

## D. of Pride 551

Chapter 551 551- The 34th Floor, The Pit And The Mysterious Ruins (2)

It was understandable since none of his subordinates were adventurers, in fact, even he was confused as to what their motive was when he saw them doing something like that at first. However, after he closely observed the people selected to lead the charge on the different floors he came to an understanding and couldn't help but laugh.

"Master what is so funny?" Alice asked perplexed.

"It's nothing, just that I found it funny seeing how these top guilds are so conceited. Coleus you asked me why they spread their numbers and sent the weaker ones to explore the floors? That is because, from their perspective, it is a good chance to let their younger generation gain experience and compete against each other to see who clears the floors faster than the others".

Simon explained, he was familiar with some of the adventurers displayed in the window. They were the participants of the 'battle of the finest' tournament which he had witnessed when he went to the capital of the kingdom on one of his journey with Adalinda.

Fate worked very mysteriously, counting the previous incident and the event that was occurring now, both the times he was watching them fight. However this time, he was no longer an observer and this was not the capital but a dungeon that was under his rule.

Another thing that was different was their strength. Previously, their strength wasn't that far apart, Simon's level might have been lower but his combat prowess was no weaker than theirs. However, now it had changed completely.

Simon had risen to a level that they couldn't hope to match even in their wildest dreams all thanks to the first fragment of pride. This fragment that increases the experience gained after every successful battle was one of the reasons why Simon could level up so fast.

If it was any other demon given the same opportunities, it would be physically impossible for them to grow so much in such a short period of time.

Anyways, if it was before, Simon would have perhaps considered them as opponents. However, right now they were nothing more than DP grinding livestock for him.

"What do you plan to do?" Irene asked, unlike the others who showed various emotions looking at the intruders, she had that calm and collected aura around her. It was as if everything that was occurring around her was mundane and nothing could break her peace of mind.

Nonetheless, it wasn't like she was unconcerned, if she was she wouldn't have asked him about his plans. This woman was caring for the dungeon in her own way.

Simon who somewhat understood that after living with her for so long, explained his plans. Well even if he said it was a plan, it was actually very simple and that was to—

"Wait and watch".

Simon smiled at their blank expressions and clarified "We will see what they are planning first before responding to it accordingly. In any case, the first phase of our traps are about to appear, now we just have to wait for the prey to fall for it and enjoy the show".

Everybody around him stared intently at the widows displaying the adventurers. Simon's gaze involuntarily went to a different window that was depicting a dark floor where one dreadful shadow after another was spawned continuously; a wicked smile appeared on his face.

The show was about to get interesting.

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One day later, 20th Floor, Main Camp, largest tent.

The various guild leaders were locked in an intense debate. Usually, other than the vice guild leaders and a few important people from the twenty guilds, no other person was allowed to enter. However, today there was a different face that didn't belong to any of the powerful twenty guilds seated amongst them.

"Xandros, I hope that you are not making up things. What you are saying clearly goes beyond the realm of common sense"..

"That's right, it is absurd that there could be something on the deepest floor of the dungeon that could even threaten us"...

The guild leaders didn't like being underestimated and hurriedly argued back.

"Vice guild leader of the Tyrant Mountain guild, currently your team is the only team in the tower town that has explored the highest number of floors. Can you tell us why you think so?"

Karina asked, her charms was enough to cause these barking guild leaders to immediately shut their mouth.

The new face was none other than Xandros, the vice guild leader of the tyrant mountain guild and also the man who was involved in rescuing the adventurers that were taken hostage when the orcs had invaded the town.

Currently, he was seated around a meeting table as all eyes focused on him. The reason why he was here, was because a few days ago, the staff of the adventurer's association branch came looking for him after he and his party returned to the town after exploring the 40th floor.

That was also when he became aware that a large group of adventurers made up of many different guilds, had also entered the dungeon. The floors became bigger the deeper you went, thus it wasn't unusual for adventurers teams to not bump into each other.

Anyways, the reason why he was here, was because the grey haired man had called for him. Xandros couldn't tell who the man was behind that mask; however, given that he had the ability to manipulate the adventurer's association branch, and put a halt on other adventurer's team from the tower town to dive inside the dungeon, he guessed that the man possessed a high position and authority.

"I have no proof to back my words, it is your own decision to believe my words or not. Me and my team have been able to reach the 40th floor because we were cautious in our every step. The dungeon has shown us far too irregularities, it would be foolish to pit it with the other low ranking dungeons" Xandros stated.

These people here were severely underestimating the dungeon and its dangers. But given their lineup and power, he could understand why that was so.

Gathered in this tent were not only the top five guilds, but also the other big guilds that came right after the top five. Sky Slashing Blade, Six River's Streaks and even Absolute Sea Guild.

These guilds were all hegemony of their own territory and produced some of the finest adventurers of the kingdom of Ellesmere. Not to mention the talent from their guilds always were within the top thirty positions in the battle of the finest tournament.

His Tyrant mountain guild also fell within that rank and apparently, his guild was also contacted by the top five guilds and this mysterious grey haired man to join their expedition. However, the guild leader had left the decision to Xandros who was already leading a team to tackle the dungeon.

"I see... you are a prudent man Xandros. Since you have put it like this, I believe your words must hold some truth. We will proceed with caution, expedition leader Brutus, spread this message of Sir Xandros to every adventurer" the grey haired man spoke calmly.

Brutus nodded his head, it was a done decision and approved by everyone that he will be the expedition leader.

"On that note, Xandros what do you say about your tyrant mountain guild joining our campaign? I have already asked this once to your guild leader; however, he put the decision making on your shoulders. If your team is to guide us, it would save us a lot of time and energy. Of course, your guild will be compensated with the same reward I promised everyone".

The words of the grey haired man made Xandros frown his brows, no reward can be better than keeping their life intact. He was just about to shake his head when the grey haired man spoke once again.

"Don't be so hasty to reject my offer, listen to the rewards that I have to offer first. If your guild joins the expedition, the reward I'm offering is .....".

Whoosh... Even though there was no wind inside the tent, Xandros felt as if a cold wind brushed past his body, opening his pores and waking every cell of his body.

The tent was covered with an unusual silence, each of the guild leaders had various emotions fluctuating in their faces. Even though they had already heard about the reward, it still managed to break their composure every time they heard it.

Greed, desire, yearning, excitement, ruthlessness and arrogance, all kinds of emotions could be seen in the eyes of the guild leaders. Xandros was no exception, a reward of this level, forget about his tyrant mountain guild, even guilds stronger than his would readily agree and do anything as long as they can get their hands on that reward.

Perhaps the only one who was not affected by this revelation was the former vice guild master of the sea god's trident, Dalton. His hands clenched into a fist without anyone noticing.

It took an inhumane level of patience for Xandros to suppress the raging emotion in his heart. He took a few deep breaths to calm his mind and asked with a shaky voice that suggested anything but otherwise.

"Is that true?"

The grey haired man smiled, he very much liked the expression of the current Xandros. Spreading his hands, he said grandly—

"Of course why would I like to you all? As long as you help me conquer this dungeon, each of your guilds would be provided with one of those. So... how about it? A reward like this isn't something that you can come across every day. As long as you help me, you would be able to enjoy that reward".

Chapter 552 [Bonus ] 552- The 34th Floor, The Pit And The Mysterious Ruins (3)

Words like these were like a devil's enticement, nobody with a sane mind in this world would be able to reject that offer. Xandros finally understood why even the top five guilds were hooked. They too were after that reward, a low ranking dungeon had no allure to them.

If not for the promised reward, they wouldn't even bother sending all of their manpower here.

It would be a lie to say that Xandros wasn't enticed, he too wanted the reward. But he did not give his answer immediately and considered various aspects in his head first.

The thing that was bugging him the most, was why the grey haired man would put a reward as rare and precious as that instead of keeping it for himself. However, before he could come to an answer, an uproar seemed to have erupted outside the tent as a couple of adventurers rushed inside.

"Who dares to intrude inside the main tent? Don't you know that an important meeting is going on?" one of the guild leaders shouted in rage at the people who had just barged in.

"We are extremely sorry to interrupt the meeting of the guild masters. However, an incident had occurred, the guild masters need to see it" they reported, their voice was urgent.

"What is it Alvin?"

The guild master of the Assassin guild asked. These people were from his guild, they were tasked with the mission to follow all the other tertiary teams and report every incident that is happening back to the main camp.

"Guild master Cassius, the seven tertiary teams that went ahead, we have lost contact with all of them" Alvin reported with trepidation.

The moment those words fell, the eyes of the various guild leaders of the twenty guilds went wide. After a momentary stun, they bombarded Alvin with questions.

Although the tertiary teams were mostly made up of newbie adventurers, they also had their talented younger generation and the future successors of their guilds. Losing them would be tantamount to crippling the guilds.

"What happened why can't you contact them? My son is there".

"My disciple also went ahead, did you lose all contact with them?"...

Alvin's body trembled intensely facing the pressure of the many guild leaders.

"Everyone calm down. Alvin explained clearly what had happened. The last report that we got was a few hours ago stating that all the seven tertiary teams are currently gathering on floor 34th with the Savannah Beast Guild reaching the place first. Are you saying that something had happened in those few hours?" the guild leader of the assassin guild, Cassius mediated the situation for everybody.

"Guild leader... the last report I got from the units that were sent to follow the seven tertiary teams said that they had found a mysterious ruin on the 34th floor. I told them that there was no need for them to take risks and wait for our primary team which will be arriving there soon".

"This was about an hour ago... I have tried to contact all seven units after that; however, none of them are answering the call".

Alvin had a grim face as he recounted everything that he was informed about. With that report, the atmosphere around the entire tent had changed. Many of the guild leaders were unable to keep calm at this moment and hurriedly got up from their seats.

It looked like if nobody stopped them, they would storm with their teams to the 34th floor.

"Calm down everyone" Just as the guild leaders of Sky Slashing Blade and Absolute Sea guild were about to leave the tent, the grey haired man spoke up. He then turned towards the calm Brutus and Karina and asked.

"You two must have some items that could check on the life status of your members right?".

When asked that oddly specific question, the two guild leaders smiled bitterly and nodded their heads.

When the other guild leaders saw that they turned towards Brutus and Karina. Brutus being the expedition leader, sighed and took out one of the treasures of his guild in front of everyone's eyes.

An oddly red coloured fang rested on his palm.

"This is the fang of the Blood Saint Tiger" When Brutus introduced it, it pulsed with a crimson light that made the blood of all the guild masters inside the tent boil.

Everyone's eyes widen a little, even the grey haired man was shocked when the thing came out. Everyone in the kingdom of Ellesmere was aware that the Savannah Beast Guild possessed a beast inheritance that they passed down to their younger members from generation to generation.

However, this was the first time they had heard the name of the beast the Savannah Beast Guild got the inheritance from.

A beast inheritance doesn't just form inside any beast, it is so rare that even if you kill hundreds of thousands of beasts, you wouldn't find any that was able to form its own inheritance.

Only a beast that possesses a human like intelligence, whose bloodline has reached a certain level of purity, is able to form its beast inheritance. The beasts that match these criteria are at the very least Catastrophe class.

Forget about killing them to get their beast inheritance, a class of that level was enough to flatten a kingdom like theirs. And even if one manages to somehow bring down that beast, a beast of human like intelligence would rather destroy its core stone where the beast inheritance resides rather than let others get their hands on it.

From this one could understand how difficult it was to get a beast inheritance, this at the same time also made others envious of the Savannah beast guild.

Seeing that he had the eyes of every people inside the tent on him, Brutus explained. He did not think much about their greed filled envious eyes since the beast inheritance has already been refined in their bloodline.

"As you all know, the bloodline of our Savannah Beast guild is a little special. The fang in my hand is our guild treasure and also a gift from lord Blood Saint tiger. Only someone who is appointed as the guild leader of our guild is allowed to hold it".

"It holds a special property and that is only the person who has received the inheritance of the Blood saint tiger, is allowed to place a drop of their blood on it. As long as the person is alive, the fang will always remain red. I hope that this is enough to assure the guild masters that the teams down there are still alive".

Brutus explained, he could tell that his son Marcus was still alive and fine or else the blood red colour in the fang wouldn't be this deep.

"Guild leader is speaking the truth, I too hold a similar item that allows me to know the life status of my disciple. However, it is not as fancy as the fang of the blood saint tiger" Karina attested to Brutus' words.

The various guild leaders calmed down for a moment and sat back in their seats.

Karina turned to face Brutus and congratulated him with a smile.



"It is said that other than the first guild leader of the Savannah Beast guild, no other members have managed to place their blood on the guild treasure. Since Sir Brutus' son was able to do it, doesn't it mean that he has received the full inheritance of the Blood Saint Tiger? The Savannah Beast guild will rise like the saint tiger in the future".

When the others heard what Karina said, they too congratulated him. In any case, it was never a bad decision to make a good impression with someone strong.

Brutus had a bitter smile when he received their congratulations, he had planned to keep this fact a secret yet this woman was somehow able to learn it.

TAP... TAP...

"Alright everyone, settle down. For the time being we know that the tertiary team isn't in the immediate danger of getting wiped out. Nonetheless, it doesn't change the fact that we cannot contact them".

"This means that something has happened on the 34th floor. Either they have entered the mysterious ruin or the master of the dungeon has made his move. In any case, we should start heading out. Expedition leader Brutus, I'll leave leading the primary unit to you".

The grey haired man gathered everyone back to the matter at hand. Subsequently, he turned towards Xandros and asked—

"You must have explored and passed through the 34th floor quite a few times. Were there any ruins on that floor before?".

All eyes turned towards Xandros, the man was currently the most knowledgeable adventurer present within this main camp.

Xandros recalled the memories he had of the 34th floor before shaking his head sidewise "My team has explored the 34th floor quite a few times. However, we never found any mysterious ruins that you all are talking about".

Hearing this the grey haired man narrowed his eyes.

'So it must be something recently placed. A trap from the demon to cull our numbers. Knowing that should we step into it?' he mused internally.

After a while he placed his attention back on Xandros and asked "So what will it be? Are you willing to help me?".

The vice guild leader of the Tyrant Mountain Guild took a deep breath, and considered his options before shaking his head.

"Oh?" the grey haired man was surprised, he didn't think that Xandros would be able to reject the allure of the reward he promised.

"Can I know the reason why you are rejecting my offer?".

Chapter 553 553- The 34th Floor, The Pit And The Mysterious Ruins (4)

"I'm not rejecting your offer, it's just that my team is in no shape to continue diving inside the dungeon. we have just surfaced a few days ago after exploring the 40th floor, my team is tired. It would be asking too much for them to dive again without resting for a few days. So I hope that this Sir will not mind".

Xandros came up with a perfect excuse. Of course, he was interested in the reward that the grey haired man offered. However, he also knew the dangers of this dungeon more than anyone in this tent.

In these many months of exploring the dungeon, Xandros was never able to see through its truest depths. The more he dived deeper, the bigger the dungeon became and along with that his shock deepened.

He has never seen the master of this dungeon, however, his years of adventuring senses were telling him that something ridiculous, something very powerful resided within the deepest floors.

Xandros trusted his senses more than anything, no matter how high the reward, one can only enjoy it when they are alive. It would mean nothing if he ended up losing his life in a moment of greed.

The expedition team made up of the twenty biggest guilds was strong but so was this dungeon. Xandros couldn't tell who would win in this clash thus he decided to refrain from joining.

"I see in that case please rest well".

How could the grey haired man not see through such a ruse? Getting your way using Sophistry was something he was also adept at.

The meeting inside the main tent was adjourned and the primary teams of the twenty guilds camping on the 20th floor were rallied under a single main unit and led by Brutus Sarge, the guild leader of the Savannah Beast Guild, started moving once again after three days.

Their objective—conquering the dungeon.

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34th floor, deep inside the mysterious ruins that was discovered near the south-eastern region of the floor. The paths inside was meandering and the walls and ceiling here were made of hardened stones that would even make a person above level 200 sweat to put a scratch.

At the end of the meandering path, were seven large doors. carved on those doors were pictures of fierce monsters. At the other end of each door was a gigantic space and a mountain of treasures glimmering at the end.

Deafening explosion sounds erupted everywhere as magic and skills collided. The dark space was lit up with its light. On the ground, one could see numerous corpses strewn everywhere, their blood and entrails littering the floor.

These corpses were of monsters but one could also see the bodies of some adventurers amidst those mountains of corpses. In fact, if one looked carefully all around this space, one would notice quite a few bodies of the adventurers lying dead.

At the centre of this space, was a large group of adventurers tightly maintaining a formation as they continuously fended off tides of monsters that came rushing at them from the ground, air and everywhere.

The battle which had been going on for a couple of hours slowly chipped at the strength of the adventurers and with time, their casualty rates started going higher and higher. Yet it didn't seem like the endless horde of monsters they were facing showed any signs of stopping any time soon.

The scene where the fire raged and bodies dropped down robbed of their life, was truly a painting straight out of the battlefield.

Similar scenes were currently happening inside all of the seven doors.

A couple of hours ago, near the centre of the 34th floor where the entrance to the next floor was, a group of approximately 7,000 adventurers, divided into seven teams, was currently assembling one after the other.

"Heh, it looks like our guild was the first one to arrive here after all".

Marcus commented sitting on top of a rock. He was decked out in a [B] tier golden armour from head to toe, his weapon the large blade, shined with a faint green light indicating that it was made of Mythril.

Each and every item on his body was very rare and released a shine that told other that the gears, was extremely expensive and precious. So much so that it could make the eyes of the ordinary adventurer go green with envy.

It was not only him who was donned head to toe in expensive armours, even those close adventurers around him were so. Although their armours couldn't be compared to Marcus' all of the things on them were nonetheless precious items.

In fact, the items donned by each and every member of this tertiary team could be compared with the primary teams of other guilds. What's more all of this was just on a tertiary team. This made one wonder to what extent the quality of items on the primary team of savannah beast guild's has reached.

"Tch Marcus don't be so smug, you were just lucky to have arrived here before us. If not because we were delayed due to certain reasons, we would have been the first ones to have arrived here".

The one to speak was a man wearing a gaudy red robe and holding a rare looking staff in his hand. He had short black hair and frown lines on his forehead. His eyes were sharp and he wore a solemn face all time round.

A badge of explosion was hanging on his chest representing the guild he was from. He was Kenan Lantz from the Crimson Demolition Guild.

Behind him walked his twin brother Jason Lantz, wearing a similar garb. Anyone that looked at them would immediately be able to tell that they were identical.

Behind Kenan and Jason walked another pair of twins. But unlike the Lantz brothers, one of the two was wearing a magician's robe while the other twin donned a warrior's armour. They were Connor Rees and Tyler Rees.

All four of them were participants in the Battle of the Finest tournament.

These four people walked towards Marcus, they all wore items and gear that weren't too shabby compared to his own and hung a badge of explosion on their clothes.

"Heh, all four of you were also placed in the tertiary team by your guild to gain experience I see". Marcus glanced at all four of them, his eyes shined with a peculiar light indicating that he was using the [Analysis] skill.

"Hm? what a surprise, it looks like all four of you have also broken through level 400. I suppose congratulations are in place".

Marcus smiled, although he wasn't able to see through their skills because of some items on them barring his attempt of [Analysis], he nevertheless still managed to see through their levels.

"Hmph, don't act like you are superior to us. Your talent might be superior to mine because of that beast inheritance you have got from your guild. But if you think that allows you to look down on my guild you are sorely mistaken".

Kenan snapped back. He disliked Marcus' attitude that seemed to be talking down on them from above.

More than half a year ago, during the battle of the finest tournament, he was around the edges of reaching level 400 while Marcus had already breached it. Now that he had broke through level 400, he learned from his guild master that Marcus had inherited the beast inheritance of his guild.

It was part jealousy and part inferiority complex that made Kenan hate Marcus' guts.

Marcus' simply smiled facing Kenan's hate filled glare and shifted his eyes to other teams slowly walking here.

Kenan and the tertiary team of Crimson Demolition Guild he was leading, also turned to face this batch of newcomers that arrived just after them.

The arrival of this group stole the eyes of all the people and immediately filled the place with a clear and fragrant scent. Their charms and every movement they made tugged on the heart of these adventurers.

The previously sombre atmosphere on the 34th floor was quickly replaced by an atmosphere of spring with their arrival.

The team that just arrived, had the lowest number compared to all the other six teams. However, their presence and aura wasn't weaker than any of the tertiary teams present on the floor.

Another thing of note was that, this team was made up of all female magicians thus setting them apart from all the other teams.

The Mage Guild was here.

Marcus whose eyes were similarly looking at this group of females, immediately spotted the three figures that were leading this group. The three of them also felt Marcus's group and saw the geniuses of the various guild gathering beside him.

There was Lantz and the Rees brother from the Crimson Demolition Guild, Park Garrett and Max Rose from Sea God's Trident, Gallio Stallard from Assassin's Guild and other geniuses from the big guilds that had taken a spot in the top thirty of the battle of the finest tournament.

Tiana Lowe settled her team in an open field before taking her two sisters with her to meet everyone.

Marcus stood up and smiled at the three who were coming over to greet him. Of course his eyes were glancing mostly at Hallie May, the girl who took the fourth spot, ranking right after him in the tournament.

"As I thought so, you were indeed the first one to reach the 34th floor. Then it is decided that that guild master Brutus will be leading the expedition" Tiana commented coming to a stop in front of all the geniuses from the top twenty guilds of the kingdom.

Chapter 554 554- The 34th Floor, The Pit And The Mysterious Ruins (5)

She could see the fire of rivalry in the eyes of her junior sister and Marcus. After all, the both of them had performed splendidly in the battle of the finest tournament. One placed fourth while the other tied with the third prince for the third spot.

Plus they each were accessed with very high potential. Both saw each other as rivals.

"Hehe, it just turned out that way. I was simply excited to explore the dungeon and before I know it I was already on 34th floor. Father taking charge wasn't something that I was planning for".

Marcus laughed, he made some small talk before commenting "It looks like Miss Hallie is still as taciturn as ever".

Hallie hasn't spoken a word since the moment she arrived here, her behaviour was just like the time he saw her on the stage. After Marcus' the geniuses of the Crimson demolition guild, Sea God's Trident, Absolute Sea Guild, Baskerville guild and other various guilds, came to initiate small talks.

When everybody was done expressing the greetings, the genius from the Assassin guild, Gallio Stallard used his transmission conch to send a report back to the Main camp.

"What did they say?" Marcus asked.

The assassin's guild was tasked to be the reconnaissance unit for this expedition. Thus their members were present within all of the seven teams.

"The main camp said that the guild leaders are having an important meeting right now. They told us to wait here and secure the floor. It may take them a couple of hours to arrive" Gallio reported.

"They expect us to wait here that long? What should we even do on this floor?"

Levin Field from the Phantom Light guild spoke. He was wearing light leather armour made of top quality goods and carried a sword on his back.

"Well, they did say we can secure the floor. You know the thirty fourth floor is called 'The Pit' by the adventurers of the tower town. They say that the pit is frolicking with strong looking monsters and the fate of those that fall inside the pit, is extremely miserable. My team has cleared the surface of all the monsters. However, we have yet to dive inside the pit".

Marcus stated, his nonchalant manner of speaking intended something.

"Are you saying that we should try to clear the so called 'Pit'?" Tiana frowned when she heard that.

"Well, the main camp did say that we secure the floor"...

"Right and if the pit is still filled with monsters, the primary teams would think that we are slacking on our task".

After a while, they all came to a consensus that the floor need to be secured before the main unit came. The seven tertiary teams each led by their own geniuses turned their attention towards the big hole in the ground north from the centre.

From a distance this enormous big hole looked just like the mouth of the devil, it was deep, dark and not even a single trace of light could be seen inside.

"So this is the pit huh? It doesn't seem that special."...

"Well, we will find out once we head there".

Marcus, Kenan, Park... all jumped inside, their teams followed behind. Tiana who was Looking at that spectacle, sighed.

"Elder Sister Tiana, what are you thinking?" Hallie asked.



Tiana shook her head and said, "It's nothing, I was just thinking that these boys are so competitive. It hasn't even been an hour since we all gathered together yet we are now heading down to further explore the floor".

"Hehe, it should be fun, let's go down too and see what the pit looks like" Hallie looked at the deep dark pit and her eyes involuntarily started shining from the excitement.

Compared to Hallie who was impulsive and adventure seeking, Tiana was much more practical and cautious. This was also the reason why guild master Karina had made Tiana the leader of the tertiary team instead of her disciple Hallie.

After deliberating for a while the mage guild too followed the other tertiary teams and jumped down. In any case, the surface was already cleared, there was nothing to do here.

Whereas, the pit was yet to be explored. Given the fact that their journey to this floor was a smooth one without any hiccups, the teams jumped inside the pit without any worry.

So what if the pit was frolicking with monsters? These guilds who had no problem tackling the monsters on the floors above, didn't think much of the monsters on the 34th floor. A mistake that they would later come to regret.

Except for a few thousand people who were told to sit outside and wait for the primary team to arrive, nearly four thousand people jumped inside the pit.

The three girls landed in a dark underground space, they used their powers to slow down their fall. The pit was more than five thousand feet deep, it was dark and the only source of light was the dim ores that protruded from the ground.

Sound of clothes flapping could be heard as their team landed behind them. Tiana and the three sisters used their magic to create an orb of sorts that released light and illuminated the place for them.

"So this is the pit huh?".

Hallie remarked looking at the numerous tunnels at the edges of the underground space. These tunnels weren't big, they only allowed at most three people to walk side by side. If they were to encounter a monster on this pathway, it would probably be a little troublesome.

"Looks like the other teams have already entered those tunnels. Let us also be on our way then"  
Tiana, Anna and Hallie led the team from the front while the others cautiously followed behind them.

Their team already had the smallest number out of the seven teams to begin with and they left half of it on the surface to wait for the primary team to arrive. Therefore only around 200 people from the mage guild entered the pit.

The pathways were dark and gloomy, muck and filth littered the place. Sometimes, a crisp cracking sound would echo in the tunnel whenever one stepped on some bones. Who did these bones belonged to?

That was a question none of these girls wanted to think about. Some of the bones clearly had bestial features while some had the outlines of a human. This dark and contained place was enough to make anyone claustrophobic.

"It is weird" Tiana muttered under her breath as she observed her surroundings.

"Big sister, what's wrong?" Anna asked from the sides, she was looking at the bones and made a revolted face.

"It has been a while since we entered the pit yet we haven't met a single monster till now. According to the adventurers of the tower town, the pit should be frolicking with monsters. However, we are yet to encounter even one. Don't you think it's weird?" Tiana stated the bizarreness of the situation.

"Now that elder sister has mentioned it, it is quite weird. Could it be that all the monsters were attracted by the other six teams when they entered?" Hallie questioned playing with her staff in boredom.

Tiana frowned she did not say anything and simply extended her staff to conjure a Light magic spell.

"Light Magic Mastery:- [Light of Dawn]".

A speckle of light as big as an egg materialised, it sped toward the front with Tiana's command leaving behind glitters of light. The team from the mage guild silently waited for Tiana to complete her magic.

Being a mage themselves and belonging to the same guild, they understood quite well what kind of magic Tiana conjured. It was similar to an Assassin's skill [Pathfinder], the light magic [Dawn of Light] charted out the correct path for the caster.

It was quite useful in situations where there are winding paths and abnormal conditions barring your vision. The mist on the upper floors could easily be confronted because of the existence of such kinds of skills.

"I found the path, it looks like the other teams are waiting at the end".

Tiana noted after finding the exit. The team proceeded forward and soon the narrow pathway opened up to reveal a huge space much like the one they dropped down to after falling inside the pit.

While coming out of the passageway, they all failed to notice the many tiny four leaf clovers growing at the edges of the ground. These tiny clovers were so inconspicuous that they were like wild weeds that would be stepped over by the people without them even noticing it.

No sane person would always keep activating their [Analysis] at every little loitering in the ground but if they did, perhaps there was a one per cent chance that they would notice the four leaf clovers hiding amongst the weeds that was growing all across the edges of this underground space.

Tiana and her team stepped into the underground space to see a large mysterious ruin standing at the other end of the place. The various teams that had reached here earlier than them, were gathered in front of the ruins.

The armours on Marcus, Kenan, Park and the other geniuses were extremely conspicuous even from this distance, so it wasn't hard to spot them from thousands of people.

CHATTER... CHATTER... the place was noisy as many people discussed something. At the centre of the crowd, there seemed to be some kind of commotion going on among the leaders of the team.

Chapter 555 555- Trapped

"What's wrong?" Tiana and her two sisters, approached the crowd. Since they were the last one to arrive here, they were unaware of the cause of this commotion.

Marcus's who was trying to settle the quarrel between two geniuses of the two big guilds pointed at the huge seven doors behind him and said "It's because of the ruins that we found. They are quarrelling because of the clash in opinions as to whether we should proceed forward or not".

Tiana and the others listened to the people arguing. Some were saying that they should explore the ruins, and some were of the opinion that they should wait for the primary team. While the other were indecisive or neutral.

"Haha, wait for the primary team to arrive? Oi-Oi.. I didn't know that the Baskerville guild were just a bunch of cowards?" Levin Field from the Phantom Light guild mocked. The people from his guild laughed at those from the said guild.

"Levin you bastard, watch your words. My Baskerville guild isn't afraid of anyone. I'm just saying that those ruins are very unusual, it could be one of those mysterious chambers we have encountered on our way here".

"The monsters inside these chambers are always strong, even the traps are trickier. If we are not careful, some people might get injured. It would be better for the primary team who have years of experience diving inside the dungeon to explore it rather than us" Bastille defended his guild.

"Heh, it's the same as being a coward. Hmph, if you are so afraid of exploring an unknown place, then you shouldn't have joined this expedition. You all should have just stayed inside the safety of your guild headquarters" Levin mocked some more.

"?... Aren't those two from the same team, why are they fighting?" Hallie asked tilting her head. She had seen the two geniuses of the two guilds working as a team when they arrived on the 34th floor.

"It's not unusual for a team comprising of two or more guilds to quarrel when there is a difference in opinion. In the first place, they were working together because they had a same goal and that was to reach the 34th floor before the other teams".

"A tertiary team of a single big guild isn't strong enough to match the teams of top five guild, thus to make it fair, the guild leaders of various guilds proposed the idea of working together. All of it was just so that they can become the expedition leader. However, now that position was secured by

the guild leader of savannah beast guild, these teams have no common goal to work for" Tiana explained things to Hallie.

"Right, but it is not only that. I have heard from my father that the Phantom Light guild have two successors who are intensely fighting for the position of the junior guild master. Levin Field who is one of the successors is trying to raise his value to the higher ups of his guild by trying to gain merits and accomplishment in this mission. For him, this expedition might be his biggest chance to get the big shot of his guild to his side".

Marcus who was listening from the sides, added after Tiana.

"Well in any case, this discussion wouldn't go anywhere if they don't stop arguing. How about we decide this with a show of hands. Based on what the majority wants we decided whether to explore these ruins or not?".

Marcus shrugged his shoulders and came up with a solution. His natural qualities and the take charge attitude made him quite the leader at his young age.

Marcus's words clearly had a lot of weight after all, he was the strongest person here. The geniuses of the various guilds contemplated for a while before nodding their heads.

"Alright, raise your hands if you are of the opinion that we should wait for the primary team to arrive" Marcus spoke his voice loud and clear for everybody to hear.

About a thousand people raised their hands, it wasn't just the Baskerville guild other guilds also had similar opinions. What was shocking was that even Tiana and the mage guild she led also raised their hands.

Marcus nodded his head...

"Now then, those who are of the opinion that we should explore the ruins before the primary team arrive, raise your hands".

This time, around nineteen hundred people raise their hands. The number was clearly higher than the opinion to wait here. Amongst those that raised their hands was the crimson demolition guild, Sea god's guild, the phantom light guild.

Astonishingly, even Marcus and his Savannah beast guild sided with the opinion to explore the ruins.

The people who didn't raise their hands were either unsure or couldn't make up their mind.

"Haha, it's decided then. We will explore the ruins. Those cowardly guilds who are too afraid, can just stay behind" Levin laughed, his mockery seemed to have irked those who didn't want to go or were unsure.

What these egoistic younger generation brats of the various guild who were showered with praises and admiration by those around them, disliked the most was being looked down upon. When put like that, there was no way they would allow someone to dishonour their guild and their pride.

They determined themselves to explore the ruins in a show of proving the other party wrong.

"I didn't think that you wanted to explore the ruins?" Tiana asked turning her eyes towards Marcus.

The later nonchalantly shrugged his shoulders and said "Do you see any other exit that would lead us out of this pit? I believe that the exit lies inside those ruins. In any case, I believe in the potential of my team. Even if there are dangers lying inside, as long as we work as a team, we should be able to overcome it. What about you, what does your guild wants to do?".

Tiana sighed, since the moment she entered this dungeon, she felt like she was being swept by a wave that she had no control of.

"It's as you said, we have to find the exit to get out of here. I had sent a few of my magic [Dawn of light] to explore the tunnels earlier and every path led to this place".

If they wanted to go back to the surface, they had to explore the ruins. Thus even though many teams and guilds were bickering with each other, they still entered the ruins and explored every corner of it.

Unlike the last time when these people jumped into the pit in seven teams, now they were all split into their guilds with each heading off to a different part of the ruins to explore. The ruins, although it looked old, it had signs of being newly made.

The stones still had that fresh scent to it and the algae on the walls looked like they had newly formed. The place had many crisscrossing cracks and the sound of water could be heard flowing underneath them.

Additionally, the place was also filled with numerous deadly traps, such as lava pit, pitfalls, acidic traps, guillotines and boulders that came rolling down at you.

These traps might be lethal to others, but the group that was exploring the ruins, were best of the best if they were just the tertiary team. The adventurer teams explored the ruins for dozens of minutes before they came around to a gigantic inner hall at the end of which stood huge seven doors.

These huge seven doors, were carved with hideous looking beasts and depictions of cruelty. The various teams that spread everywhere, rendezvous inside the inner hall. With a quick count, anyone could see that all of the top guilds and those that came immediately after that were all here.

Only a handful of few guilds were absent.

"What happened to the other guilds?" Marcus asked finding it odd that some of the guilds weren't here yet.

"Who knows? Leave them be, they might have given up on exploring the ruins midway and have gone out to wait for the primary team to arrive".

Kenan Lantz from the crimson demolition guild commented. He and his team were observing the closed door that did not budge open even they exerted all their strength.

"Everybody, be careful. This might be some kind of trap" Gallio Stallard from the Assassin guild said. His various sensory skills were alerting him of some kind of danger that was behind these doors.

Everybody nodded their heads; nevertheless, they weren't too worried after all, they all were geniuses and from the top twenty guilds of the kingdom.

"Why isn't the door opening? Should we try to blast it open with our powers?" it wasn't known who came up with this idea, maybe it was somebody from the crowd who spoke.

However, it was well received, many even tried to use their abilities to push open the gates only to be stopped by Tiana, Gallio and a few perceptive ones.

"We don't know what kind of reaction destroying the doors would end up triggering. Hence destroying the door should be our last option. Since these are doors, there must be a way to open them".

Everybody fell into thought after those words from Tiana. Time ticked down slowly yet they were unable to find a single clue. Just as they were getting impatient, a magic circle suddenly erupted in front of the sixth gate and those people who were around it, suddenly disappeared.

"What?! What just happened?" Kenan who wasn't paying attention to the sixth gate shouted in shock.

Chapter 556 556- Trapped (2)

It was not only him but everybody was so. Nobody expected a magic circle to appear in front of the sixth gate and make the people around it disappear.

"I think that was a teleport circle, those people who were standing there might have been teleported inside the door" Hallie mused. Her master Karina was a little accomplished when it came to the field of space magic.

Being her direct disciple, Hallie too learned a few things. From what she could tell, those spatial fluctuations when the magic circle arrived, were definitely from the usage of space magic.

This is to say, that the people near the sixth door didn't just disappear but were actually teleported somewhere. This explanation of her was much easier for others to accept than the mysterious disappearance of the people.

"I see, then does that mean that the only way to go to the other end of the door is to trigger that magic circle or something?" Marcus came to the same realisation. He and his team were near the first door right next to the second door where Hallie and the mage guild were.

"But how do we do that?".



They have been trying to evoke some response from the doors for a while; however, no matter what they did it did not budge. As the crowd was searching for any kind of hidden mechanism, another magic circle appeared.

This time it was in front of the fourth door and teleported the people from the phantom light guild, sky slashing blade and a few other big guilds.

"Not again, how did those people do this?"...

"Is there something that we are missing?" the crowd discussed.

Some people were ready for something like this to happen thus they clearly saw the scene this time and pondered something over in their heads.

"It's because of the numbers".

Most of them arrived at the same conclusion. They were sure that there are no hidden mechanisms to trigger the magic circle, those people that were teleported earlier only managed to do so because of their numbers.

As far as they could tell, the people gathered around those two doors, at a time were around five hundred. A quick headcount told them that there were around 3500 people when they came to this inner hall out of which exactly 1000 people were missing.

If it was as they thought, then didn't it mean that all they had to do was...

The idea was worth trying. Marcus was the first one to move, he had brought over exactly 500 people from his team down to the pit. He and his team stepped in front of the first door and in front of many amazed eyes, they triggered the magic circle.

A magic circle with complex runes surfaced from the ground and with a glaring light teleported all of them somewhere.

With Marcus taking the lead, the other guilds also followed suit. Even the most simpleton ones also understood something after seeing so many people disappear one after the other and soon all of the 3500 people in the hall teleported inside the seven big doors.

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While all of this was happening, on another corner of the ruins. Blood and gore were spilled everywhere, adventurers were running like headless chickens as they stepped on the bodies of those slower than them.

Everybody was doing their best to get away even if they needed to betray their friends or drag them down with them.

A simple way to explain the situation would be an absolute mayhem, many people died just like by getting stepped on.

These people who were currently running away were none other than the adventurers from the few guilds that tried to secretly leave the ruins while the other teams gathered in the inner hall. The Baskerville guild, Absolute Sea Guild were some of the few among that number.

So who are these adventurers who are from the top twenty guilds of the kingdom, running from?

The answer was the being behind them that slowly galloped towards them on that wretched looking Antler. The being held an enormous scythe in his hand and was covered in a black robe from head to toe.

Yet when it looked up, inside those dark hood one could see a face that was the personification of pain and agony. Those hands that swung the scythe, were like countless snakes wiggling around each other, even if you cut them, they regrow and wiggle back once again.

Whether it be magic, or their skills, nothing could damage this nightmarish looking being that was standing guard at the entrance of the ruins.

In front of the overwhelming might of this being, none of their attacks mattered, their resistance was pitiful in front of its scythe that harvested their life with every swing. It was weirdly beautiful yet at the same time it raise all the hairs in their body.

The only thing fair in this current situation was perhaps the swing of its scythe that granted each and every one of them death without any partiality or bias.

"Fuck.. Fuck.. Fuck... What the fuck is that?!".

Bastille from the Baskerville guild screamed. He was one of the first people to run when he saw the high levelled adventurer he brought with him die in an instant. His idea to pretend to go along with the other teams to explore the mysterious ruin and then sneak out when nobody was looking, had completely backfired.

Who would have thought that a being like this would be waiting on the path where they came in from? If that thing guarded the entrance, there was no way they can go out of the ruins.

Desperate, these people stumbled upon the inner hall after running from that monster. However, finding the inner hall didn't evoke any joy from them, on the contrary, almost all of them had a ghastly white face as they looked at what lay in front of them.

As if the being behind them wasn't enough, two more similar beings were currently waiting for them in front of the seven enormous doors.

"This must be a nightmare" Bastille spoke, his eyes devoid of any hope.

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Inside the entrance to the second door, a group of around 500 people teleported. What's unique about the group was that the majority of them were females belonging to the same guild while the others were from different guilds.

Tiana, her two sisters and the people she led, teleported in front of a dark passageway lit up by numerous phosphorescence crystals and luminant grass.

"Woah, elder sister it really did work?" Hallie commented after seeing that they teleported to a different place.

"So it really was the case. I was wondering why there was no mechanism or clues for opening the doors, it turned out that there was a hidden condition that we needed to trigger".

Tiana observed her surroundings, around there were exactly 500 people and behind her was the door, that remained unbudged no matter what they tried.

She looked at the door behind them for a while and only after seeing that nobody other than them had teleported, that she was sure of her guess.

Only five hundred people were allowed inside a door at a given point in time. That is to say, now that they were here, the other wouldn't be able to enter this door. It was also because of this reason that they were unable to enter the fifth and sixth doors that triggered the teleportation circle first.

This at the same time also meant that nobody would be able to exit this place without clearing whatever that was waiting for them ahead.

BOOOM... to further prove her words, a few girls from her guild fired consecutive magics; nonetheless, it did not even dent the door.

"Tiana, what are you planning to do?" A man donned in a leather armour that was clearly made of some high class beast's hide, said as he walked up to Tiana.

This man who had no presence to talk about whatsoever, carried a badge on his chest that depicted a dark black blade.

Assassins guild, there was no other guild that carried such a symbol on their chest.

Other than the people from the mage guild, the people from the assassins guild were also here.

"Gallio, so you are also amongst those people that followed us?" Tiana turned her eye towards the man. Because his presence was so low, she only just noticed him when he talked to her.

This man whose presence was so low that anyone would just pass by him without even noticing him, was also the future successor of the assassins guild, Gallio Stallard.

"Haha, don't put it like that. You make it sound like I was following you guys. My team is assigned with the task to follow you guys and report it back to the main camp, I cannot help it" Gallio shrugged his shoulders and smiled bitterly.

"By the way, I know that you have already noticed it but I still wanted to tell you that this place is weird. All of my sensory skills are flaring alerts to me, in my field of vision the path forward is covered with the colour of red".

Tiana's beautiful eyes which were indifferent up until now, trembled a little when she heard Gallio's words.

"In your vision, the colour red that you see, is it a deep shade?" Tiana asked, a shadow of concern could be seen on her face. She was one of the few people who knew Gallio had one of the extremely rare mutated physiques, the [Mystic Eyes].

In terms of rarity, the [Mystic Eyes] was even above a Rare Legendary skill because of how special the eyes were.

Chapter 557 557- Trapped (3)

[Mystic Eyes], it was an extremely mysterious physique that allowed one to see or even predict the outcome or a possible future based on the colours and the choice they make. According to some legends that her guild master told her, the [Mystic eyes] might even be able to see through fate and destiny.

So if Gallio was telling them to be careful, Tiana knew better than to ignore his words.

Gallio nodded his head but the next second he frowned his brows, a look of hesitation appeared on his face for a second or two.

"Although it is a deep shade of red, it is at the same time also another colour".

"Another colour? What does that suppose to mean?" Tiana only knew a little information about the eyes thus she didn't understand what Gallio meant by another colour.

Gallio did not answer her, and instead muttered to himself "The colour of purple, this is the first time that this colour appeared. What could it mean?".

Even he was amazed that his eyes would show a totally different colour that he had never seen before, at this point in time. If it had only just shown him the deep red colour, he wouldn't have been that amazed after all, he had seen it many times.

Most of the time when sparing against the people of his own guild. The colour red indicated that it was dangerous and that he should proceed with care, the deeper the shade of red, the higher the danger.

The path ahead of them was also a deep shade of red, just like that time when he sparred with his guild leader, Cassius Grey the guild master of the Assassins Guild.

Seeing Gallio go silent, Tiana lightly bit her lips and pondered. Excluding the number of people from the mage guild she brought with her into the pit which roughly made up half of their numbers, the rest belonged to two big guilds called the Lighting Rain and Typhoon Thunder.

The people from the Assassins guild made up for even less.

Given their numbers and their guilds, no matter what lay ahead of them it shouldn't pose too much danger. "It's just a low ranking dungeon after all" Tiana convinced herself.

It may be her first time leading a team into a dungeon, but it wasn't her first time inside a dungeon. Hence she rallied her team and all those people around her before cautiously walking through the caverns lit up by luminous ores and plants.

The group of 500 people marched through the pathway before arriving in front of a large grassland, the size of which was ten times the chamber where they previously were.

The entire place was full of lush green grass that reached up to their ankles and a clear breeze swept over the place from time to time. The breeze carried a sweet scent that tickled their nose and calmed their minds.

When Tiana and her team arrived at these grasslands, the first thing they did was get into formation. They observed their surroundings while maintaining their caution. However, when they saw nothing unusual happening even after a while did they slowly dropped their guards.

"What is going on? Why aren't there any monsters in this place? According to the recount of the adventurers, this place should be brimming with monsters. Yet we are unable to spot one even after diving inside the pit and arriving at this mysterious place".

Tiana voiced her concern. Her two sisters Anna and Hallie were frowning intensely too.

"That shouldn't be, in my vision this place is still in red in fact the colour is slowly becoming darker and darker" Gallio added with a grim voice.

What was going on? The place was devoid of any dangers, there was not even a shadow of monsters to be seen anywhere. On the contrary, these grasslands gave others the feeling of just lying down and laze for a few hours.

This unusual peace was making them sluggish and drowsy, fortunately for them, they had the perfect place to rest their bodies.

'Wait... sleepy?'

Just as this thought arrived inside Tiana's mind, her eyes opened wide and her pupils contracted to the size of a pinpoint.

She turned her head around and saw that everyone around her was also drowsy. It was only now that she realised that they had fallen onto a trap.

"Everyone cover your nose, do not breathe in the sweet scent in the air".

Her panicked voice startled others. The people from the mage guild had enough trust in Tiana thus they immediately covered their nose while the people from the other guilds who made up the rest of the numbers, took their sweet time.

"Gallio... look all around you, can you really not determine where the colour of danger is coming from?".

Gallio who was called out, activated his [Mystic Eyes] once again. Understanding that something was amiss, he observed everything carefully to the point of straining his eyes. Yet no matter how

carefully he observed his surroundings, he couldn't find the reason behind the colour of danger his vision was painted with.

As far as he could remember, his [Mystic Eyes] started showing signs of danger from the moment they arrive before the mysterious ruins. However, at that time it was only the colour of yellow which meant that it needed attention and a little bit of caution.

But as they kept going in, the colour of yellow started turning darker until it turned red in front of the chamber where the seven doors was.

Now after they entered one of the doors, the colour was a dark shade of red; nevertheless, the cause for this sense of danger was yet to be identified.

'Was the enemy hiding underneath the ground?' just as his train of thought led him till here, a thud noise of something falling on the ground sounded out.

An adventurer from one of the big guilds, had fallen on the ground. The people around that person called out to him yet he didn't respond.

THUD... THUD... THUD...

After that first person, many more adventurers fell onto the ground in a similar fashion. When their vitals were checked, it was found that they were still breathing. However, they were unconscious and foam was coming out of their mouth.

That was when everybody realised... "Poison".

It was not known who shouted it, but everyone hurriedly covered their nose. Though it was already too late, the poison had already entered their respiratory system and was slowly taking its effects.

"So it really was poisonous" Tiana commented. She downed a vial of antidote that she had already prepared before diving inside the dungeon and covered her face with a veil of cloth.

Following her actions, the others too hurriedly took out various medicines from their space rings.

"Where is the poison coming from?" the question was hanging over everyone's head.



"Below" Gallio's hoarse voice came at this moment. He had been staring at the ground he was standing on with dark ashen eyes for a while.

"We have been had, the entire grassland... No, the entire mysterious ruins was booby trapped from the beginning".

His words caused the crowd to become silent and a cold chill to run down their spine.

"What do you mean?" Tiana asked sensing the gravity of the situation.

Gallio gave a dry laugh before pointing below them "Look below, the poison is coming from the..."

"Everyone be alert, we have company"...

Gallio's words were drowned by Hallie who shouted at the first signs of sensing magic in the distance.

RUMBLE... her words only just rang out when the ground started trembling intensely. The wind rustling the grass stopped, and a light appeared in the distance.

WHOOSH... WHOOSH... WHOOSH... one by one, these lights started appearing in the distance. If one strained their eyes and looked into the distance, they would be able to see that the light was coming from a tree.

To put it more precisely, the trees burning in the distance were providing this light. What was unusual about the situation was that these trees ignited all of a sudden and the fires seemed to faintly take the forms of leaves.

Weirdly enough, the entralling flames looked like it was a part of the tree, as if the tree was meant to be burning. The sight caused the adventurers from the various guilds to hurriedly raise their guards.

However, what shocked them was what came next. Numerous magic circles started appearing on the other end of the grassland. It appeared on the ground, air, ceiling and the walls.

Monsters came pouring out of it in a never ending droves. At a glance, there were more than tens of thousands of them and that number was gradually increasing. Not only that, even the types of monsters that came out were many.

Some were land born, some aerial born, some had sharp beaks, while others had menacing fangs. Even their race was different. If there was something in common between them, it would be that all of them were denizens of fire.

The bodies of monsters blazed with fire.

SHIREEKKK... the monster released a wild cry as soon as they appeared and fixed their gaze on the humans in the distance. Their eyes blazed with unconcealed bloodlust as they charged forward.

"It's just one problem after another. Everyone stay on your toes, and maintain your formation at every cost. The enemy may appear intimidating because of their number but in terms of levels, they are inferior to us".

"As long as we fight together as a single unit, it should be a problem for us to survive the horde. Warriors you just need to hold down the monsters, leave disposing them to the magicians of my guild. We will blast them with magic powerful enough to blow them into smithereens".

Chapter 558 558- Trapped (4)

"Anna you will hold down the frontlines with me, Hallie try to conserve your mana as much as you can. If a strong monster shows up, we will have to depend on your magic to get us through".

Tiana gave out one command after another. Only then did she turn towards Gallio and asked "I'm sorry, what were you saying about the ground again?".

Gallio looked at the oncoming horde, before revealing the existence of something that had gone unnoticed by them till now.

"So you are telling me the poison is coming from the four leaf clover?" Tiana muttered in a dour mood. She lowered her gaze and looked carefully at the ground.

Indeed, there were many four leaf clovers growing inconspicuously amidst the grass. If one didn't pay enough attention to them, they would go completely unnoticed by anyone. In fact, if not for Gallio pointing it out, Tiana wouldn't even have noticed them.

"Poison Detoxifying Clover... dammit, how could we fall for such a simple trap" when she used her [Analysis] on it, it finally revealed the true effects of the seemingly inconspicuous clover prompting her to step them underneath her boots.

Their conversation made many others to also notice the poison detoxifying clover. Their face turned visibly ugly the moment they used analysis on it. The sweet scent in the air that made them tired and sluggish, was being released in the air by these very devilish plants.

Now not only would they have to fight the hordes of monsters while all sluggish and drowsy, but they would also have to be careful not to inhale too much poison and knock themselves unconscious like the others.

Nonetheless, that wasn't the only problem that they had to face...

"We have got another problem, I am unable to connect with the main camp on the 20th floor" Gallio spoke with a tense voice, the transmitter conch on his hand was unable to send the signal back to the other transmitter.

A heavy atmosphere descended onto the place making the mood even gloomier. Everybody could feel a sense of crisis at this moment as they watched the monsters rush towards them from the distance.

Their wild roars heavily pounding into the hearts of these adventurers from the big guilds who for the first time were experiencing a situation where their life was at stake.

Their morale was plummeting fast when a brilliant explosion erupted into the distance and engulfed more than a hundred monsters at once. All eyes turned towards the caster of that magic.

There on the frontlines, was a beautiful fairy like girl standing undauntingly while facing the hordes of monsters all on her own. Her delicate figure, which seemed like it would scatter with the breeze, was facing the monsters without any fear.

Her courage and valour stood out like a beacon of light in this darkest of hours and encouraged many.

That quiet and beautiful figure was none other than Hallie May. Tiana and Anna looked at the silhouette of their junior sister who was younger than them yet had more courage than them. All hesitation disappeared from their face, replaced by a determined expression.

The entire place was covered by poison, the combat potential have been reduced, they were facing an unknown number of monsters and they were unable to contact the main camp. There was no denying it, they had fallen headfirst into this trap that has been carefully laid for them since the moment they entered the pit.

With the transmission conch not working, they couldn't wait for the main team to come rescue them. Their only hope in surviving this was to tackle the obstacle and overcome it.

"Let the light free you of all fears... [Brave Heart]" Tiana cast a wide AOE light magic.

A pillar of light descended onto the crowd immediately uplifting their spirits and suppressing all negative debuffs.

"Those who do not have an antidote with them, take this. It will help negate the effects of the poison in your body for the time being. Those who have it, share some with the ones around you".

Tiana took out several vials of antidote and passed it to the people who showed the most signs of being poisoned. After each of the adventurers drank the antidote, she turned her attention towards the approaching horde of monsters who were only a few dozen meters away from them and raised her staff.

"There is no path back for us, if you want to survive, you all better work together with my team. So what if we have fallen for the trap? Didn't we dive inside the pit while fully knowing the dangers? So what if we are surrounded by monsters? Haven't we faced such situations many times while on our way here?"

"We all are from the most powerful guilds in the entire kingdom of Elsmere. There is no obstacle that we cannot clear. So raise your weapons high, and let's crush these monsters".

Tiana's rallying cry invigorated the crowd. They boldly brandished their weapons and collided with the incoming hordes of monsters. Thus a gruesome battle for survival started. Bodies of monsters dropped on the ground one after the other. Battered by various skills and blasted into smithereens by magic.

However, like an unending horde, the monsters came pouring out of the magic circles and rushing towards adventurers..

Little by little, they started chipping away at the strength of the adventurers, their stamina started dropping and their attacks became dull. Finally, an adventurer was overwhelmed, causing an opening for the monsters to exploit.

Their attacks started becoming even more fierce and soon that adventurer succumbed to his injuries and died. This caused the load on the others around him, to increase.

Gradually, even the other adventurers on the frontlines were starting to be pushed back...

"Frost Magic Mastery— [Frozen Prison]"...

When a blast of icy cold wind appeared out of nowhere and froze the blazing bodies of the monsters all around them in hundreds of meters of area.

"Change positions with the other teams and rest for while" Hallie's soft voice rang near their ears snapping them out of their daze. These adventurers hurriedly followed their command and swapped with the other team using this chance.

After supporting the team that needed the most help, Hallie returned back to her position beside Tiana and Anna who were discussing something with Gallio.

"How does the situation look?".

"Not too good, the monsters are behaving very primitively, it is as if they are out for our blood. That kind of bloodthirst isn't natural. Also when they attack they do not fear death nor do they defend. It is as if they do not regard their own life and are deliberately pitting their bodies against us with the single goal to tear us apart in mind. We are holding on somehow because their attacks are wild and easy to predict" Hallie replied.

"I see, that kind of behaviour isn't natural, something must be spurring them to do so" Tiana who was providing timely healing to the front liners assessed. Her eyes turned towards Gallio who was still looking at the ground with consternation.

"What's wrong?" She asked.

"I don't know... the enemies are right in front of us and we have already taken precautions against the poison detoxifying clover yet for some reason, the colour of the ground in my vision is still painted red. I am unable to determine the reason for it".

Gallio caressed his eyes that have been strained far too much after repeatedly using the [Mystic Eyes].

"What should we do elder sister?" Anna asked locking her brows in a frown. She used her spell to blast a couple dozens of monsters into smithereens.

Tiana mused for a while before coming to a resolution—"Alright we shall be careful of the ground. As for the monsters, although their number is too much, it hasn't reached the point where we can't handle it. There might be a few casualties, but we should be able to get through it without any trouble".

They weren't just empty words, Tiana really did believe so. Even if the monsters seemed like an unending horde, their level was at the end around level 300-350. Each and every person in her team that she brought with her inside the pit was above level 350.

In terms of quality, they had the upper hand not to mention, the monster they were facing were all unintelligent and attacking without a shred of tactic.

There was no way they would lose, Tiana was right in believing so however, she had failed to consider one thing and that was the poison detoxifying clover wasn't the only trap that was set up on this floor.

If she had mulled on Gallio's words some more, and considered burning the grass around them first, perhaps they would have been able to prevent what was about to transpire.

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Coming back to the present, the entire grassland was filled with an atmosphere of destruction and desolation. Bodies of both humans and monsters could be seen sprawled all around the place, their innards and blood painting a gruesome sight.

Fire and smoke spread everywhere, burning every plant and green that was on these lands.

In the middle of this encirclement of fire, was a group of humans covered in dust and injuries. They were all huffing and puffing, as they defeated one monster after another.

Out of their initial number of five hundred, only a little more than a hundred people were still standing. The rest have either succumbed to their injuries, shredded into pieces by monsters or fallen prey to the traps.

The sight was a dreadful one to watch, their comrades and the friends they shared a conversation with a couple of hours ago, were all gone. The pain and the struggle that had befallen the ones that had survived, could only be imagined.

Chapter 559 [Bonus ] 559- Group Effort

However, this tragedy was yet to end, there were still thousands of monsters encircling them from all around, looking at them with those bloodthirsty eyes of theirs. Although they have stopped pouring out of the magic circles, the surviving people weren't in the position to say that they can safely clear it out.

"Dammit... [Healing Rain]"...

A pillar of light rose into the air before scattering into thousands of tiny particles and raining down on the tired and injured adventurers.

After healing her remaining team, Tiana moved from her place and timely avoided the sharp attack of a Pyrodactyl that dive bombed at her. Next, she moved around lithely and avoided the sharp jaws of Blaze Wolves while at the same time casting Light magic to buff her allies.

[Concurrent Chant] an ability that allowed one to cast magic while moving. It was a necessary skill that every mage needed to acquire to become an elite in the mage guild.

Tiana, Anna, Hallie and the remaining fifty or so mages that survived the aftermath, were capable of concurrent chant. Hence even when the formation broke and the frontlines were unable to hold down the monsters, these mages were able to cast their magic and avoid dying.

Nevertheless, everything had its limit. Skills depended on physical abilities and mana to activate, one cannot continue using it again and again without getting tired.

Out of the hundred and twenty people or so remaining, around half of them were from the mage guild, the adventurers from the Assassins guild accounted for one-fourth of that number and the remaining survivors were from the two big guilds.

More precisely, it was the geniuses who were being protected by their guilds remained alive. The rest had died while protecting them or used as shields or bait.

GULP... GULP... Gallio downed the contents of a vial and threw it on the ground "That was my last antidote. I'm almost out of potions too and I'm running on fumes. I don't know how long I can hold on".

He had been conserving his elixirs and mana during the entire fight yet in a couple of hours he was almost out of it. The others around him had long finished their stocks and were on their last leg too. In a situation like this, it would be asking them for a tall order to clear the remaining hordes of monsters.

He looked at his remaining comrades and the ones that had fallen. A resolute light flashed in his eyes...

"If it comes to this I will go all out and take you all with me".

Gallio was prepared to die; however, before he could do so, Tiana placed her hand on top of his shoulder and stopped him.

"There is no need for you to sacrifice yourself. Hallie will take care of it".

"Huh?" Gallio muttered in a daze.



"Hallie has a magic that can cover the entire grasslands and wipe out all of these monsters at once" Tiana explained, one could also see the signs of exhaustion on her beautiful face.

"If you had something like this, why didn't you use it before? If it can cover the entire grasslands and wipe all the monsters a lot of lives would have been saved" Gallio was so heated in that spur of the moment that he lost control of his emotions.

His eyes glared at Hallie who was avoiding his gaze. One couldn't blame him after all, he had lost a lot of brothers from his guild. On top of that, he did not know what had happened to other members of his guild who had tagged along with the other teams and gone inside different floors.

"It's because I have been stopping Hallie from using that magic" Tiana came in defence of her little sister.

"Why?" Gallio's voice was hoarse.

"It's because it puts too much strain on her [Mana Lines] and she can't use it more than once a day. I wasn't sure if there were any other traps or powerful beings waiting for us thus I hesitated on using our trump card. However, now that it has come to this point, I have no choice but to allow her to use it".

Tiana's words were calm and practical but one could see the pain and remorse in her eyes. Being the leader of this team, she bore the responsibility of all their lives. Each and every life that was lost, was like a dagger stabbing into her heart.

Amongst those who had died were comrades and people that she used to know. The guild she was feeling could be imagined, if only she asked Hallie to use the magic earlier, if only she had burnt down the entire grasslands, then those demonic vines wouldn't have caught them off guard.

If it wasn't for that trap that appeared when they least expected them and drained them of their energy, all of this wouldn't have... Tiana sighed, there was no medicine for regret.

She accepted the hate filled glares of the adventurers from other guilds around her and nodded at Hallie who raised her staff high.

A vast amount of mana surged out of her body and quickly covered hundreds of meters of land. Wind started blowing out of nowhere and the fire in the surrounding started dimming.

Hallies' lips moved and a beautiful song like chant came out of her mouth. Every line, every chant was lyrical and melodious to hear.

Her song ensnared the attention of everyone, it was as if the song itself had some kind of power, even the charging monsters who were filled with bloodthirst and murderous intent, stopped.

The entire place had halted, as if time had stopped.

Slowly, the verses of the song took shape and the vast mana pouring out of Hallie amalgamated together to form a new kind of magic. The temperature of this place was starting to plummet and the magic was about to take form when a dull heavy noise came from the passageway where the door that led to this place was located.

BANG... the noise became louder and with a heavy bang, something came flying out of the passageway and dropped on the ground in front of them.

All eyes fell on the thing that came out of the passageway. To their surprise, it was the door that had barred their exit from this place.

The door that did not budge even after taking all their magic, was at this moment bent out of shape. However, what was surprising wasn't the door or it being out of shape, but the silhouette of a figure that was standing on top of it.

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A couple of minutes ago, inside the White Palace, Main Floor.

Simon and his closest aides were watching all the scenes that was unfolding within the spaces inside those doors.

"I must admit, that teleportation magic of yours worked quite well Bea".

Simon praised, his eyes glued to the window which showed the chamber and the seven doors that were installed on it. The teleportation circle that appeared after exactly 500 people stepped in front of a door was something that was set up using Bea's help.

"Master is over praising me. I cannot take all the credit. The door made by Sir wisp is quite strong too" a little flattered and a little embarrassed by those words, Bea smiled joyfully.

Wisp too made some happy sonar noise. The door that Tiana and the others had so much difficulty putting a dent on, was made from a special alloy that was discovered in the territory of the high orcs.

It was called Iridium and was by far the sturdiest metal below Mythril. It was difficult to process and was one of the main components required for manufacturing Andromedas Mk 9 and above.

Because the territory of the orcs was sitting on top of a humongous iridium deposit and went unmined for hundreds of years, Simon had lucked out quite a bit. With his agreement with the diluvian high orcs, he was free to mine the deposit as much as he wants.

In fact, he had sent several Mk 11 Andromedas to mine those places as they are sitting here.

The Andromedas was a technology that didn't belong to this world, and was by far the most advanced thing. The Mechas were something that the inhabitants of this world had never seen before. Its potential and capabilities were limitless.

Given that, it would be foolish not to invest in their production when it could become a huge asset to him. These cold war machines were one of the key aspects unique to his dungeon and was deeply connected to its safety and development.

Not only that, it was also connected to his growth and the path that he would walk in the future, would surely require their help. That is why, it was a good thing that the Andromedas were being improved steadily.

On that note... "How are they faring against the team from the strongest guild currently inside the dungeon?".

Simon turned his gaze towards one of the windows that depicted the scenes from the first door. The space where Marcus and his team went to.

[BEEP-BOOP-BEEP-BEEP-BOOP] the wisp released a multitude of sonar noises.

All his other subordinates tilted their heads. Since they didn't have a spiritual connection with the Wisp like him, they were unable to understand what it meant.

"Big brother, what is it saying?" Cecilia who was sitting by his side, asked. She wanted to hold this ball of light in her embrace; however, Wisp didn't allow it and always escaped her contact.

"It's saying that although the andromedas Mk 9 can hold its own against even a level 400 opponents, it still needs a lot more adjustments. Many of the original weapons of the Mk 9 are still not developed yet and the frame needs a lot more work too" Simon explained.

Chapter 560 560- Group Effort (2)

"Well, given that they were able to corner our enemy this much even though they were produced hastily, I would say they were a success. Although the unfinished version cannot be compared to a level 400 yet, they aren't too far either I would say they are around level 380".

The window that depicted the scenes of the first door, was devastated beyond recognition. Smoke and dust rose everywhere, metallic scraps and pieces littered the ground causing sparks and fire everywhere.

There was no hint of the previous greenery in the place anymore, it was replaced by gorged earth and large craters everywhere. In the middle of this mountain of scraps, were a group of people maintain a tight formation.

In the forefront of this formation leading the group was a young man with bright crimson hair and fur on his body. His hands had enlarged into claws and his overall frame was more than double the size of the people around him.

His eyes were beastly and crimson stripes like that of a tiger, formed some kind of complex pattern on his body.

SHIING... with a swipe of his sharp claws, he slashed numerous missiles before they could come near them. From time to time he would give a loud roar that would disrupt the mana around the place and cause interference in the air.

This sometimes affected the weapons of the Andromedas leading them to miss or malfunction.

"Hmm... is it because they are not tuned yet? Anyways, they were just unfinished versions meant to be used to collect information and perfect the Mk 9. Make sure you collect as much information as you can and retrieve the scraps later. Although they are broken, they can be processed again".

After giving his commands, he turned his eyes towards the other windows. Out of the seven windows that depicted the scenes within each of the seven doors, only four still had some activities. The remaining three were completely silent with no movements to be seen anywhere.

The scene inside those windows was a complete bloodbath with corpses littering everywhere. No survivors could be seen within those windows.

"I guess that many number of monsters was just too much for those teams from the big guilds to handle. But I must admit, the newly mutated Blaze Wolves and Pyrodactyls are quite powerful. You did a good job coleus".

The monsters chosen to attack the different teams of adventurers that came exploring the pit, were the mutated Direwolves and Anemodactyls. These monsters were only recently added to the dungeon after the mutation and much was unknown about them.

Hence Simon decided to take this chance and use these monsters to pit against the adventurer teams. This way not only will he be able to cull the numbers of the adventurers but also be able to collect data from both sides.

Apart from that, another reason why Simon used the Blaze Wolves and Pyrodactyl in this fight was that they were cheaper to spawn.

Unlike the standard way of spawning evolved and powerful monsters (like the Elder Lizardmen and pterodactyl) using the [Spawn] function, spawning the mutated monsters was much cheaper. Not only were they far stronger than their pre-mutated species, but the DP they required to spawn was also the same.

That is to say, not only spawning the mutated monsters saved a ton of DP, they also matched up to the standard evolved monsters in terms of power.

Not to mention, some of the mutated species were even stronger than the standard monsters that could be spawned by a [D] ranking dungeon. The mutation crystal was a powerful weapon that broke the balance.

It was a common knowledge that powerful monsters beyond a certain level, cannot be spawned in a low ranking dungeon. It was something that everybody knew and was the parameter that decided the ranking of that dungeon.

However, with the appearance of the mutation crystals on the bottom of the serenity pond, this notion was turned on its head in dungeon Laplace.

Imagine encountering a monster powerful enough to match minotaurs and hellhounds from middle ranking dungeons. Would it completely break the common conception of this world?

The dungeon Laplace led by demon Simon was starting to become such a place. Even if Simon was restricted by the laws of the dungeon and unable to spawn highly evolved and powerful monsters, with the aid of mutation crystals he can easily circumvent this restriction.

"Haha, Lord Simon is praising me too much. Although I was able to mutate the Direwolves and the Anemodactyl, they are still around level 300-350. If not for the effects of the Crimson Aggression Stalk, Poison detoxifying Clover and Draining Mercury Vines, the monsters wouldn't be able to achieve the result they did today. The credit should go to Fay, Maya and her team".

Coleus humbly passed the praise towards the two females.

What he said was the truth, these mutated monsters weren't powerful enough to overwhelm these teams without the backup of items such as the Crimson Aggression Stalk and such. Fay, Maya and her team who diligently cultivated these plants around the mysterious ruins and made it so that they aren't easily noticeable, did a greater job than him.

The Crimson Aggression Stalk and the other items in question were items that were found inside the bottom of the pond. The Crimson Aggression Stalk was the burning tree that the adventurers saw in the grassland.

Apart from its enthralling burning look, the tree had the effect of driving monsters with elemental affinity to fire, berserk. In this state, the power of the monster increases and they are driven into a state where they do not care about their life and simply seek to slaughter their target.

This anomaly in the monsters was also noticed by the adventurer teams; however, what they didn't know was that the burning tree referred to as the crimson aggression stalk was the cause of it.

Apart from the burning tree, the four leaf clover that the adventurers found was the cause of the poison, was another item that was brought out from the pond.

The effect of the item was to detoxify poison was storing them within it. However, when the clover grows to become a four leaf, the poison stored inside is expelled.

"That is not true, if not for Cecilia's assistance in concocting such an effective poison, we wouldn't have been able to..." Fay and Maya in turn passed the praise towards Cecilia who wasn't expecting to be involved in this relay of passing the credit around.

"H-How can that be, Miss Bea, Uncle Coleus, Miss Fay and Maya worked hard too. I on the other hand simply asked the Deep Sea Alligator King and Lightning draconic serpent to simply share some of their poison to concoct one. I cannot take all of the credit".

Cecilia shook her head and passed the credit back towards them. Seeing these people not want to take each other's glory and accomplishment, Simon involuntarily smiled.

"In that case, I take my words back. It was my fault to praise you individually when all of this was a group effort. I'm proud of you all. All of you deserve my praise".

He stepped up and praised everyone for their efforts. Although the battle for the defence of their dungeon was far from over, from this endeavour one could tell how diligently his subordinates had worked to fortify and secure the dungeon.

The 34th floor was just the beginning, there were far more trickier and dreadful traps waiting for these adventurers on the lower floors. The dungeon Laplace was fully prepared to receive the guests who came from the top and the most powerful guilds of the kingdom.

Seeing the confident and relaxed faces of the people around her, a small smile blossomed on Irene's face. In the beginning, the master of this dungeon Simon, was all alone. Most of the management of the dungeon was done by him and the burden was also shouldered by him alone.

Yet with time, he gained new comrades that are willing to share this burden with him, help him manage this place and create an abode for its inhabitants. Slowly but surely, a group with him as the core was gathering around him.

Irene's smile had a trace of melancholy but more than that there was this unknown emotion of sadness and pain. No one was able to notice her smile or know what the reason for her sadness was.

"Master I believe your idea to add the draining mercury grass deserves the most credit" Annette stated.

If there was something that had the most effect and was the key to their victory, it would be the last trap that Simon had set. Yes, the Crimson Aggression Stalk and the poison detoxifying clover weren't the only traps that were setup in those places.

The reason why the multitudes of traps and the newly mutated monsters and incomplete andromedas Mk 9 were able to achieve what they did, was because of the draining Mercury grass.

This trap which was nigh impossible to detect, turned the situation completely in their favour and swept the adventurers off their feet.

The Draining Mercury Vines wasn't an item that was brought out from inside the serenity pond. Far from it, it was an item that was drawn out from the [Ga??????] in one of Simon's random sprints.

Of course, being an item that he himself had created, he knew all about the draining mercury grass and how to bring out the best of it. As a result of that, the adventurer teams that dived inside the seven doors, suffered massive losses.