miss or the Serene Palace Merchant guild whatsoever.

It wouldn't be a surprise if they chose to stand down in a situation where their lives were threatened. Though she felt nervous, she did not reveal it because she knew better than to show weakness at this crucial point in time.

After what the Brigand Master said, it naturally affected the frame of mind of the adventurers and guards alike; however, unlike the adventurers, the guards were duty bound and employed by the Serene Palace merchant guild.

Therefore even if their heart wanted to surrender they couldn't do it from the fear of suffering the repercussion from the merchant guild.

"Kukuku, we will see about that" the Brigand Master scoffed. He then silently emitted pressure on the members of the convoy as he glared at every one of them. Those that couldn't take the pressure, shifted their gaze away.

Time ticked away little by little; finally, an adventurer who was too tense about losing his life in this scuffle, chose to walk towards the side where the bandits were.

The action of the adventurers was the straw that broke the camel's back, one by one many adventurers started leaving the side of the convoy. The sounds of their steps was like the beat of a heavy drum as they heavily thumped within the hearts of those remaining.

Within a couple of minutes, the convoy that had more than fifty members initially, was reduced to only the staff, silver guards and a handful of adventurers that chose to stay.. The scene caused the guard commander to close her eyes and tighten the grip on her sword.

Chapter 255: Fight Against The Bandits

"Miss please forgive me for acting selfish but you must run when you have the chance," Alvara declared.

Cynthia's delicate brows were tightly knitted together, her beautiful face was masked with an unconcealed worry. She knew that this moment would come; however, even she didn't predict that she would be this helpless when that moment came.

"Fools" the Brigand Master mocked looking at the ones that chose to struggle till their last breath.

With just a glance, it was already clear that they had an absolute numerical advantage, not to mention they also have strong ones amidst them who could easily contest with any of the guards and adventurers on the other side.

Then there was him a level 374 [Panzer Fighter], a rare class that he got after three class changes. A class that heavily boosted his Endurance, Defence and Strength.

Additionally, there was also the two bandit leaders who easily handle the likes of veteran adventurers such as Bignosio.

The outcome of this battle was already clear to everyone. The adventurers that chose to leave, thought about this very possibility and felt their survival chance was better on the other side.

The convoy of the Serene Palace merchant guild on the other hand only had a few people that can fight compared to the bandits. Seeing that everything would be decided after this fight, Cynthia turned around and addressed the people that chose to fight by their side.

"Sigh... wish I could say something inspiring at his moment where we need it the most. But I'm not a warrior hence I could only say a few encouraging words. Guards, adventurers it is only natural that one would value their own lives that is why I do not blame those that want to leave."

She paused and observed all those people that did not move even after being told so. She then continued:

"Since it is like that, I would like all of you to inform of a harsh truth. The enemy's numbers are in hundreds and there are even some strong ones amidst them not to mention the adventurers that have decided to go over on that side. If they all join hands, the chance of our victory is very slim, nevertheless, it is not nil".

"Although I would have preferred to say it in a more confident way, if we do win this battle, I will increase the rewards of every individual by ten times. Additionally, I also promise that the Serene Palace merchant guild would remember this favour, we will also help and back you in the future in any way we can".

Right after finishing her words, she deeply bowed her head. She knew how precarious the position she was in right now and all the benefits and promises that she could give right now, sounded as simply empty words.

The people who remained, looked at each other and nodded their heads, they then brought out their weapons and took a formation. Naturally, Simon was with the members of the convoy, although he found getting involved in all of this bothersome, he couldn't just allow them to get wiped out or else who will navigate a way for him to the capital?

His eyes scanned all the members who remained and stopped briefly on one particular person. The person was none other than the butler who was constantly triggering his instincts. Adalinda was quietly standing by his side enjoying the farce that was soon going to erupt.

After a few minutes passed, the brigand Master's patience ran out. He took out a large bastard sword from his space ring and pointed it towards the convoy.

"Kill everyone else other than the women" his fierce words generated an intense shout from these outlaws behind him who only knew how to shed blood. At his command, dozens of bandits ran forward and charged towards the members of the convoy on the other side.

The adventurers and guards reinvigorated their spirits, ready to meet the bandits that were rushing towards them. At this moment, Chuck who had a rich battle experience and was used to managing a whole guild, stepped forward to take the lead.

"You people better give your all if you want to survive" with a spirited shout, the [Guardian Knight] held a wide shield with a bull carved on it in one hand and held a long sword on the other. His figure was just like a boulder giving a sense of protection to those behind.

"Yeah!!".

As if it was not their first time fighting in coordination, these people after being gathered by Chuck showed an airtight formation that came to them naturally.

Simon was placed at the centre of the formation since everyone believed that his class was a mage. Hence he and Adalinda were stuck in the middle.

"Sigh, is this the situation you had in mind when you said the fun is just going to begin? You do realise that we need their help to reach the capital right? " he asked sighing internally.

"Hehe" the little girl simply acted coyly and smiled.

Simon shook his head and shifted his eyes away which landed on the army of bandits. From his observation, he instantly found the strong ones mixed within them and when some of them charged along with the other bandits, he would target these bandits with his magic.

Clanging noises of metal meeting metal, weapon colliding with weapons rang out. In an instant, the previously peaceful campsite was instantly turned upside down.

In the darkness of the night where the only source of light was the moonlight that sometimes penetrated through the thick layers of canopies, a fierce fight was currently undergoing near an area not far away from a small brook.

CLANG... with a wide swing, one of the silver guards was able to push back a bandit with his lance before another came charging at him.

WHOOSH... wind rustled and quickly formed a small sphere that rushed towards the incoming bandits injuring and halting their momentum somewhat.

Other than Simon, there were three other people at the eye of the formation whose classes were mages. The magic just now was from one of them, Novice tier Wind Magic Mastery [Wind Blast].

The spells from the mages shaved some of the burdens off their shoulders and allowed the warriors to firmly hold the frontlines.

Whenever it would seem that the formation would collapse, flame spears containing an intense heat, would target that specific spot. Each of these flame spears would accurately hit the area where the charge of the bandit was too intense. It was like they had a mind of their own.

These repeated attacks, allowed the warriors on the frontlines to firmly hold their ground. Everybody looked with awe and appreciation in their eyes when they gazed at the caster. These swift spells that did not take more than a few seconds to conjure, came from a young provisional adventurer.

CLANG... Two sickle like blades met a sleek long sword in the front lines that was covered in a green light and was instantly blown away. The female warrior with an alluring body and tight leather garb, used this chance to swiftly end the bandit that had perverted intention revealed on their faces.

The guard commander tightly kept the formation intact and helped wherever she saw the formation was about to break apart. This female warrior who stood tall in this battlefield, utilising her masterful sword techniques, skills and magic, was none other than Alvara the guard commander.

At this moment, she no longer stayed idle by Cynthia's side and kept running around the battlefield killing as many bandits to reduce the pressure on the frontlines. Alvara was a level 359 [Skyguard Warrior], a rare class with a high focus on Agility, Strength and Magic. Along with her mastery in gale magic, she was a force to reckon with.

Her light footsteps would immediately make her disappear from the line of sight of her enemies and her swift attacks could easily pierce through their armours like paper.

The sword that she carried was a [C] rank weapon called Sword of Twisted Vines and was bestowed to her by the mistress of Serene Palace merchant guild. The sword was discovered in a dungeon and according to some master swordsmiths, made from the body of a particular monster that was no less powerful than a disaster class.

One bandit after another fell at her hands in a fierce yet elegant manner.

On the other side of the battlefield, where the frontlines of the convoy were keeping the bandits away from the mages and non-combatants, Chuck and his group shined brilliantly. His rare class

that gave him a well-balanced stats and along with his defence oriented skills, he was like a mountain that stormed waves of bandits.

The battle quickly fell into a stalemate where the brigands couldn't create a ripple no matter how many times or in numbers they charged.

"Dammit, those two are too much for your members to handle. At this rate, they won't even be able to break through their formation" Bignosio cursed.

Despite having an absolute numerical advantage, they were still having difficulty dealing with the small numbers of the convoy.

The Brigand Master glanced at Bignosio and snorted, with his experienced eyes, how could he not notice that the one keeping most of the pressure off of their formation was not the woman warrior nor the grey armoured adventurer but instead the young man in casual black robes at the centre.

His mastery in flame magic was something even the Brigand Master was forced to recognise and the way he accurately halted the strong bandits to join the fray told others that the young man was extremely experienced in fighting groups of enemies.

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'No wonder he was able to deal with two of my bandit leaders, I must kill that man no matter what' recognising the threat that Simon represented, the Brigand Master thought internally.

"Hey, shouldn't you all do something? At this rate, all of your members will get killed" Bignosio commented anxiously.

"Hmph, there is no need to fret over their lives, as long as they can diminish the stamina of their opponents, their lives wouldn't have gone to waste".

The one to answer him was the bandit leader Osbin. He then took out his two stilettos from his waistband and mockingly pointed them at the adventurers who chose to stand on their side.

"Hehe, it's time you guys showed your gratitude for sparing your life. Attack the convoy along with those bandits" Osbin commented while licking one of his stilettos.

"What?!" the adventurers were startled, nonetheless, they did not display any impulsiveness and turned their gazes towards the people fighting the hordes of bandits who were once their teammates.

Although unwilling they still took out their weapons and charged towards the convoy. They knew that doing this will make them fall even low in the eyes of their former comrades; however, they still thought that saving their lives at this crucial moment was paramount.

The bandits that were lazily standing behind the Brigand master, laughed at the adventurers who had decided to betray their own group in thoughts of saving their life. These people that were still not making a move, were each releasing a strong aura. Clearly, this group was the cream of the corps.

"Dammit, to think I have fallen so low as to take orders from a mere bandit. This is all your fault" Bigonsoio cursed incessantly, his petty mind blamed every misfortune that had befallen him on Simon.

After their former teammates joined the bandits in attacking them, the members of the convoy started having an increasingly difficult time holding them back. Their fatigue that have accumulated after facing so many bandits, was starting to show its effect.

The blades and lances of the people at the vanguard were starting to become dull and their movement sluggish. Not to mention the ones attacking them this time were their former teammates made the situation all the more difficult for these people.

SLASH... one of the Silver guards who was unable to dodge an attack, was blown away by the a skill. Finally, there appeared a gap in the formation through which the bandits poured in. The pressure on the other people in the frontlines increased and it looked the formation wouldn't hold for long.

The bandits that had managed to enter the formation immediately darted towards the mages and the non-combatants at the centre trying to disturb the flow and concentration of the members fighting at the front.

However, before they could approach any closer, an alluring figure of a woman in leather armour, appeared before them. The long sword in her hand was shining a faint emerald and her short hair rustled along with the wind.

"[Sword Mastery], [Cutting Enhancement], [Super Enhanced Agility]" Alvara cried inwardly and pressed forward.

Instantly, her figure disappeared from the line of sight of the bandits, her speed was so fast that in a few seconds she appeared in front of the bandits who still had their eyes wide open in surprise before stabbing them with her sword.

THUD...

The others only came to their senses when they heard the body of one of their people coldly hitting the ground. They pointed their sickle-like weapons at the woman, however, she was already gone by then.

Cold sweat trickled down their faces, the bandits looked all around their surroundings. Just then another sound of a body hitting the ground rang out and before long all of the bandits lay on the cold grassy floor with dull eyes and listless bodies.

"Haa... haa" the guard commander took hurried breaths, activating all those skills earlier, took a little toll on her body.

After settling the matter of the bandits breaking in, she swiftly ran towards the injured guard before taking out a small vial from her space ring.

"Drink it, it's a minor healing. potion and get back to your position. No matter the cost, we cannot allow them to break our formation" her words were cold, but right now she had no time to mask her words.

She knew that the enemy was trying to drain their stamina by pitting them against the weaker bandits. Even though she knew what the objectives of the enemies were, she could do nothing but grit her teeth and endure on.

While all of this was happening, the Brigand master threw a sneaky glance at the butler who was quietly standing at the other side with the non-combatants of the convoy. Perceiving the message the butler was sending through his gaze, the Brigand Master narrowed his eyes motioned and with his hands.

At that instant, the bandits that were standing still all this time, finally made their moves. Their powers that weren't any weaker than those experienced and sturdy guards and adventurers, made everyone from the convoy unable to not notice them.

Their presence stuck out like a sore thumb amidst the bandits.

Contrary to the rejoice and delight of the bandits, the members of the convoy had a darkened face. Their face was haggard and their breathing ragged, it was already difficult for them to hold their former comrades back, but now to their dismay, they would also have to deal with these strong bandits now.

The hopes for victory looked extremely bleak now.

BOOM... BOOM

Just then two explosions rocked the area where the bandits were flooding from. When the members of the convoy turned around to looked behind, they saw a young man casually tossing out powerful magic one after the other.

The sight of the young man who stood valiantly without any trace of fear or worry, raised the morale of all the others. His actions were literally saying that the bandits weren't the only ones having strong people at their side.

The reinvigorated spirits of their opponents made the Brigand Leader frown his brows and the mistress of the Serene Palace Merchant Guild to intensely look at his back figure. The white ring on her hand glowed with an unusual white light.

The magic that fell onto the onrushing bandits continuously and fiercely burned until their bodies became scorched black. The strong ones that were able to doge in time still had minor burns from the intense heat released by those flames.

"Keep charging, I want to see how long their formation can hold" the bandit leaders commanded. The magic that was meant to stop their momentum from rising anymore, was broken apart by that call from their two leaders.

"That's right, even if those people have a strong people with them, they still had the bandit leaders, and the brigand Master, there was no way they would lose' the bandits thought internally before attacking the formation once again.

The pressure on the frontlines tripled, it wasn't much for powerful and experienced fighters like Chuck and his team but it was just too much for these adventurers and silver guards to hold back.

SLASH...

"Gurgh..." one of the adventurer spat out a mouthful of blood when two scimitars like weapons managed to pierce through his armour and penetrate his chest. The light in the eyes of the despairing adventurer became dim before his cold body hit the floor.

After the first injury, the convoy had suffered their first casualty. Subsequently, one after the other adventurer and silver guards succumbed to the tension and fatigue. Before long, the entire formation came apart and bandits exploited that to flood in.

"Tremor Magic Mastery- [Heavy Earth Guard]" with a coarse roar, Chuck manipulated the small pebbles and rocks around him. His body was just like a magnet that pulled all of the rocks towards him.

They all stuck to his body like a tightly packed armour and before anyone could marvel at this scene, a five-meter tall human golem appeared in front of everyone.

"Haaaaah" with an energetic shout, he brought down the fist of the armoured golem down on the bandits.

BOOM... many of the bandits were blown away, their bodies were just like kites with their strings cut. A wide dent had appeared at the place where the fist had landed and the ground trembled from the force for a while.

When he was about to bring another of those attacks, two sharp attacks came targeting his face and legs. Chuck was forced to stop his attacks midway and defend his face from those attacks.

Although the [Heavy Earth Guard] gave him a strong defence, those parts that were still popping out from the golem like his head, were still vulnerable and hence can be exploited.

The Human golem that Chuck had transformed into, was just like a fortress, powerful and sturdy but at the same time, it was extremely slow. the Two attacks that came flying at the human golem, achieved nothing other than managing to carve some scars on it. Nonetheless, it was enough to halt the momentum of the golem.

The two bandit leaders after stopping Chuck's attack, sneered at him.

"Why don't you play with us Chuck Remington" Osbin stated while Grime repeatedly nodded his head.

"You know my name?" Chuck inquired maintaining his awareness of the surrounding.

"Haha, you must be kidding, who doesn't know the fame of Chuck Remington from the Sea God's Trident Guild," osbin said shrugging his shoulders.

"That's right, I also heard a rumour saying that you had become too complacent with your achievement and let it get into your head that led to the disaster of almost all of your guild members dying in an exploration. Seeing you bring only two people, I wonder if the rumours were really true?" Grime mocked

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"You dare to mock our leader" the two members fighting the bandits alongside Chuck, became immediately enraged when they heard the blatant insult.

They shouted at their enemies and were about to engage with the two bandit leaders when Chuck hurriedly stopped them.

"Stop, there is no need to argue with them. I can handle these two, you two go and help the others" the former branch leader of the Sea God's Trident said.

While they had absolute trust on Chuck, they still hated the fact that they couldn't smash the enemies with their own, they turned around and obeyed his command nonetheless.

"It won't be easy for you all to take us down" Cuck commented offhandedly and prepared to engage the two when he saw the snickering smiles on their face. A bad premonition hit him but he did not know where it originated from.

"Is that so... but that's alright, our job is only to stop you. As for destroying you, someone is already on to it" Osbin remarked.

Just after his words fell, a stifled cry of a woman rang out from the centre of the formation. In front of everyone's surprised eyes, Cynthia the mistress of the Serene Palace Merchant Guild and also their client, at this moment had her neck tightly clenched by none other than the hands of her own butler.

"Ugh" Cynthia whose entire body was above the ground, couldn't help but emit some painful cries. Her beautiful face that could instantly smitten any man, was pale white and masked with pain.

"Kehehe, Miss Cynthia please do not trouble others anymore and simply accept your fate. Your destiny was already sealed since the moment you entered this northern outlaw forest" Jeeves smiled delightedly.

Perhaps his friendly smile gave others the chill, they all shuddered at this moment.

"JEEVES... you bastard how dare you betray the Miss?" Alvara who was busy pushing the bandits back, cried out loud the moment she saw Jeeves claw the mistress by her neck.

"Kehehe, what is the guard commander saying, when did I ever betray the miss? I was trying my best but I couldn't save her from the hands of the bandits. Kuh, it hurts me greatly to see the mistress die by their hands" the butler explained melodramatically his hands on her neck tightened slowly.

"You scoundrel, I'll kill you" extreme winds generated around the guard commander and her pretty face was no longer calm. She hastily utilised all of her skills and her figure blinked towards Jeeves with the swiftness of a tempest.

The [C] tier long sword in her hand turned a denser shade of green when extreme amounts of gale magic was poured into it. A faint buzzing vibration spread from her sword and travelled across the air causing a faint noise to emit out.

The sword engulfed in wind magic, was hacked towards the chest of the butler with a piercing swift speed. The attack was so powerful that it could easily drill through multiple large and sturdy boulders.

However, just when the sword was about to contact with his body, Jeeves used his hands like a pincer to grab the edges of the sword.

BANG... a muffled thunder-like sound rang out and instantly pushed Jeeves a few meters back. The power from the attack was enough to destroy the surrounding area until they were gouged out from the ground.

Nevertheless, other than having a severe bleeding from his hand and his tattered clothes, the attack from the guard commander did nothing else.

"Tch, it seems that I am still not used to my powers... argh dammit it hurts" the butler's eyes became red with pain.

He glared at Alvara and snarled "You stupid woman do you think that I won't kill her? If you attack once again I will crush her throat" he pointing at the purple robed woman who was doing her best to escape his grasp.

"Y..you...how did you..get this much...power all of a sudden?" Cynthia barely managed to form some words from her anguish and asked.

"Kehehe... do you think that I will reveal something as important as that? Even if your fate is to die here, you still don't get the privilege to hear all of that" Jeeves laughingly mocked, his grasp on her neck tightened.

Cynthia's snow white skin started turning a shade of red and made it harder for her to breathe. Even though she was slowly being choked, she still continued to glare and question the butler.

"Is this what my Elder Brother planned?".

Her question, finally evoked a minute reaction from Jeeves who did his best to hastily hide it; nonetheless, Cynthia still managed to spot it.

Realising that he had let something important slip, his hands tightened and was just about to rupture her windpipe when an extremely piercing white halo erupted out from her ring and repelled his hand that was holding her neck.

On the other side of the battlefield, the situation had completely turned, the members of the convoy were getting pushed repeatedly unable to hold their ground in front of such odds. From this, one could see how disadvantageous the silver guards and the adventurers were against the bandits.

At this moment, two more people came from the side of the Chuck to support the other parts of the frontlines, nonetheless, it was just like a drop in a bucket of water.

"What do we do Sir Simon?" the mages in the backline who had involuntarily chosen Simon as their leader asked.

The young man analysed the situation around his surroundings and the people engaged in a fierce fight before giving his command.

"You guys take some rest, recover mana and drink some potion. I'll cover for the frontlines in the meantime, after you are done get back to your position and cast your spells and magic to support them. The only reason the convoy is still holding on, is because there are very few people on the side of bandits who could call themselves a mage".

Hearing his words, these people instantly understood how important their magic was at this moment in time. They swiftly sat on the ground and started taking out elixirs and potions that could help them recover their mana.

While they were doing that, they would throw some astonished glances at the young man who was able to easily cast one magic after another. His powers and mastery over the fire element was so high that even while not being the target of the magic, they could still feel the searing heat from it.

Their hearts would pound greatly when imagining the intensity of the flame created within each flame spear. What was even more astonishing for these human mages were that even after casting so many magic, the young man showed no signs of fatigue or slowing down.

"Is it me or does it feel like Sir Simon is enjoying this to you all too?" one of the mages asked his comrade in a hushed voice.

"What nonsense are you saying, can't you see that he is also covering for us? If you are done recovering your mana, go and help him" the other mage reprimanded. He had stars in his eyes whenever his gaze landed at the valiant back of the young man.

Unknowingly to the person concerned, he had become an idol of worship for these mages. While the mages had shut the other person down, never would they be able to imagine that they couldn't have been any closer to the truth.

Indeed, Simon was currently enjoying the rush of experience that he was getting after killing numerous bandits with his spells. He was surprisingly profiting after getting dragged on to the chaos between these two parties.

"Hehh~ quite shameless aren't you? Reaping all the benefits that you can amidst this chaos" Adalinda remarked nonchalantly, her eyes capturing the fight occurring all around her. This was the situation she was hoping to see after getting bored out of her mind from this constant travelling.

Simon was sure that the little girl had already forgotten their initial objective of tagging along with the convoy in the first place.

Suddenly, a commotion erupted from behind where the non-combatants of this convoy were. Gasps of surprise and a pained groan of a woman who was suddenly grasped in the neck by an old man donning a butler's suit.

Another blow was dealt to the already frail formation when the client that they had to keep safe at all cost, was suddenly taken as a hostage and that too by none other a person who was travelling with them all this while.

Simon's eyes widened, If he wasn't so busy enjoying the rush of mystical energy within him, he would have been able to react when the butler suddenly grabbed hold of Cynthia's neck. Thus the moment he realised that the client's life was in danger and the trip might have very well been forsaken it was already too late.

Even the guard commander who had reacted the fastest wasn't able to snatch the mistress of the Serene Palace merchant guild from the butler's hands.

The old man who had repeatedly given him a feeling of foreboding, had finally shown his true powers. Seeing the butler's hand tighten around Cynthia's neck, Simon couldn't help but think of the worst possible situation.

p If that woman died here, it would take them longer if they wanted to reach the capital and find that disciple of this little grandaunt thus he couldn't allow the woman to die.

Just when he was deliberating stepping over, the situation took another turn that surprised all the onlookers. A loud sound along with a white flash of light erupted out and forced the butler a couple of meters.

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BANG...

Jeeves felt a powerful force hit his hand making it completely numb. His astonished eyes looked at the white halo that had suddenly taken the form of a beast.

The creature formed from the silver-white halo, stood mightily in front of Cynthia like a guardian, its majestic aura overflowed around the surrounding giving it a kingly presence. Its ferocious eyes that could scare even some adults, were currently glaring at Jeeves.

It stood well above seven meters tall and looked just like a lion, the king of beasts. Although it looked illusory, its mere presence was enough to warrant everyone's caution.

At this moment, the swift figure of Alvara rushed in between.

"King Leo thanks for saving the Mistress once again" She bowed towards the illusory beast called King Leo and hastily ran to support Cynthia who was gasping for breath.

"Thanks" supported by Alvara, the mistress of the serene Palace merchant guild stood on her feet.

"Un... I leave the rest to you, this king shall go back to preserve his strength".

Leo's majestic voice sounded out. Mysteriously, the illusory body of the beast called King Leo, dissipated and went back inside the ring on Cynthia's finger. The white light emitting from the ring visibly dimmed down.

"Miss, you should get back. Let me deal with this ingrate first" Seeing that Cynthia was gently caressing the ring on her hand, she called out.

After her Miss backed down where she was comparatively safe, next the guard commander focused her gaze on the butler.

"What was that thing right now? Was it an artefact?" Jeeves asked peeved by the turn of the situation.

To his question, Alvara simply reiterated his previous words back at him "You are not privy to such information".

Simon who was about to take action, halted his steps. Thankfully the purple dress woman was not completely unarmed; there was something on her person that was able to repel her assailant at the last moment.

When the being that had helped Cynthia showed its appearance, even Simon was forced to give it a careful look, his eyes narrowed. That was because the illusory beast that had appeared, gave off a presence that even gave him a demon viscount a heavy pressure.

The moment it appeared, the chaotic battlefield all around, descended into a complete silence. Everyone stared with wide eyes at the beast that stood tall and mightily at around seven meters and released of majestic aura that seeped out at every corner of the place.

What was even more astonishing was that this beast who was referred to as King Leo by the guard commander, could speak the human language. That alone told everyone that the beast that had appeared out of nowhere, was extremely intelligent and sentient being.

"Hohh~ I didn't expect that woman to have such a thing around her. No wonder that ring kept on catching my attention, who knew this was a high class soul ring" Adalinda murmured silently.

From her words, Simon could feel some slight amusement and surprise.

"Do you know what that thing is?" he asked intrigued by the sudden appearance of the beast.

Seeing the interest in his eyes, the little girl couldn't help but snort.

"You don't have to feel that amazed, that thing there is nothing but a mere soul fragment that obstinately refuses to die. It might have been powerful once in its prime when it still retained its

body but now it's just a soul without any of its former power that could die out any moment if not for the ring".

Simon's eyes twitched when he heard those words from Adalinda, a beast that could suppress even a Demon Viscount like him even without any of its former power, was nothing? Only a person like Adalinda who couldn't be judged by common sense could utter such sentence.

While it may be true that Simon was curious about the soul that Adalinda had mentioned, he was more interested in the ring that she had focused more on. A ring that is capable of preserving a soul, how valuable of a treasure that must be.

While it may be true that he was engrossed by the appearance of that mighty beast, he didn't neglect this chance when the bandits were distracted to swiftly throw multiple flame arrows.

BOOM...BOOM..BOOM...this time, even those powerful bandits weren't able to dodge in time and got hit squarely. Needless to say, an attack from Simon even though it wasn't thrown using his full strength was enough for these bandits with Normal classes to be fatally injured.

In a span of a few dozen minutes since the fight started, multiple notifications alerting him of his level up, rang inside his head.

"Let us assist you Sir Simon, we have recovered most of our mana" the mages that were sitting down behind him after recovering their expended mana, said casting their spells at the enemy one after the other.

Although the situation looked dire for them a few seconds ago, it seemed that they were still not without any cards remaining. A faint ray of hope lit within the hearts of these members of the convoy who were doing their best to fend off the bandits.

Just when Simon was thinking of reducing their number even more, one of the silver guards who was unable to stop the bandit's march, allowed some of them to slip through.

An attack that carried sharp blade light and killing intent flew towards Simon, at an extremely fast speed. Seeing that, other people who were close to the area, hurriedly shouted in warning towards the young adventurer mage whose presence was extremely crucial in determining the victor of this battle.

A mage class that focuses more on Magic stat, is highly vulnerable when faced with attacks in a close range. Unless they have a rare class or are above a certain level, most mages are weak to close combat.

This knowledge was something that was a common knowledge to all humans hence even though they knew the young man was strong, they couldn't help but worry when they saw an attack fly towards him from a sneaky angle.

Of course, Simon who had honed his battle senses in the extremely dangerous Ghastly Winding Forest, was able to perceive the attack even before it came near him. With a quick sidestep, he was able to easily dodge the attack with minimal movement that left no openings for his enemy to exploit.

After dodging the attack, his gaze landed on the assailant who was grinding his teeth in annoyance at his failed attack. The person bore a massive grudge against him.

Who could the Person be other than Bignosio? After failing to kill Simon with a surprise attack, he clicked his tongue before he and his team came charging towards the young man with their weapons drawn.

"You guys step back" Simon ordered the three mages behind to hurriedly retreat. Though they looked hesitant, they still did not refuse his command and obediently backed down.

On another part of the battle near the centre of the formation, Alvara was fiercely engaged in a battle with the butler after the guardian spirit retreated back into the ring.

Sword met fists and surprisingly made clanging noises like that of two metals colliding together. Intense spark generated and the swift attacks of the two made the audience hold their breath.

CLANG... after a loud exchange that even made the air around them burst apart, the two of them disengaged.

Huff...huff... Alvara took hurried breaths, before arranging her posture and stance, in contrast to her, the butler was smiling in delight as he felt the vast energy within him.

"Little girl, you are no match for the current me, give up" Jeeves laughed. His arrogant tone seemed to look down on her.

"Hmph, that is still yet to be decided. I won't lose to someone who is using a borrowed power" the guard commander remarked placing her long sword in front of her.

Jeeves brows twitched at that comment and his eyes held a violent fury. He was more than aware of the state of his body, the strength that he had been displaying until now, was not his own and could even be said as a borrowed power.

He knew his past self was just a weak old butler who had no power and battle experience. That is why after getting this strength and knowing the sweet taste of power, he absolutely hated it when others called it a borrowed power.

The attacks Jeeves erupted out in his fury, were ruthless and filled with killing intent. Each of his claw attacks and punches, were filled with enough power to fatally injure Alvara if it landed on any of her vital areas.

Fortunately, the butler was a beginner at fighting and thus allowed Alvara to have a breathing room. She was trying her best to exhaust her enemy when from the corner of her eyes she saw a group of people who were their former comrades on this trip attack the young man whose magic even astonished her.

'This is bad' the guard commander thought internally, this lapse in her concentration allowed Jeeves who was single-mindedly throwing his attacks to land a blow.

BANG... Alvara was pushed a few meters back when a punch landed on her guts. A line of blood trickled down her lovely face.

"Little girl, don't you know that you should focus on the enemy in front of you" Jeeves sneered.

The guard commander had no mind to pay attention to him, her eyes were focused on the young man who was currently being besieged by a group of seven people.

While inwardly thinking that she had to do something since they cannot afford to lose such a powerful mage at this point in time, the scene that occurred next, made her completely befuddled.

Bignosio and his team who were trying to pincer Simon from all sides, were shocked to find that the person himself was charging towards him. Mocking him for a fool, Bignosio brandished his axe made of white silver and utilised his skills to deal a devastating blow [Wide Berserk Slash].

Instantly, the blade of his axe took a crimson hue and his powers bolstered manifold after the multitudes of skills he had activated. Veins bulged in his forehead and he roared "Die".

The axe came smashing down on the onrushing young mana's head like a guillotine, however, at that moment his figure had completely disappeared. The axe smashed nothing but solid ground and created a small fissure.

'What happened? He suddenly disappeared from my line of sight' while these were Bignosio's thoughts, miserable shrieks of people and dull thuds of something hitting the ground, rang out from beside him.

Turning around he saw two of his teammates lying down on the floor with blood splattered all around.

"W-what" Bignosio's voice just fell when one more body hit the ground, a wide gaping hole on his abdomen that was not covered by his armour.

"Y-you how did you?" the disbelieving adventurer asked. Simon did not bother to answer, his cold callous eyes looked at them as if they were just a bunch of ants.

"leader, we cannot defeat him... let's retreat" the other three who were alive, felt their hearts tighten whenever they saw the somewhat crimson eyes of the provisional adventurer.

'Retreat? After that shameful display previously, will I have to run away once again? NO' Bignosio whose rationality was slowly seeping away from him due to the usage of [Berserk] skill was unable to just leave things like that. His eyes were starting to turn beastly when suddenly an ingenious idea occurred to him.

"After joining hands with the bandits, do you think we will have any place remaining if we retreat now? Just do as I say and attack that bastard together" Bignosio roared, his voice was laced with hatred and grievances.

The other three remaining members of his team grounded their teeth, knowing that there was no place for retreat, they pressed forward and attacked the young man as ordered.

Seeing that his team was doing as they were told and keeping the young man busy, Bignosio shifted his attention towards the little girl who always tagged along with that man. From his perspective or during their entire journey, the little girl never once displayed her ability which made him think that the little girl was the weak link of their opponent.

And as long as he captures her, the young man wouldn't be able to retaliate. Thinking till here a cruel smile crept on his face and he couldn't help imagining the latter's helpless and begging face.

"You were the one who forced me to do it" cursing, Bignosio utilised this chance when Simon was momentarily held down by his teammates, to make his way towards the little girl.

Simon who was engaged with the three people, knew what the objective of his enemy was nonetheless, he did not try to stop him and instead allowed that fool to dig his own grave.

Reality was indeed as he had expected, Adalinda did not even spare the man who was rushing towards her with his blade drawn a glance and simply observed the fights occurring all across the campsite.

"Little girl quietly surrender before you experience the pain of being cut" Bignosio called out, his body was just about to approach a few meters near her when suddenly he saw her tangerine eyes finally land on him.

At that moment, he felt his body halting all of a sudden and no matter how he tried to move it, his nerves wouldn't listen to him. It was almost like the body was not his anymore.

"W-w-what did you do?" Bignoiso asked perplexed.

Adalinda spared him a last glance, before moving away, her departing words sounded beside his ears.

"Although your mind has been blocked by irrationality, your body is nonetheless honest. Your instincts detected danger and hurriedly pushed all breaks. Well, all of this explanation is meaningless to a corpse".

"Corpse?".

Bignosio parroted, feeling puzzled. Right after, his eyes became blurred and he lost all focus. Suddenly, his body erupted with blood and before long small pieces of his body fell on the ground.

Thud..thud..thud..thud..thud... the sound of flesh hitting the ground was dull and inconspicuous amidst this chaotic battlefield. However, to those that were eyeing this battle, the scene looked hellish and gross to the extreme and gave chills that originated from their souls.

Nobody, whether the convoy members or the bandits, could stop themselves from feeling afraid when witnessing a scene as abrupt as that.

Three more bodies fell onto the ground after Simon spotted them spacing out and made short work of them. However, he was not in the spotlight of everyone's attention and his fight was a little lackadaisical when compared to the little girl.

He smiled bitterly looking at the unrecognisable remains of the foolish man who had been cut thousands of times at that fraction of a second without anyone noticing. The power to do something like that, was monstrous, no it should be even above that realm.

Forget about others, even Simon a demon Viscount wasn't able to see any attack land on the big-nosed adventurer's body, not to mention thousands of them. If it was him facing Adalinda's attack, he had no doubt in his mind that he too would be meeting a similar fate.

That is how big of a power and level gap there was between them.

After the initial shock, the chaotic battlefield became a little more silent with very few fights happening all around, clearly, the scene from earlier was enough to cower all of them. Nobody dared slight the presence of this little girl who could do something as incomprehensible as that.

The fight which ended even before it could start, wasn't far from the centre of the formation where the non-combatants were. Cynthia who had watched the entire thing from start to end, looked on with wide eyes as a peculiar white shrouded her pupils.

The frontline of the formation where Chuck and the other warriors were, had developed into a meat grinding machine. Numerous bandits that came charging were impaled with spears, cut with swords or blasted into oblivion by the magic.

Those former adventurers who now sided with the bandits, couldn't help but curse themselves incessantly when they saw the situation. Although dire, the outlook didn't look hopeless for the convoy after some people who were hiding their strength showed their true powers.

Their eyes which were initially drawn to Simon for being able to fight in close combat, even without using magic, was suddenly pulled towards the little girl who had made her move for the first time.

Even though they do not know how powerful the little girl was, the strength or rather the peculiarity that she had displayed, was enough to put her on the list of strongest people they had ever seen. Plus there was still the guard commander, the former leader of the branch guild of Sea God's Trident and the provisional adventurer who not only was adept with magic, but even his close combat was on the level of a veteran or an expert.

If those strong people still stood on the side of the convoy, even if the probability were low, the convoy still had the chance to make a comeback. Realising this didn't make the situation any better for the deserters, all they could do was bite the bullet and do their best to survive the situation.

At the forefront of the formation, a seven-meter big human golem was fiercely engaged in combat against two enemies. The two enemies were in fact the two bandit leaders whose powers were only second to the Brigand Master.

BOOM... land trembled as a huge fist imprint appeared on the ground. The huge fists of the golem was enough to even crush a boulder much less the fragile and weak human body. After the attack landed on nothing but empty ground, Chuck pulled his hand back and looked at his enemies who were as slippery as a loach.

"Hehe, Chuck Remington though that battle form of yours is powerful, it is extremely slow. There is no point in having this much strength if the attack does not even connect" one of the bandit leaders named Osbin sniggered.

Chuck did not bother retorting and instead smiled widely. The wide hands of the rock golem that he had assimilated with, dug into the soil deeply.

"Haaaaahhh" with a spirited shout, cracks started around the area and a few meters of land was slowly lifted up. Grabbing the piece of land with its two hands, the human golem threw it towards the rushing bandits at the distance.

BOOOM... the piece of land flew and crashed into the hordes of bandits that weren't able to dodge in time. Clouds of dust rose up after the crash hiding the hideous bodies that lay within. Even without seeing with their eyes, anybody could tell the final outcome of those bandits that were crushed by that huge piece of land.

"Even if you can dodge my attacks, your subordinates can't. So come at me if you don't want your entire brigand to get wiped out" Chuck taunted. He knew that if the convoy wanted to grab the victory he had to keep these two busy so that they can't go after his teammates who were already on the brink of exhaustion.

While he was busy engaging blows with the two bandit leaders, he always spared a part of his awareness around his surroundings. Suddenly, he felt a presence that he was keeping his eyes on all this time, disappearing.

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BOOM...BOOM...BOOM..

It would be a lie if Simon said that he wasn't having blast right now. The amount of experience or rather the mystical energy flowing within him was so much that it allowed him to level up multiple times.

Using this chance Simon also conjured his Electro Magic in hope of increasing its mastery. Unlike the orcs high defence, these human bandits were much more weaker with different allocations in stats.

Although there would be some who could endure his attacks, none of them managed to dodge his electro attacks that were extremely fast. Not only that, his novice tier electro magic was also becoming faster and more lethal.

Feeling the changes, Simon was delighted, he finally knew which direction he should walk on to progress his Electro Magic. Unlike how he evolved his novice tier Fire magic to intermediate Flame magic by condensing and increasing the heat, electro magic relied more on swiftness and density of mana to evolve.

Excitement rose within his heart, when he felt these minute changes. Simon was just about spam a few more of his electro magic attacks, when something at an insane speed came charging towards him.

He hurriedly took a step back and was barely able to dodge the attack that swept by his face.

"Kuh, you can even dodge that huh? Seriously what kind of insane rare class did you get?" a rough voice that had little do with manners, rang out.

A brawny figure wearing mismatched armours came in front of him. He had a bald head and carried a huge hammer on his back. The person that rushed up to Simon was none other than the Brigand Master who finally decided to make his move.

After sparing a glance at the still and silent Adalinda, the brigand master focused his gaze on the young man in black robes and questioned.

"You are the guy who did a number on some of my bandit leaders right?".

Simon simply shrugged his shoulders at those words, he was now sure that the bandit leader he had killed a few days ago had indeed sent a message back.

"Don't play dumb, I know it was you. Did you think that you can get away after laying your hands on my subordinate?" the Brigand Master declared. He then took out his huge hammer and wielded it with one hand.

"Did you think that just having a rare class makes you much more stronger than us?" slamming the hammer onto the ground, the bandit commented.

A small fissure swiftly spread from the area of effect and rushed towards the spot where Simon was standing.

BOOM... like a geyser, flames erupted out from the fissure burning and scorching everything around.

The young man nimbly dodged the attack, landed a few meters back and observed the hammer on the hands of the bandit.

CHIII... at this moment, the hammerhead had turned crimson with heat and smokes continuously came out of it. The effect earlier was the due of the hammer on his hands.

 When Simon used [Analysis] on the hammer, his guess was immediately proven right. The hammer was a [C] tier weapon that bestowed quite a few skills along with mastery in Flame Magic. That was how the brigand master was able to use flame magic even though most of his stats were allocated on strength.

Comparing the Scorching Hammer, it was on the same level as the Twin Blades that was used by Laris.

Seeing that his attacks did nothing, the Brigand Master swung his hammer wildly. Muffled sounds of wind blasting apart could be heard every time the weapon was swung against the wind showcasing the immense strength of the wielder.

That was not all, after every successive swing, the friction from the air would heat up the hammer until its entire dull grey body became a flaring red.

"[Heavy Scorching Blast]" the brigand master roared out internally, with another fierce swing from his hammer, a huge column of heat that was shaped like the weapon itself, came attacking the young man at a breakneck speed.

Everything about the attack whether it was power, heat, momentum or speed was on a different level. Even Simon with his high agility, felt it was nigh impossible to dodge the attack without suffering any recoil.

WOOOSH... the attack containing a terrible momentum, approached near gouging the ground along with it. Just when it was a meter away from him, Simon took out something from the emerald ring on his hand and brandished it wildly.

Immediately, thunderous noises rang out around the area and a flash of blue appeared amidst the glaring red.

Simon's hands which were tightly holding on to the Twin Blades, clashed with the column of flame, his mana that was poured wildly into it, was able to generate a column of lightning that was not any weaker than the hammer's.

BOOOOOM...

The two attacks collided and immediately caused all of the sound around the campsite to drown out. The air around the collision of the two attacks was burst apart and a huge shockwave containing flames and lightning, spread around the surrounding.

Those unfortunate enough to be in the proximity of the two, were sent flying as they reeled in pain. The battle between these two parties was nothing like the ones occurring all around the campsite. If a weaker person got caught up in it, suffering heavy injuries would be the least of their worries.

After the power fluctuation from the two attacks died down, the two figures that were facing each other, came into everyone's view. All their focus were strained onto the two, confronting each other since this fight very as well be the fight that decides the victor of this battle.

"Tsk, you bastard it seems that you enjoy hiding your strength. Who knew that you still had a weapon like that. Not bad, after I kill you in the most gruesome way, I will keep those blades as a prize" the Brigand Master declared arrogantly, supporting the huge hammer on his shoulder.

He did not bother to suppress his voice hence everyone was able to hear his declaration loud and clear. The bandits especially, rejoiced after hearing those confident words from their master, their morale that was at its lowest, suddenly spiked.

Simon did not retort and calmly observed the blades that he had kept with him after defeating Laris. The Twin Blades although [C] tier, was honestly not that bad but it still lacked heavily when compared to his Crimson Blazing Flame Blade.

Nonetheless, it wasn't as gaudy and eyes-catching as his [A] tier weapon and thus could be used in situations such as this. Clearly, if he had brought out his weapon, it would have attracted lots of unwanted attention towards him and might even caused him some future troubles.

The [C] tier Twin Blades although not as precious as the [A] tier weapon, it was still a highly valuable weapon that could be afforded strong and reputable people.

Simon swung the twin blades a few times and tried to get familiar with it, the weapon was something that he had kept and refined to be used as his spare weapon. Thanks to him using

[Ga??????] (previously [Gacha]) every single day, he was able to stock quite a bit of Amegdite Crystals that are used for refinement.

Using that, he was able to bring the refinement level of the twin Blades all the way up to tier five. Now the weapon, could be said much better and stronger than what it was previously.

Although refinement did not increase the tier of the weapon, it was still better than most [C] tier weapons out there and could even be compared to some low quality [B] tier weapons. To put it bluntly, after that exchange Simon was able to tell that his weapon was better than that Scorching hammer of his opponent.

Giving it a few more swings, Simon felt the shape and structure of the Lightning magic the weapon bestowed. The main reason for him taking out the Twin Blades was because he wanted to feel and experience more of the intermediate tier lightning magic to advance his electro magic.

Additionally, since he couldn't use his laws in his human form, he could only rely on his spare at this moment. That is why he in his unilateral judgement of things, forgot that there was one additional person present on the battlefield who recognised this weapon.

After a moment of silence, both the party started moving at the same time. From their clash, one could see that both of them had a rich battle experience with how they avoided or deflected each other attacks and counterattacked at the slightest movement.

The fierce battle attracted quite a few gazes and even Cynthia's eyes were tightly locked into this clash. A crimson hammer and lightning laced blades made numerous blade arcs and blunt attacks that tore apart the surrounding air, land and forced all of the onlookers dozens of meters back.

those that were fighting in the distance, disengaged themselves and moved back. Nobody wanted to get entangled in a battle where they could die at any moment.

RUMBLE... BOOM... flames and lightning wreaked havoc and turned the whole area around the centre of the campsite a complete mess.

"To think that person would be able to hold off against the Brigand Master for so long..."Osbin the bandit leader murmured something, his eyes continuously swept towards the battle between those two.

"Shouldn't we help him?" the other bandit leader Grime who has been fretting over it, asked.

"Don't be stupid if we head over there, we will only earn the master's ire. Besides, he is not fighting seriously and has not used all of his powers" Osbin who had fought with the man for the position of the Brigand Master quite a lot of time, knew how powerful he was.