

D. of Pride 771

Chapter 771 771- The Hidden Mastermind (3)

By now, many of the cellars were destroyed and families freed, leaving only a few locations that were now strictly being guarded by the criminal organisations. The security was so tight that even with these many adventurers, it was like facing an army.

The other side completely overshadowed them in terms of numbers, the difference was so vast that it was not even a proper comparison.

The side of the criminal organisation had the numerical advantage. On the other side, the adventurers had the aid from the insanely powerful demi human group led by Annette.

Their power which managed to surprise the adventurers at every turn, was enough to turn the tides of any battle. With them, the adventurers had complete faith that they wouldn't lose.

However, this battle was to save the families of the adventurers who were being suppressed and used as pawns by the criminal organisations. Their tyranny could only be broken by freeing the hostages which in essence was a stealthy mission.

The key here was speed and strategy, catching the enemy by surprise and raiding them before they could do anything. The whole mission would fail if the enemy killed the hostages.

As such, even though they could absolutely crush the other side, they could not move hastily, lest they lose the hostages they wanted to save.

All that said, it was not like the side of the resisting adventurers was at a complete disadvantage. The many raids they did on the criminal organisations to save the hostages, not only brought their names to the hit list, but it also made them stand out.

By now almost all of the adventurers in the tower town were aware of them. They now knew that there was a force that was directly opposing the criminal organisations with the motive to save them.

Sometimes, having even the tiniest bit of hope in the darkest of hours can become the brightest beacon of light. The adventurers of the tower town who had almost given up all hope and became complacent in despair, had a change of heart after hearing the news.

What they were waiting for wasn't something as extravagant as a saviour who come and free them all but a tiny hope in the form of a chance. This was their moment, many of them broke out of their gloomy shell and carried the spark of revolt.

This tiny revolution that started as a small spark, became a huge raging fire in the tower town now. The criminal organisations were already having a tough time but now they also had to divert their efforts to suppress the adventurers under them.

It was like fighting a war on two fronts, the criminal organisations were taking heavy losses. That was not all, knowing that there was a force fighting for them, many adventurers started making their own resistance groups while some joined Blake and the others.

The fight with the criminal organisations was full on.

"Them tightly guarding the locations is not totally a disadvantage for us. See it like this, if they are tightly guarding a place, it must mean that they are keeping the hostages there. This move of theirs could instead backfire on them since they are revealing the location of the cells to us"

Blake commented while looking at a chart on the table. The chart depicted the map of the town, the forest, the criminal organisations' strength and various other things on top.

"It's as Blake said we can use this to our advantage instead. Now we know the other locations where they are keeping the hostages. The problem is... these locations are all inside the town. If we want to raid these places we will need to enter the town; however, doing so we would not be able to avoid detection" Wyot agreed.

The other adventurers present fell silent. The tower town was completely under the control of the criminal organisations, from passing merchant to bars and all important establishments and locations were all under their surveillance.

Carrying out the mission to save the hostages under such a condition was extremely disadvantageous for them.

"If only we could divert their manpower and attention to somewhere else. Then we can just sneak in, rescue the survivors and safely escort them outside"...

"You are asking too much, besides even if we somehow can divert their attention how will we escape their eyes? All the people in the town are under their control. We will be discovered even before we step inside the town"...

"Dammit, is there nothing we can do?"... Meanwhile when the adventurers were trying to find a solution, Annette stepped towards Cynthia and spoke something in a voice that only the two of them could hear.

"What? Can something like... No, if it's him then it's no surprise. Alright, please do so, I will convince the others".

Saying so, Annette stepped forward in front of the adventurers and decidedly declared.

"There is still a way, everyone do not lose sight of our objective. While rescuing the hostages is our primary goal, nothing will change if we do not defeat the criminal organisations plaguing the tower town"

"Even if we save the hostages now, if we leave the criminal organisations at large, things will only repeat themselves. To make sure that nothing like this happens again, where your friends and families are not taken hostages again we need to defeat them thoroughly. This is a perfect chance, since the other party is only expecting us to raid the cellars, we can take them by surprise if we attack their base. This is the chance to take the Tower Town back".

SILENCE~...

A serious atmosphere engulfed the tent, the various adventurers inside, all had a solemn expression. What Cynthia said was something they had all thought about at least once. However, they had been avoiding addressing it.

They all knew in their head that just saving the hostages would solve nothing, as long as the organisations known as The Vipers and Chaos Order stood, the same events as now would occur once again.

To stop that, they need to push the criminal organisations out of the tower town and take the place for themselves. What the Tower Town has become now, was nothing like the place the adventurers desired.

The place that they once used to call home, the place that was filled with adventurers, excitement, stories, riches and of course dangers... to turn into something like this.

What Cynthia said was also going through their mind, they needed to take the tower town back. After all, it was a place built by adventurers for the adventurers.

"Is there a chance to win? I mean the opponent is a First Grade country after all?" one of the adventurers who had newly joined them asked.

After interrogating the members of the Blades of Ascension and other high ranking members of the criminal organisations, they were fully aware of who their opponent was.

The mastermind behind all this was not the Vipers or the Chaos Order, they were just the front, the true enemy was the First Grade nation, the kingdom of Eldoria. It was no wonder that many adventurers here thought that they had no chance in a full frontal battle.

"Are you doubting her highness? If she is saying to fight, then it must mean that we have a chance. Haven't you witnessed her strength already? Besides, it's time we directly attacked those criminals. Those people who took your loved ones hostage and oppressed you like a slave, don't tell me that you don't want to take revenge on them?"

Wyot got up from his seat and heatedly glared at the adventurers. After finding his wife from one of the recent rescues, he became a devoted follower of Cynthia to the point where he would not tolerate even the slightest slander directed at her.

The intimidation of a level 400+ assassin could be imagined, it quickly forced the whining adventurers to shut their mouths and swallow whatever they were about to say.

After the place became quiet once again, Cynthia continued—

"I know what you guys are concerned about, so let me clear some of your doubts. We will not be fighting a full frontal war, you can be relieved of it. When we attack the criminal organisations, their attention and manpower will be divided. Using this chance we will attack their base and get rid

off them in one fell swoop. Don't be mistaken our first priority is still the rescue of the hostages. As such, as soon as we free your families we will commence our battle".

The adventurers looked at each other, one of them stood up and asked "Your Highness, what is your reason for believing that their forces would be divided when we attack them? Is there some kind of intervention happening in the tower town that we don't know about?".

What this young adventurer asked was also in the mind of the others.

"A reasonable question; however, please forgive me for not being able to answer it. For now, I can only ask you all to believe in me and give it your all. I know I'm asking you all to put your lives in line without telling you the reason but please me when I say that we will definitely prevail over them" Cynthia bowed her head and requested.

Even if there were many adventurers here who came from other nations, who here did not know about the princess of Ellesmere.

She wasn't renowned across the lands just for her beauty but also for her tactical and intellectual acumen that allowed her to create a huge merchant chain that operated in multiple kingdoms like the Serene Palace Merchant Guild.

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It was the case of her reputation preceding her. For a person of her stature to be bowing her head, one could imagine the impact it had. All the adventurers got up from their seat while her subordinates tried to stop her.

"Your Highness please raise your head, a royalty like you shouldn't be bowing their head".

Despite Alvara and the others telling her to stop, Cynthia continued to bow her head until her feelings were conveyed through her actions.

"We understand your highness, we will believe in you and fight. Please raise your head"...

"That's right, we have already witnessed miracles happening before our eyes. We already have full faith in you, there is no way our belief in you will waver at this point"...

"Yeah, we were prepared to put our life on the line since the beginning. Your Highness has helped all of us rescue our families back, our gratitude towards you couldn't be explained".

One by one, the adventurers started showing their agreement. The atmosphere of doubt inside the tent was quickly swept away bringing about a positive and optimistic change.

"Haha, to quickly win the hearts of others with just her action, only her Highness could do it. These old eyes weren't mistaken, she is truly the light of the Ellesmere royal family" her subordinates muttered in a low tone.

"Your Highness can rest assured that we will fight with all our strength. We will take back the tower town from them" With Blake's comment, the plan was set in motion.

"Un, I leave it to you all. Although I'm not proficient at forming battle strategies, I will also fight with you all. There is no need to worry about being discovered while sneaking inside the town, I have few connections I can make use of".

Although the number of merchants coming to the tower town has gradually decreased over time after the criminal organisation grabbed hold of the town, being the mistress of the largest guild, Cynthia still held a lot of influence.

If it's the merchants who owed her, they would no doubt help her once they knew she was alive. She can make use of her connection to sneak all of the adventurers in without getting detected.

Time passed by, every detail and options were discussed and little by little, a plan was coming to life.

It would not be long before these brave adventurers would throw the gauntlet of battle at the criminal organisations, toppling their tyranny and kicking them out of the tower town forever.

"Everything has been almost finalised. However, there is still one detail that is left. The date of the battle".

Every eye turned to look at Cynthia. If the adventurers here were captains and leaders of their team, then she was their commander-in-chief. This detail was something that only she could pick.

Cynthia glanced at Annette who gestured something with her hands before she stated. "How about three days from now?".

Blake and the others nodded their heads.

"That works, we will at least need that much time to prepare all the equipment and materials needed for the upcoming big battle"

One cannot fight a battle with blunt tools and equipment after all. Basic rules of adventuring— a weapon is not just a tool, it is your partner. You need to take care of it. The more well maintained and sharp the weapon is, the more it will respond to your commands. Your odds of victory is only as strong as your weapons.

—When going on an expedition always make sure you are well stocked on potions, antidotes, skill crystals, scrolls and various other things. You might not know what might happen in an unexpected situation. As such, having ample preparation is the sign of a veteran.

The adventurers not only needed to repair their weapons and armour, but they also needed to stock up on expendables that they already used in the recent raids. Three days would seem short finishing up all those tasks.

If it was before the adventurers would have trouble gathering even the basic equipment such as potions and scrolls. However, with the arrival of Cynthia, all those problems were easily solved.

She might have lost her place as the princess and her kingdom was devastated, but she still commanded a lot of influence and respect that she had built over time.

A few loyal merchants group who refused to believe that she was dead, came to the tower town to find her. Through their help, it was easy for the adventurers to stock up on their gear.

Before anyone knew it, three days quickly passed by.

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At the dawn of the next day, a cavalcade of carriages carrying goods arrived at the east entry point of the tower town. Two guards who carried the badge of a green coloured viper in their armour, stopped the carriages for questioning.

"Which merchant guild are you guys from and what goods are you carrying?"

One of the guards asked. Although he posed a question to the driver, his actions showed no indication that he was waiting for an answer as he started ransacking the goods.

"Hoh? What's this Alcohol huh? Hmm, it's not bad"

The way he started drinking and taking some of the goods, it looked nothing short of robbery. However, the driver did not say anything. No, it was not that he didn't want to say anything, rather he couldn't.

The town he was entering was rather a lawless area with the criminals and murderers loitering all around the place. As such, if he valued his life, it was better for him to ignore the actions of the guard.

The two guards who obviously belonged to the criminal organisations, did not stop there, they started blatantly looting goods from all the carriages.

"Do you have the permit to enter?"

With a wretched smile on their face, they swiped their thumb and index finger in an obvious gesture.

Getting the cue, the driver quickly took a couple of gold coins and handed it to them.

"Hehe, we have received the permit, you can go now".

The horses neighed pulling the carriages forward. Just as the cavalcade was about to pass through the gate, one of the guards suddenly asked.

"Does all the carriages carry alcohol and food?".

The driver nodded.

Satisfied by the answer or perhaps with the harassment, the guards left to harass the others in the line. Had they been properly doing their duty and checked each and every carriage, they would have found out that, the carriages weren't just carrying food and Alcohol but instead something much dangerous.

Something that would create a huge commotion on this day, surpassing all their imagination. However, the guards were unaware about it, the whole town was unaware of what was about to happen.

As the decisive hour slowly drew near, the cavalcade of carriages continued forward and came to a stop in front of a particular building. The signboard in front of the building depicted a beautiful white palace and four bold words... Serene Palace Merchant Guild.

That's right, this was one of the buildings owned by Cynthia's merchant group. To be more exact, it was owned by her first brother after her presumed death. Now with the prince missing and the news of the princess returning alive the loyal subordinates which still remained in the guild, welcomed her happily.

The door to the building was pushed open and a man who appeared to be a butler walked out.

"All preparations have been completed, please park the carriages at the backside of the building".

On the butler's words, the carriages turned around and slowly entered the backyard of the building. The backyard of the building was a large space with big sheds built to receive the cargo.

Once the carriages came to a stop, the butler stepped forward and knelt with one knee.

"Welcome your Highness, we have been awaiting your arrival".

The tarpaulin covering the cargo in the carriages was pulled open and multiple people walked out of it. They numbered over fifty, leading them was a violet haired woman with a stunningly beautiful appearance.

She was wearing a long robe with light armour underneath to protect herself. Even though she was dressed in a common adventurer's garb, there was no hiding the inborn aura of nobility that she inadvertently released.

"It's good to see you again Blamenco. Are you doing well?" Cynthia greeted the butler.

Blamenco was one of the few loyal retainers of hers whose loyalty did not change side after she was declared dead.

Blamenco smiled, his eyes that contained relief, joy, delight and many other expressions continued to stare at his liege.

"I can't explain how good it is to see you again your highness. As you can see, the merchant guild isn't doing good. After your disappearance, the first prince took charge; however, His Highness barely had any knowledge about commerce. All he did was give us unreasonable commands and funnelled all the money he could squeeze from the guild into building his faction"

"As a result of which, many of our businesses failed, transactions halted and the market taken over. Right now, except for the branches located in the foreign nation, all our businesses have stopped"

"The conditions are even worse in places that were affected by the war, especially the capital. After the first prince bribed and poached over most of the employees the ones that remained either left the capital after the defeat of the royal family for fear of their lives or went underground. However, now that you are here, we still have hope. Not only the royal family can be revived, but the merchant guild can begin anew once again under your leadership. Your Highness, please command this old subordinate".

Chapter 773 773- Dungeon Overflow (2)

Blamenco explained with a heavy heart. One could see from his expression and his tone how desperate of a situation the Serene Palace Merchant Guild was after Cynthia's disappearance.

It could be said that the situation of the merchant guild was no different than the sinking ship. With the captain missing and several crewmates either switching ships or escape through lifeboats, he was amongst the few people loyal enough to still try and save the ship from sinking.

Cynthia looked at his old retainer, she could imagine what kind of hardship he had to go through. Meeting her today had rekindled the hope in him.

Nevertheless, it was a pity that she was unable to respond to his wishes. Things have changed drastically since then, it was not like before when she could give her all into managing the guild.

Right now, she was bound by a contract and no longer had as much free will as before.

"Stand up Blamenco, we will talk about this later. Right now, I'm here for a different reason. I have already clarified you about the situation through a letter, have you completed all the preparations?"

"Your Highness does not need to worry, I have completed everything as per your instructions"

Blamenco felt that something was different about the princess; however, he did not question her decision and proceeded to show everybody inside. The store was nothing like what it was used to before.

There was not even a single item remaining inside the building to be sold or auctioned as everything had been looted by the criminals.

"As Her Highness instructed, I have used the Presence Isolation Scroll on the whole building. Your presence cannot be sensed by anyone outside the building. However, if you step out, the effect will wear off. Additionally, the Presence Isolation scroll will only work for three hours, after that, the effect will naturally wear off. If you are going to make a move, you need to do it during this window of time. Is it alright your highness?"...

"Un, you did a good job Blamenco?"

Cynthia praised her butler's preparedness. In this short period of time not only did he prepare a cavalcade of carriages with loyal people to sneak them in, he even got his hands on the Presence Isolation scroll, an item that very rarely appeared even in the capital. His preparation could be said to be perfect.

"That's great, now all we have to do is wait for the chance and strike them when the enemy is completely disorganised" Blake stated looking out of the window.

"The town looks all normal and silent. Will there really be an opportunity to strike them?"

It was no surprise that the young adventurers thought that after all, nobody was briefed about when and how the opportunity would arrive. All they were told about was to put their all when the moment came and strike down the enemy when they were distracted.

While the adventurers that newly joined them were anxiously discussing about the plan, people like Blake and Wyot who had been the part of the team since the beginning, were calmly assessing the situation.

They did not doubt even for a second that Cynthia's plan would fail.

"What did 'He' say? Is it going to start soon"

Sensing the rising tension amongst the newcomers, Cynthia approached Annette and her gang and asked.

The success and failure of this mission depended on the 'move' from 'that' guy. The plan was devised based on the fact that 'he' would make the first move. As such, she was waiting for that very moment.

"You don't need to worry Your Highness. I just received a message from my sister, the plan is already underway. Master said that he also sent an additional help. I wonder who it is? He didn't even tell me" Annette explained with a smile "Just wait a little it would start soon... oh it already started".

As soon as she said that, the ground beneath them started shaking.

At first, it seemed like a small tremor but as seconds went by, the tremors intensified causing the whole place to shake fiercely.

"What is going on? Why is the building shaking? Is it going to collapse?"...

"Idiot, it's not the building, look outside the whole town is trembling, it's an earthquake"

Surprised at the sudden turn of events, one of the adventurers pointed at the town outside the town. Just like he had said, it was not the building that was shaking, but it was the entire town.

People were scurrying out of their houses and running all over the town in mass panic.

"What's going on? Why is there a sudden earthquake"...

"What should we do? The hostages are kept in the underground cellars. If the earthquake gets any more intense, the walls and grounds might collapse on them"...

"What should we do leader?".

Just as the adventurers were starting to panic, a stern shout brought them back to their senses.

"What are you all acting like headless chickens for? Getting frightened over some earthquake and you still call yourselves adventurers? Get a grip of yourself, in a few moments from now, we are going on a battle against our arch enemies. Before that, don't loosen up".

Blake's commanding shout woke the adventurers up. That's right, this was just an earthquake, what was there to be afraid of? Haven't they experienced much more dangerous and difficult situations before?

The adventurers quickly came to their right mind and composed themselves. Shortly afterwards, the intense shaking of the ground also stopped.

When it all seemed like it was just a natural calamity, an event that surpassed all their imagination, occurred. The curtain raises for the true calamity. ROAARRRRR...

Piercing roars came from one corner of the town followed by streams of people running and screaming away.

What was going on?

"That roar just now, it sounded like it came from monsters" Being the adventurers they were, the thing that they were most knowledgeable about was monsters.

Without even needing to see the creature with their own eyes, they could already somewhat tell what species and race they were with just by their howls.

"What the... look out, the roars were really from monsters" With one person's emphasising it out, the rest of the adventurers also turned to look outside.

"It's true, the monsters are running havoc in the centre of the town"...

"They are Stromwolves, Warring Mandrills, Battle Bears, Fire Eater Rats, Killer Worker Bees and even Blazeounds among them. There are so many, where did they come from? Did they attack the town?"...

"Idiot, the town is guarded by walls and sentry towers all around. If there was a monster outbreak from the forest, the sentries would have alerted the town. The fact that they did not, means that the monsters appeared from inside" Wyot walked towards Blake and asked, "What do you think?"

"It's just like you have said, it is unlikely that it is a monster outbreak. They are running amok everywhere; however, if you notice properly, they are mainly coming from the east side of the town where the tower is".

"You mean they are pouring out of the dungeon? It couldn't be..." Wyot instantly caught the meaning behind Blake's words.

"That's right, it is a Dungeon Overflow" Right as he said that, Blake's eyes could help be drawn towards Cynthia who seemed to be the least bit surprised out of all.

Did she know that this was going to happen? No, in the first place, the diversion that she was talking about, was it the Dungeon Overflow? If so then how did she know about it? Who are those people next to her? What was their identity?

Unwittingly, Blake found his eyes turn towards the people next to her and accidentally meet the eyes of Annette.

At that very instant, a bone pricing chill ran down his spine. He felt as if those eyes weren't watching him, but his soul. He felt like a tiny insignificant thing in front of a huge mysterious force.

Hurriedly, he broke eye contact and only then did this mysterious feeling disappear.

"Blake, are you alright? Your face looks pale?" Frida asked in concern.

"Huff.. huff... I'm alright, it was nothing" the former hurriedly changed the topic and declared in a loud crisp "Everyone get ready this is the chance we are waiting for. The whole city is in uproar with the outbreak of monsters right now. Their guard and security have no doubt become lax. This is our opportunity, while our enemy is dividing their forces to counter the monster we will attack the underground cellars at the same time and save all the hostages".

"Are we going to ignore the monsters?" A few adventurers asked.

Having fought some of these monsters before in the dungeon, they knew full well how strong and dangerous they were. If they were not dealt with properly, then the whole town would be trampled over by the monsters.

"At this moment we do not have the liberty or the manpower to deal with both the criminal organisations and the monsters at the same time. Our numbers are already very low compared to our enemies, we cannot spread ourselves thin anymore"

"We will stick with the plan we made as for the monsters, we will leave them to our enemies. Besides, I have a feeling that the tower town won't be destroyed"

With Blake saying so much, there was no longer any doubt remaining inside the adventurers. They straightened their gears and got ready for battle.

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"Thanks to sir Blamenco, we already know where all the locations are. The criminal organisations have two more underground cellars where they are keeping the hostages. One is in the south side of the town, and the other is in the north"

"Both of these locations are not far from our current place. After we save the hostages, we will escort them back here. Sir Blamenco, can I leave them in your care for a while?"...

"Leave it to me", Seeing the butler nod, Blake continued: "After we are done escorting, we will regroup in the east side of the town, in front of the two tallest buildings there. That is the headquarters of our enemy. Thanks to the monster outbreak, their numbers would be thin. We will cut through straight in and take the heads of their leader in one go. If anyone has any questions, ask them now?".

One adventurer from the group, raised his hand "What should we do if the enemy is too strong for us to handle or beyond our league?"

Blake glanced at the adventurer, the other party was a relatively young adventurer who was doing his best to hide his anxiety.

He did not blame them after all it was a battle of life and death and the odds was against them. They did not know much about the enemy's power, even the Blades of Ascension were outer members and did not know much about the organisation.

In such a situation where they were oblivious to the enemy's strength, they were still diving headfirst into their territory. Blake understood why they were nervous; however...

"Diving into the unknown is that what we adventurers do? When you dive inside the dungeon, you never know what kind of dangers might lurk in front of you or what strong monster you will encounter next"

"We call ourselves adventurers because we have the ability to overcome all obstacles. An adventurer is someone who pulls through even the most challenging of situations. So if you find yourselves in a similar situation, overcome it with your willpower"

Gulp... All the young adventurers with limited experience gulped their dry throats and nodded their heads.

To lighten the pressure on the shoulders of these greenhorns, Blake added with a grin "What? It's a hundred years too soon for you brats to worry about fighting a powerful enemy. With us present, you might not even get the chance to make a debut".

The veteran adventurers thumped the shoulders of the young ones and laughed. Soon, the atmosphere lightened up and the operation began.

Just like before, the adventurers divided themselves into two groups, one was led by Blake while the other by Alvara. After the adventurers exited the building, it was only the Annette group remaining inside. Even Cynthia had joined Alvara's team.

"Let us get to work too. Remember, Master said to keep the casualties on the side of the adventurers to a minimum. So keep in mind when you decide to help them. Another thing, we are not the heroes of this show, so try not to stand out too much. The spotlight needs to be on the princess and the adventurers she is supporting. Am I clear?" Annette declared.

"We understand Sister Annette. All we need to do is prevent the adventurers from dying right? My kindreds are more than capable of handling it on their own. I wonder why Master sent additional help. Who could it be?" The group discussed as they leisurely exited the building.

"I will go to the city's south side and back up those people. Maybell, can I leave the humans who went to the north side to you?" Theodore requested his sister.

"Leave it to me, brother. I will not let those weak humans die" Maybell nodded in affirmation.

"What about you sister Annette and sister Emma are you guys going to act separately again?"...

"That is correct, I plan to monitor the whole situation from a distance and correct your slip ups that I know you guys will make. Emma will aid me in that" Annette replied in a matter of factly.

"I see... well I guess sister Annette will not have any task to do since we are not going to make any mistakes"

Leaving those words behind, Theodore jumped off. Maybell followed suit heading off towards the north side.

"Those cheeky brats" Annette saw them off before disappearing too.

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North side, in the backyard of a big dilapidated building once used as a warehouse by a merchant guild, Blake and the team led by him, quietly assembled. Fallen under their foot were the bodies of the guards protecting the place.

"I expected there to be more of them. It seemed like most of them left to contain the monsters. This is our opportunity, let's quickly free the people inside"

Blake's impatience was given after all, there was a fifty per cent chance that his sister who was kidnapped by the criminal organisations, was held here.

Led by him, the team of around twenty adventurers stormed through the back side of the building.

"Enemy attack!! It's the adventurers, don't let them free the hostages"

Their commotion quickly attracted the attention of guards inside who hurriedly took out their weapon and engaged. Thus a fierce fight broke out between the adventurers and criminals.

Blake led the charge, mowing down one enemy after another. At his level, there weren't many enemies that could stop him and besides right now he was fueled by the adrenaline rush to find his sister.

No matter who it was, if they stood in front of him, they would be mercilessly cut down. Like a tiger that knew no fear, he cut through the enemy lines and appeared before the cells where they kept the hostages.

One of the guards there who saw Blake approaching, randomly pulled out a person from the cell and pointed his sword on their neck.

"Dammit, what are the others doing? Allowing the enemy to get so far in" The man threatened "Stop right there!! If you value the life of the hostages, don't take any more step further".

He knew that the goal of these people was to free the hostages they kept here. As such, as long as he held their 'weakness' they wouldn't be able to do anything.

"Kuh!! Let go of me. You bastards, my brother won't forgive you all. He will definitely come to save me, at that time see what happens. It will spell your end"

The girl who was being threatened with the sword, struggled. She appeared to be in her twenties with a childish face and rebellious attitude. In terms of appearance, she was downright beautiful, with crimson hair tied into pigtails, blue eyes and fair skin.

Most importantly, her appearance resembled very much the man who just stormed in with the adventurers.

"Mona!!" Blake exclaimed.

The girl turned her head at the mention of her name and was surprised to see the figure in front of her.

"Brother!!" She called out. Her eyes quickly turned misty as a surge of joy, pain, relief and various other emotions threatened to overwhelm her.

"Brother, save me!!" She cried out again.

"Hoh?!! What a turn of events, so he is your brother huh" The guard suddenly made a sinister expression as he glanced at Blake "If you value your sister's life, throw your weapons and surrender".

His threats wouldn't have been as effective when holding some other hostage. However, through some turn of fate, the prisoner he brought out to threaten the other party, turned out to be their sister. There was no way they would be able to act out now.

As expected, after seeing that it was the life of his sister that was at stake, Blake obediently put his weapon down and backed away.

"Good, now tell all the people you brought to do the same. If I see you trying to pull wool over my eyes, don't tell me that I didn't warn you"

He brought the sword closer to Mona's throat. A thin trace of blood leaked from her neck and caused her to groan in pain.

Blake's eyes immediately turned bloodshot. Nevertheless, with his sister's life in line, he did not try anything that would put her in danger. He obediently turned to face his comrades and opened his mouth.

The criminal thought that he would tell the others to throw their weapons too; however, the words that came out from him were something else entirely.

"Frida, is it done?".

The man was confused for a second, what was he talking about?

"I knew you wouldn't be patient enough to wait for long. That is why, I was prepared since the beginning.... Lightning Magic Mastery- [Chain Paralysis]"

Before he could understand what was going on, the ceiling across the entire building started brightening up with arcs of lightning travelling all across the blade.

In an instant, one two, three... numerous bolts of lightning dropped on him, paralysing and jolting his body away. It was not only him all the criminals in the building were electrocuted by multiple chains of lighting until they were knocked unconscious.

Blake immediately rushed forward and held his sister, preventing her from falling down.

"Mona are you alright? Sorry I am late. They didn't do anything to you did they?" he asked relieved to find his sister again.

"Un, I'm fine although they would sometimes scare and beat us up, they didn't go as far as to kill anyone. But it's all fine now, you are here" Mona aligned her head on her brother's shoulder and felt all of her exhaustion and worry disappearing like magic.

"Healer, call the healer here fast" Blake roared.

The location on the north side was successfully captured. The adventurers released the captive hostages and explained the situation. Those who found their families, cried in joy and relief in their reunion, just like Blake and Mona.

"She is fine, I healed all her injuries. She just needs rest, being held captive here must have drained her mentally and physically" the healer advised.

Blake pulled his sister and carried her on his back. Now that the rescue was completed, it was time to get the hell out of here.

"Those who are newbies, carry the hostages who can't walk by themselves. The veterans make sure to clear a path for them. The town is overrun by monsters, make sure you don't let your guard down".

Carrying the hostages, the adventurers slowly exited the building and made their way back to their base. On their way, they had to repeatedly change their route due to the monsters overflowing the streets and roads.

However, the monsters were the least of their worries as they also had to hide from the members of the criminal organisation who spotted them a few times but were beaten back.

Just like that, they made their way around the town. Weirdly enough, for some reason they did not encounter any strong opponent on their way.

"The building owned by the Serene Palace Merchant Guild, is just a couple of blocks from here. If we run straight, we ought to make it in a couple of minutes. Hang in there for a little more while"

Blake spoke raising everyone's morale. Although he said that to his teammates, it was in essence directed towards the non combatants they were escorting.

"Alright, you can leave it to us, Blake. We will make sure to properly protect them. That said, it is very weird. We have come in range of the monsters to sense us many times. Yet none of the times were we attacked. Even the ones that have heightened senses, ignored our presence and continued to attack the town"

"No matter how you see it, they are behaving weirdly. It is as if they do not care about us, destroying the town and causing Mayhem is their main goal" Wyot analysed.

"You are probably thinking too much. They are monsters after all, they do not care about what they destroy. We weren't attacked probably because their focus was on something else"...

"You might be right"

Although Blake made up some excuse to convince Wyot, he himself was not convinced by his words at all. First, it was the princess predicting the dungeon overflow and then there were these monsters who kept ignoring them.

It was commonly known that the monsters were feral and extremely aggressive in nature. They were ruled by instinct to kill and hunt and would attack anyone. Except for the sentient and aberrant ones that infrequently appeared, almost all the time that was the case.

However, the monsters overflowing the tower town, flipped that concept on its head. Not only different races were collaborating with each other, but they were also moving in an organised way, ignoring everyone other than the members of the criminal organisations. Almost as if somebody was leading them.

"Your Highness, what have you been up to?" Blake muttered to himself.

From the time of Cynthia's disappearance and her miraculous return with strong individuals by her side and then this. If he connected the dots, a terrifying thought appeared in his head.

Nevertheless, since he didn't want to jump to any conclusion, he quickly dispersed such thoughts and focused on his mission at hand.

The princess would never betray them, or else she wouldn't have helped them to rescue their families. That's right, what he needed to do right now was not to question her but to fulfil his duty to the best of his abilities.

On his mark, the adventurers and the people they were escorting, started running. The monsters were all focused on the ones that were fighting back providing them the perfect distraction.

Just as they passed the first two blocks and were about to reach their destination, Blake came to a stop at the third block.

"What's wrong Blake? Let's get the hell out of here while the monsters are still distracted" Wyot asked noticing his friend stop running.

"Please take her with you, I have something I urgently need to see"

Before he could get any answer, Blake asked him to take care of his sister and swiftly took off. The direction he was headed for was where the monsters were swarming from.

"It can't be, was I mistaken? However, there is no way I will forget that aura, the nightmare that still haunts me to this day. It has to be that thing"

Blake muttered to himself, increasing his speed even further. Soon, he arrived on the rooftop of the Adventurer's Association building.

Standing away from him, facing below was a figure watching the swarm of monsters flood the town. As if perceiving his presence, the figure turned around and looked at him.

Standing at a towering height, they had a physique that was the manifestation of both power and agility. Crimson horns grew atop their heads, like wicked thorns, they curved majestically while releasing an ominous aura.

The figure possessed two pairs of eyes strategically placed one below the other. They gleam with an otherworldly intelligence, glowing like coals in the depths of the night. Their body was enveloped in flames, burning from the shoulder blades, the fire cascaded down to their shoulder like a mane.

Their feet which were caught in perpetual fire, left fiery footprints behind. Draped in ancient yet which still retains its undiminished grandeurs, the armour that the figure wore bore the marks and tales of battles long fought.

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At the same time... Dungeon Laplace, Main Floor, White Palace...

Simon walked inside the Main Hall after finishing his training. Waiting inside, were his closest aide and family.

As he walked in, Bea came over serving him tea and light refreshments. Simon sat down and enjoyed their company.

"It looks like your body has completely adapted to your new rank" Irene commented observing his obvious growth.

Just like she said, be it his aura or his presence, it was nothing like before. He had not only become physically stronger, but the entire air around him had changed. It was like watching a calm sea suddenly become stormy and turbulent.

That was the level of change that Simon had undergone. That's right, he had finally reached the Demon Marquess rank, standing at level 608.

After becoming a Demon Marquess, there was no obvious external change. Instead, all progress was internal. He felt like an invisible ceiling that had been suppressing his progress and blocking out his view, suddenly disappear giving way to a clear blue sky.

He felt like he had soared, crossing one realm and coming to the other. From this vantage point, the view that he saw was also different.

If he had to relate it, the change would be like an old piece of machinery getting a cutting edge upgrade. That was the feeling he was getting right now. He felt like he could do everything that his previous self was incapable of. Everything and anything came to him easily.

So this was Demon Marquess... Simon clenched his hands, he had stepped one step closer to his goal once again.

At the level and rank he was in, he could easily be counted as the top twenty per cent of the strongest people in the world. He was worthy to look down on the myriad life forms of the world.

Sparked by the Fragments inside him, the rank up not only made him more powerful, but it also boosted his ego and ambitions. Unbeknownst to him, his perspective and outlook changed. Whether it be his bearing or temperament, they carried a faint trace of arrogance now.

These changes were subtle, causing the person himself to be unaware of it. For him, nothing much changed other than him getting stronger. However, for those close to him, they could almost see those changes.

"Although I have reached the Demon Marquess rank, there is much progress that needs to be made" Simon replied.

It hadn't been long since he had reached this rank as such, he wanted to try out various things and improve all of his skills and magic.

"By the way, how goes Annette and the other's mission? Did they send any news back?"

He questioned looking at Irene. These past few days, he was busy trying to rank up as such, Irene was the one who received all the updates from his subordinates.

"It appears that they are doing well. They have already found the ones who are responsible for the current condition of the tower" Irene answered passing him an Echomir plate.

"Hoh, they are already raiding the base of the criminal organisations huh? It's a good thing that I sent him there. Cynthia is doing a great job too, just her influence allowed all the adventurers to band together under one banner. If she keeps this up, soon she will become the hero of the tower town"

Reading the progress made by his subordinates, a smile appeared on Simon's face.

"Is this the reason why you sent them there?"...

"Yeah, as you know even if I or my subordinates made the move and cleared the town of its filth, it would only serve to make the people of the Tower Town who were already terror struck by the criminal organisation, to be even more afraid. This would run contrary to what I want to achieve"

"The Tower Town will become the lifeblood of the dungeon in the near future. The benefit it would provide would be enormous, there is no way I will allow it to destroy itself even by my own hands"

Who could this mysterious aide be?

ViciousPepper

776 Chapter 776- Mars (3)

Simon answered looking up. Although he was staring at the ceiling, his gaze was in fact much higher up, at the tower town located right above his dungeon.

"You know that's not what I was asking" Irene shook her head telling him that she was not asking about Cynthia.

"What I meant was, was it alright to send it up there? Haven't you just recently given it a name? It hasn't even adapted to its new strength yet, aren't you worried that his new powers might..."

"Don't worry, I have known him the longest. Other than the Twelve Heroes, I have the strongest bond with him. That guy is the very epitome of loyalty. He would give up his life but he would never do something that would cause me any harm"

There was not even a trace of doubt in Simon's voice as he said that. The being he sent up there to aid Annette and the others was one of his most loyal subjects and his first companion after he reincarnated in this world. Other than the Twelve heroes, he knew him the best.

"Even I was surprised at first when it came to me with that request. However, it all worked out in the end. The Naming Ceremony was a success. I can't wait to see how he will grow in the future".

That's right, the being who came to Simon to give it a name the other day was none other than the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse.

"It was a good thing that you had ranked up or else there was a high chance that the Naming Ceremony would have failed" Irene mentioned, she was there during the naming ceremony.

"That's right master, sometimes you do the most dangerous of things. Was there a pressing reason as to why you had to give it a name after you had just ranked up? Couldn't you have waited after your rank increased again?" Bea added, her face still carrying traces of concern from that event.

Simon laughed to relieve their worries and answered "That's right I had a compelling reason. When I saw it approach me, I could see the determination and resolve in its eyes. It had very much made up its mind"

When Simon saw those eyes, he knew that the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse wanted more power. Lately, its growth had stagnated and with him summoning more and more powerful subordinates, it felt like it had lost its place as one of the most trusted subordinates of its master.

Even though it knew that Simon still cared about him, it wanted power. The Bloodthron Demonic Warhorse wanted to become his strength, the subordinate he could rely on the most. That was its goal, to become the most powerful subordinate of his.

Seeing through its determination, how could Simon back down? Even though there was a risk of him getting severely injured and the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse dying if the naming ceremony went wrong, as a man he couldn't back down.

11:00

Seeing through its determination, how could Simon back down? Even though there was a risk of him getting severely injured and the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse dying if the naming ceremony went wrong, as a man he couldn't back down.

Just like Irene and Bea had said, it was true that the success and the risk would have been much less had he ranked to Demon Duke or higher before using the Naming Ceremony. However, had he waited that long then he would be slighting the determination and goal of the Bloodthron Demonic Warhorse.

Fortunately, the rank of Demon Marquess did not let him down. The Naming Ceremony was a success and the Bloodthron Demonic Warhorse became more powerful than it was before.

What's more, after receiving a name, it even ranked up and unlocked a new form. On the other hand, after giving it a name all of Simon's mana disappeared and he was in a mana drain state for a whole day with it not showing any signs of recovery.

It was so severe that he was at a risk of dying. It needs to be mentioned that after becoming a Demon Marquess, Simon's MP was well above 600,000. Yet all of his mana was absorbed bestowing just a single name.

Had he given a name to a different being, it wouldn't even have made ripples in his huge mana pool much less strain. However, all of his mana was drained just to bestow a name to the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse.

It made Simon wonder how much stronger it had become.

"Still, master I wonder why you chose to give it that name? Is there a special reason behind it?" Bea asked.

"Hmm? Yeah, I gave him the name of a fearsome fictional warrior who once mowed down the Impenetrable fortress of Helldor and slaughtered an entire army on his own. His name is..."

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As the figure slowly turned around, one could almost feel its robust and powerful aura almost bursting out of its body. Each step that they took, echoed with the sound of heavy armour, and their imposing stature resembled a battle hardened warrior.

If demonic might could seamlessly blend with the traits of a fierce warrior, then the figure in front would be the result.

No matter who it was, if they saw him for the first time, they would be overwhelmed by his appearance. The warrior was the living testament of the terror it strikes in the heart of its foes.

Blake who saw it for the first time was no exception; however, his reason for getting overwhelmed was different.

The creature looked different but there was no mistaking it. Blake was sure of it that it was the nightmare he had encountered that year inside the dungeon.

The creature who seemed like they galloped out of the depth of the abyss, the paragon of destruction that obliterated his guild. Although it possessed a humanoid appearance now, how he could forget the terror and despair that it brought?

Even until now, he was unable to forget it, the appearance of that demonic warhorse was etched in his soul.

"Hm? How did you come till here?" the warrior opened his mouth and questioned in a deep sonorous voice. Though more like a question, it was talking to himself.

"Who... who are you?" Blake snapped out of his trauma and asked.

"Me? Why do I have to introduce myself to you? However, since you have asked, let me tell you the name my lord generously bestowed on me."

It might be just his imagination but for a second there, it seemed like the warrior was smiling.

"My name is Mars, you would do well by remembering it. Now then, let me ask you. Are you with them" The warrior named Mars, pointed at the members of the criminal organisations fighting the monsters in the distance.

"You don't remember me?"...

"Is there a reason why I should know you? Forgive me but I am not very good at remembering faces, especially the ones I have no interest in" Mars declared brusquely.

"Kuh!!"

Blake was shocked. What was this guy saying? After crushing him and his entire guild, it was saying that it did not even know him. Haha, this was not even funny anymore.

Blake was devastated, disgusted at himself and outraged by his lack of strength. If only, if only he had the strength to protect his teammates back then.

Blake grit his teeth, gathering all his willpower, he tightly gripped his sword and pointed it at the Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse.

"Hoh? Since you are pointing your blade at me, then it means that you are one of them. Very well..."

The Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse now named Mars, did not mince any more words either and got ready for battle. The instant he got serious, it was as if the very air had become heavy as if some kind of invisible mountain was pressing down.

Cracks started running down on all sides of the the Adventurer's Sssociation building that they were standing on.

Mars lifted his hands and brought it near his head. At that instant, one of the two crimson horns on its head, suddenly stretched out, extending as far as eight feet long.

The next second, he casually snapped the horn from his head and held it between his hands. The horn previously on his head had now become like a spear, dreadful and sharp.

Alarm bells started ringing inside Blake's head, he who had experienced the menace of the horn also known as Bloodthron first hand, knew how terrifying of a weapon it was.

He increased his guard further.

Whoosh... Wind blew—in that very second, the opponent disappeared from his view. Almost at the same instant, the piercing noise of air being split apart, came from his side.

There was not even any time to think, Blake instinctively moved his sword to the side barely blocking the attack.

CLANG... An intense metallic noise rang out and he was thrown back. Not good... now airborne he was susceptible to attacks.

"Heavy Armour"

Quickly, he used a skill that increased his weight to land faster. Having gained his footing again, Blake activated all of his augmenting skills.

[Super Enhanced Strength], [Super Enhanced Agility], [Ultra Enhanced Agility], [Ultra Enhanced Endurance], [Rock Skin], [Fortress] [Body Enhancement], [Superior Shield Guard], [scorching Armour]:— [[Solar Protector]].

At this moment, Blake erupted with a powerful yellowish red light. He seemed to have merged with his armour as his size ballooned becoming bigger and bigger until he was as big as the Abyssal warrior in front of him.

It has been more than two years since that incident, Blake was not the same weak him back then. He has levelled up a lot since then and has gone through a class change. His previous rare class [Crimson Guard] has now become the even rarer, [Solarblaze Protector].

777 Chapter 777- Cynthia's Passionate Speech

This time, their rematch would be different or so Blake thought. The [Solar Protector] avatar that he merged with, clashed fiercely with the Abyssal warrior. Each clash of their weapon brought extreme bursts of winds and shockwaves that devastated the area around them.

Their fight was so intense that the booming noise travelled far and wide, reaching the ears of his teammates and the members of the criminal organisations who were fighting to contain the monster outbreak.

CLANG... CLANG... CLANG... Blake chained one attack after another, giving his all. Being a level 441 [Solarblaze Protector] he was in no way weak, his talent could also be said to be superior to most of the adventurers in the tower town.

Even amongst those adventurers who came from Second or First-grade countries, he was extraordinary.

However, there existed a gulf that no amount of talent or extraordinariness could make up for and that was called the level diff. Blake had made a huge mistake in judging the strength of his enemy.

Just because he could clash evenly against his opponent it didn't mean that they were identical in strength. If Blake had grown a lot since then, so did the Blackthorn Demonic Warhorse who jumped from rank [B] to [A] after receiving a name.

That's right, Mars was only playing with Blake up until now, if he wanted to, he could have easily closed the battle in a matter of seconds. After all, there existed a vast level difference between them.

The current Bloodthorn Demonic Warhorse as per the Adventurers Association Classification was no longer a [Disaster] class, but rather a [Catastrophe].

The meaning behind the two words might be the same; however, the difference was of day and night.

BOOOM... Space shook, the moment Mars decided to become a little serious, all the air from the surrounding was immediately blasted away, forming a vacuum.

The hand that was holding the Bloodthorn proceeded forward regardless of the strength his opponent put to guard himself.

In a matter of a second, the Bloodthorn overwhelmed Blake, piercing his shoulders and pinning him into the debris structure behind.

"Kugh!!" he spat out a mouthful of blood. Even though the yellowish red avatar looked like a golem, the [Solar Protector] was in essence him. It taking damage meant his real body taking damage, it being pierced means his real body being pierced.

After suffering a critical damage the [Solar Protector] came undone and Blake returned to his normal size. At this moment, he laid motionless against the wall while holding his right shoulder where a huge hole was punctured.

"Your attacks lack weight, give up you are not my match. I have other things to attend to, so let's close this"

Mars lifted the Bloodthorn ready to end the fight when suddenly his concentration faltered and he became motionless for a second.

Seizing that window of opportunity when his enemy was distracted, Blake immediately rushed forward and dealt a powerful blow. The sword in his hand erupted with a brilliant light, creating dozens of sword auras.

CLANG... CLANG... BOOM... The sound of his attack connecting was deafening, the powerful energy wave blew Mars back and created a small storm.

The attack just now concentrated all of his power, it ought to do some damage. Blake knew that defeating his enemy was a foolish hope; however, he at least wanted to deal them some damage before he died.

Whoosh... in the next instant, the dust was swept away by a powerful gust of wind and the figure of Mars slowly appeared from the debris. Be it his presence or the fluctuation of his aura, nothing about him had changed.

It looked like the attack did nothing to him; however, despite that Blake had a smile of victory on his face as if he had won.

"The attack was not bad. I'll take this scar as a recognition of your strength" Mars muttered.

If one looked carefully, one could see that there was a small cut in his armour. That's right, Blake's attack earlier did manage to do some damage to Mars regardless of how insignificant that was. It was for this very reason that he was smiling in victory.

What was there to be so proud about a small cut that did not even manage to bypass the armour? If anyone didn't know about the history between Blake and the Bloodthorn demonic warhorse, they would obviously think that.

However, those in the know would understand that this was a sign of his growth. In his first battle, Blake was helpless against his enemy, he couldn't even land a single blow and was knocked unconscious from their single attack.

In their rematch after more than two years, although he was still no match for his enemy, he could at least land a few blows and even chink their armour. This was a result he couldn't have achieved without a sufficient leap in strength.

"What is your name warrior? In recognition of your strength, I shall do you a favour by remembering your name?" Mars asked staring straight at him with its four pitch black eyes.

"It's Blake... from the Burning Arrows Guild"

Blake replied, he thought that the other party asked his name as a courtesy before he ended his life.

However, to his surprise after uttering the words 'I see... then let us fight again in the future if our oaths cross' the warrior from the abyss left.

Blake was left in a state of surprise, the moment he challenged Mars in a moment of brashness, he knew that his chances of returning alive were less than 1 per cent. However, for some mysterious reason, his opponent who was ready to deal him the finishing blow, suddenly changed their mind and left.

Blake had survived, as he lay there gazing blankly, he understood from his wildly beating heart and his cold hands, how close to death he was.

It would be a lie to say that he was ready to die after all, he still had his sister Mona and various responsibilities that he needed to shoulder. He couldn't just die and discard all those responsibilities.

"Kuh!!" Blake grabbed the hideous wound on his shoulder and grimaced "I have lost so much blood, I need to take care of this wound soon".

"Ah!! Found him, he is there. Quickly, support him, he is wounded"

He heard some familiar sounds coming from the direction he came. It appeared that Wyot and the others came to get him after escorting the families of the adventurers back.

"Why are you...?" Blake wanted to ask but the next second he shut his mouth when he saw his sister among the adventurers running towards him while crying.

Indeed, it appears that he cannot die...

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The adventurers had successfully raided the two locations and had freed all of the hostages that were being used to suppress the adventurers of the tower town. Now with their 'weakness' no longer in the hands of their enemy, they are free, they no longer have to listen to what they have to say.

Inside the Serene Palace Merchant Guild building, all the adventurers assembled. With the first part of their plan being a success, it was time to start the second phase.

Saving the families of the adventurers who have been taken hostage was only the beginning, their true objective was to defeat the criminal organisation and kick them out of the town.

Now that the other side had lost their most important card that kept the adventurers obedient to them, and their members scattered all around the town, it was the opportune time to attack the criminal organisation's base.

However, on their own, with their insignificant numbers, it was not possible to destroy their headquarters and defeat all of their members. To make this plan work, they would need the help of the adventurers of the tower town.

It begs mentioning that a significant force of the criminal organisations were the adventurers. If they could persuade the minds of the adventurers and win them over to their cause. The number disparity will quickly overturn.

After all, in the town of the adventurers, the people you would find the most are the adventurers. With all of them on one side, their chance of victory would rise even higher.

"You Highness, as per your instructions I have prepared the High Frequency Transmission Conch and have installed them all around the town. All the people of the town would be able to hear you clearly with this" The butler Blamenco handed a transmission conch to Cynthia.

The latter extended her hands and took the conch. The next part of the plan depended on her. No matter what, she needed to make it a success. Taking a deep breath, she composed her mind before speaking into the transmission conch.

Zzzz... Zzzz.... At this moment, static sound could be heard all over the town. Whether it be the members of the criminal organisation, the adventurers, the merchants, the slaves or simple people who came to the tower town to make a living, all of them turned their heads in confusion.

[Adventurers of the Tower Town, hear me! For too long, you have laboured under the dark shadow of the criminal organisations that sought to chain you with tyranny and strip away your freedom. No more! Today marks the dawn of a new day, a liberation from the shackles that bound you to their selfish will]. Who was talking? The people of the tower town had the same question.

"Look over there, it's coming from that direction" Someone pointed.

"It's coming from over there too. What the?! Who installed the High Frequency Transmission Conch all over the town?"

Chapter 778- Cynthia's Passionate Speech (2)

While the members of the criminal organisation became enraged, the transmission kept on continuing.

[Your families and loved ones who were held hostage to force you into submission, have all been freed. The chains that bound you have shattered, and we stand here today with a choice. A choice that was once denied to you]

[There is no longer any need for you to listen to the selfish and tyrannical orders of those who sought to exploit you. No longer do you have to toil like slaves, serving their every whim. The time for subjugation is over and all of this was only possible thanks to some of the adventurers who even while being threatened and suppressed chose to fight against our enemies. It is thanks to the efforts of these brave warriors who put their lives on the line to rescue us all from the cruel enslavement and give us freedom]

[These courageous adventurers who plunged the gauntlet of war against the criminal organisations and are at this moment fighting a desperate battle. The enemy is strong, their numbers far higher than us. However, they still struggle. Why? It's because we are adventurers, we are free spirited people and not some slaves. We fight to save our loved ones, we fight for this town]

Cynthia's impassioned speech reverberated all across the town causing many to stop for a moment and listen to her.

Inside the Serene Palace merchant building, Blake, Alvara and the other adventurers got ready to head out after receiving some light treatment.

"Blake, you shouldn't push yourself. You just received a critical wound. Maybe you should stay at the backlines during the raid"

Frida spoke in concern. A few hours ago, the man had suddenly run off somewhere only for them to find him in the middle of a war torn area with a gaping hole in his upper body.

"Don't worry, the wound missed my bones. If I don't move the area much, I should be fine. Besides, we are currently going off to face the criminal organisation. Even having double or triple our numbers, wouldn't suffice"

"Her Highness is doing her best to gather more reinforcements; however, there is no guarantee that those adventurers would fight with us, just because they are free now. In a situation like that, I cannot be sitting back at the backlines"

It was as Blake said, there was no way of knowing what the situation would be until the end. Frida could only back down and choose to stay close to him in case he needed her aid.

Making their final preparations, the adventurers exited the building and headed for the criminal organisation's base.

Outside, Cynthia's speech continued to sound, reaching all the people of the tower town.

[This town is the adventurer's home, it is not theirs to control. It belongs to you all—the resilient, the brave, the free. Brave adventurers hear me, we stand at a crossroads. Right now in the eastern district of the town, where the base of the criminal organisation is, a fierce battle is going on]

[The heroic adventurer who freed us all and rescued our families are currently fighting with the enemies. However, we are outnumbered both in numbers and strength and urgently need your help. Brave warriors of the town, it's time to make a decision. We can unite and stand against the

Criminal organisations or forever be their unwitting pawn. Remember, our choices will shape the destiny of the Tower Town]

[Let our unity be a beacon that guides us. Let our determination be a force that propels us forward. Today, let us forsake our identities and fight not as Adventurers, slaves, nobles or merchants but as free men and women. We fight for our town, for our families, for the right to determine our own fate. Free people of the town, hear the call of freedom! I am Cynthia Augusta Ellesmere, the princess of the Kingdom of Ellesmere. Stand with me, stand with each other, and let us face the enemy together. Our victory is not just the defeat of those criminals but the triumph of the indomitable spirit that resides within us all. Onward, everyone, for the Tower Town!]

The transmission stopped and Cynthia's speech was over. However, the indomitable spirit that she spoke about, quickly spread amongst the people of the town, swaying minds and persuading hearts.

CLAK... the transmission conch fell from Cynthia's hand, her figure staggered and she was just about to fall when Annette behind her supported her.

"This is all I can do with my current strength" she spoke softly.

"You did more than your part, your highness. I'm sure that after hearing your passionate speech, quite a lot of minds would be changed".

Annette wasn't just throwing empty words, she could actually see the spark of rebellion that Cynthia ignited inside the hearts of the people, spreading all across the tower town like raging fire.

People whether it be old or young, Adventurers or slaves, all of them started having a change of mind.

The impassioned speech that she gave, no doubt managed to capture many hearts, inspired and stimulated them to rebel. However, more so than her speech the fact that it was her who was standing with them, leading them, made the most effect.

"Did you hear that? It's Princess Cynthia, she is trying to help free all of us adventurers. Truly, she is the pearl of our kingdom"...

"Princess Cynthia? Isn't she dead? I heard that she fell into the dungeon and went missing. Is she really your princess"...

"Shut up you outsider, don't slander our princess. There is no way she died, this must be a conspiracy of her brothers"...

"That's right, she has such a beautiful and noble soul, even god can't bear to kill her"...

"Well whatever, I don't know about gods and all, but if she can free me, then I will fight with her. Let's show those arrogant sons of bitches who have been ordering us left and right, who adventurers are".

The people of her kingdom were so, but she managed to even grasp the hearts of those who came from the other kingdoms. What's more, this small ripple was only the precursor of a bigger wave that was about to come.

"Quickly pass this message to every adventurer in the tower town fighting the monsters and even the ones inside the dungeon, that they no longer have to take orders from the members of the criminal organisation. Their families are safe and sound and nothing is holding them back from standing up for themselves anymore"...

"Yes, tell everyone that the princess is alive and is leading us adventurers to get rid of the Criminal organisations".

While the spark of revolution was being lit everywhere around the town, in the eastern district near the headquarters of the Criminal organisation. Fighting the outbreak of monsters, was a group of fighters fully decked out in high ranking armours and releasing a powerful aura.

At this moment, they wore a scornful and mocking face as they sat atop a mountain of monster corpses.

"Cynthia Augusta Ellesmere? I don't know how she survived, but even if she is the one leading you guys, you still don't have a chance to beat us"...

"Just because they managed to defeat some no name guilds under us, did they think that defeating us is also that easy? Do they even have any idea who our leaders are?"

The man looked at the adventurers of the tower town below who were being used as meat shield and asked.

"Na tell me, does your princess think she can defeat the Astral Strider and the White Beast, the two title rankers who rank above 3000?".

The adventurers below trembled in fear as the gaze of the man landed on them. They couldn't utter anything in return, after all, they knew the true strength of the two criminal organisations.

The Blades of Ascension guild who they thought were so powerful, were only just the tip of the iceberg. The really strong members were the ones currently standing in front of them.

"Haha, why are you asking these weaklings, these pacified cowards who don't even have the guts to raise their weapons against us anymore? Let them come, we will show them that they don't even deserve to get close to our leaders"

The members laughed. At this moment, their senses suddenly picked up multiple presences coming towards them from the direction of the tower.

"More monsters? Man, I'm getting tired of these small timers, ain't there a big powerful monster somewhere?"...

"It's good that you are but don't get too caught up in it. Remember our orders, we need guard and stop the monsters here before they can get anywhere near the headquarters"...

"Haha, you are right. But man why do I feel like the monsters are ignoring the other places and keep pouring here? Well, whatever, since I am bored I will clean all of them myself. The warrior holding an impressive looking spear, spoke and slid down the mountain of corpses.

Even when facing the onrushing horde of monsters, his expression looked bored and lazy as if there was no energy in him at all. His spear flashed, ripping through the air they produced multiple spear auras that quickly swept all the incoming monsters away, bisecting and killing them instantly.

A rain of blood fell, followed by hordes and hordes of more monsters pouring in. It was like a festival of tomatoes with blood and gore littering the streets and walls red.

Chapter 779- One Man Army

"Too weak, too weak... it's not exciting at all" Muttering to himself the warrior of the spear threw his weapon like a projectile at the incoming hordes of monsters.

Like a dragon sweeping through the land, the berserk energy imbued inside the spear was so powerful that it completely decimated the horde. It didn't matter if the monsters were in front of its trajectory or around it, everything and anything was ripped apart by the sheer force surrounding the spear.

Like a weapon of mass killing, it did a huge AOE damage.

The spear continued forward, decimating everything. Just when the warrior was about to recall his spear back, it suddenly struck something and for the first time in a while, the spear came to a stop.

"Hoh? What's that? Something was able to catch my spear?!"

The warrior in spear muttered in curiosity as he looked in the distance. Past the corpses and corpses of monsters, there was something black slowly approaching them.

At the same time, on the rooftops of the nearby buildings, the six True Vampires led by their two Progenitors assembled.

"What's this? We were a step too late, that guy found them earlier than us. What do we do master? Should we join hands?"

Drow asked, kneeling on one knee in front of Theodore and Maybell. The others too followed suit, waiting for instructions.

"Brother, what did sister Annette say?" Maybell asked from the side.

The situation was quite different from what they had been familiarised about. They were the ones who were supposed to take on the strong members of the criminal organisation while leaving the weak and moderately strong ones to the adventurers.

However, with 'his' arrival, things had diverted from their course, causing them to no longer be able to rely on the plan.

Theodore's eyes continued to stare at the figure in the distance, it was only after some time that he replied—

"We wait and watch. Sister Annette said that the plan had changed with his arrival. We need to improvise as per the situation demands. In any case, she told us not to get involved with him and to maintain our distance. Even I am confused. Anyways for now let's see how he handles things".

Back at the scene, after stopping the warrior's spear, the black figure walked towards them. Walking in its two bipedal feet, the entity was decked out in an impressive ancient armour.

Two crimson horns twisting strangely and majestically, adorned its head. It had four pitch black eyes and was covered in flames. As it slowly stepped forward leaving fiery footprints, one could almost mysteriously hear the clanging noise of its armour hitting the ground.

The atmosphere changed with its appearance, causing all the battle hardened fighters in the area to instinctively turn their eyes towards him.

"What the hell is that thing?"...

"A new kind of monster perhaps?"...

"A monster? I haven't seen a monster like that. Could it be the reason for the Dungeon Overflow?"...

"If it's as you say, then it means the being in front is an Abberant!!"

The members of the criminal organisations discussed. It was hard to recognise the being in front as human nor did it look like your typical monster, making it hard to make a differentiation.

That being said, the fact that it was surrounded by monsters and came from the direction where the dungeon was, it was not hard to assume that it was the leader of the monsters, the anomaly that caused the Dungeon Overflow.

In any case, there was no doubt that it was their enemy.

"I don't know much about Abberations but isn't the dungeon just a [C] rank intermediate tier dungeon?" the warrior of the spear asked in confusion.

It was only at this moment that the others realised that something was wrong. The Dungeon Laplace was just an intermediate tier dungeon, how could it produce an Abberant?

"Well, Aberrant or not, since it was able to survive my spear, then it means it's somewhat strong. Before that Princessess' 'Brave Warriors' arrive, I think I will kill my boredom fighting that thing till then"

Saying so, the spear warrior rushed forward, jumping from wall to wall. He extended his hands and the spear that was caught by the mysterious figure, broke free and returned to him.

"Hehe, I don't know who you are or what you are, but I Lexus of the Thunder will be your opponent"

Lexus introduced himself brandishing his spear. Every time he waved his weapons, the rumbling noise of thunder would accompany it. That was not all, if one looked carefully, they would also be able to see thin arcs of crimson lightning running through the body of the spear, giving it its crimson look.

There was no denying it, the spear was a high ranking weapon, possible [S] tier.

Facing Lexus, the figure continued its stride unabated as if he couldn't see him.

Hmph... Lexus snorted, spun his spear and assumed a lunging position. Berserk crimson thunder, emitted out of the spear, covering it entirely in crimson and appearing just like a bolt of thunder.

RUMBLE... Just as the figure stepped into his range, Lexus hurled the spear forward. Just like a bolt of thunder, when it was let loose it produced a deafening rumbling noise and sped forward with the exact same intensity.

15:23

RUMBLE... Just as the figure stepped into his range, Lexus hurled the spear forward. Just like a bolt of thunder, when it was let loose it produced a deafening rumbling noise and sped forward with the exact same intensity.

The abyssal figure or more accurately Mars, stopped his advance at this moment and glanced at the oncoming projectile launched at him. He brought out his own weapon, the Bloodthorn and clashed against it.

BOOOM... at that very instant when the spear and the Bloodthorn collided, there was a blinding flash followed by arcs of thunder being discharged everywhere. Buildings after buildings which were hit by the thunder collapsed down, covering the entire street with dust.

"Oi.. Oi... would you look at that? Using your signature skill, [Extreme Lightning Blitz] as your opening attack, didn't you say that you wanted to kill some time before those idiotic adventurers fooled by the sweet words of their princess, arrived?"

One of the fighters standing atop the mountain of corpses said. They were donned in an extraordinary robe and were aligning against a huge Cross they used as their staff.

"Shut up Malcom, just because your rank is higher than mine, don't tell me what to do"

Lexus snapped back. Although they were currently working for the same side, it didn't mean that they were allies. In fact, all eleven of them who were currently the top executives of the Viper and Chaos Order, came from different nations and places and were practically strangers to each other.

If not because the money or incentive they were provided was enough to win them over, they wouldn't even work together because of the pride they possessed. After all, all of them were once a renowned rankers in their own right before they were blacklisted by the Adventurers Association for their actions and crimes.

However, when they were still an active adventurer recognised by the association, their rank was above 5000.

At first thought, the number might not sound so impressive. However, these numbers that the Adventurer Association assigned to the adventurers weren't just ordinary numbers but represented something much more grand and overarching.

In the vast expanse of the Central Continent there exists an uncountable number of talents and mighty warriors. Yet among these uncountable talented warriors, only a select few are given the title of Rankers.

Rankers, they are the most extraordinary, the finest of all the talents out there. Picture, if you will, the sprawling landscapes and teeming cities of the Central Continent, each corner echoing with tales of valour and strength.

Yet, within this vast tapestry, only the select few emerge as the embodiment of might—the rankers. Their very existence signifies a pinnacle of power, a testament to the fusion of innate talent, honed skill, and the extraordinary heritage encoded in their blood.

When one becomes a Ranker, they have surpassed the limits of human capability and have stepped into the realm of their own. They have become titans revered and feared all across the central continent.

That said, there are only a limited number of seats that these titans can occupy, the Adventurers Association categorise these seats as the, 10,000 Rankers.

The number represents the top ten thousand strongest people in the Central Continent. To be chosen among the 10,000 and becoming a Ranker, is to ascend the echelons of the finite strongest and becoming the very embodiment of might.

That is what being one of the 10,000 meant. Furthermore, it is generally known that the lower one's number was, the closer they stood to the zenith of this elite group and the more formidable their strength and their legendary feats were.

So from the number 5000, one could imagine how powerful this group of eleven people were. Each and every one of them had long surpassed the legendary level of 700 and stood somewhere between the later level of 750-800.

That was how powerful they were. Naturally with unmatched strength, came unmatched arrogance, all of these people who stood on the mountains of monster carcasses, thought that they were the strongest and weren't willing to listen to anyone other than the two organisational leaders.

"Snort, do as you want, but don't destroy the town. I don't want to be held responsible for the destruction you caused" Malcom uttered in annoyance.

"You don't have to tell me. Anyway, I think we are done here. I don't think that Abberant or whatever it was, survived my attack"

Chapter 780- One Man Army (2)

Since his field of vision was blocked by the clouds of dust, Lexus wasn't able to see what happened of the black figure. However, he was confident that his skill was able to do the job.

Assured in his victory, he extended his hand in an attempt to recall his spear back. A crimson light flashed in the distance and rushed at Lexus.

Just when he was about to grab it, his acute senses cultivated through multiple battles, sent alarm bells ringing in his head. Hurriedly, he tried to retract his hand; however, it was already too late.

With a splash sound, the crimson light penetrated through his hand and went straight for the members of the organisation behind him.

CLANG... a huge cross clashed against the crimson light, barely stopping its advance. With its momentum gone, one could finally see what the crimson light was.

"Thunder Spear?! Oi Lexus, what the hell are you doing aiming that thing at us?" Malcom was just about to lash out, when he noticed an arm dangling just a few inches away from the spear.

Surprised, he turned towards Lexus only to see him with an arm missing and blood pouring out of his side.

What just happened?

It was not only him, the commotion also attracted the attention of other members who saw Lexus' miserable condition. Nevertheless, instead of getting alarmed or concerned, they laughed out loud, finding the situation extremely funny.

The guy who always thought that he was better than them, was currently kneeling on the ground, clutching his shoulder where his missing arm was and screaming. Nothing could be better than this.

All of them felt that he got what he deserved. If it was any other team, they would have no doubt shown some shock or distraught at the injury of their teammate. However, as mentioned before the top executives of the two organisations weren't your usual team.

As long it wasn't them, even if someone died among them, they would only sneer in contempt. Teamwork? Camaraderie? There was no such thing as that.

If anything they would even rub salt into the wound just to aggravate the other party. Like what was happening right now.

"Heh, I thought that you said you finished the Aberrant. But from what I see it's far from over and it doesn't seem like you can fight anymore in your condition. Do you need my heal? If so then beg for it. If I can feel your sincerity through your words, then I can perhaps throw a heal or two at you. What do you say 'Mister I'm the best'"

Malcom grinned at the other party's misery. He held his healing back, wanting to humiliate Lexus even more.

"Hmph, since that guy is rendered out of commission, it means that I can take the enemy for myself right?"

A warrior with a wide frame and carrying a huge cudgel stepped forward. His entire body was marked with war paints and scars from battles that he carried around like battle trophies.

Out of all the people, he was the one who was decked out in the least amount of armour. However, one look at his impressive and toned muscles which had been trained to their limits, was enough to tell people that even without the need for armour, just penetrating through that steel like muscles would prove an insanely difficult task.

It was for this reason that the warrior did not wear any armour on his upper body. It was because he had full confidence in his steel like muscles.

"Hoh? Are you going up next, Garder?"

Everybody cheered seeing the next contender step up. Given how cheerful they looked even after one of their teammates was defeated, it didn't look like they were seeing this as a battle, but more like a game.

Since one player was out, it was time for another player to replace the first.

Carrying the enormous cudgel on his shoulder, Garder jumped. His impressive physical strength allowed him to rise as high as ten meters before landing in front of Lexus.

"Kuh!! I'm not done yet, I will be the one to defeat that thing" clutching his wound and struggling to get up, the latter said with vehemence.

"Haha, for how long can you keep that tough guy act? Just accept it that you lost just like a good loser. Now, get aside or else I will kick you out, I don't have time for losers. It's my turn to experience the might of the Aberrant that you couldn't defeat".

At this moment, the figure of Mars could be seen walking out of the dust. As soon as he appeared, a huge cudgel swung from overhead and carrying a mountain crushing force with it, came attacking him.

BANG... the hammer was stopped by the bloodthorn which did not even budge while facing a weapon many times bigger and heavier than it.

"Oh? You are quite strong Aberrant. No wonder, you were able to injure Lexus to that point. However, I am different from the guy over there who focuses more on magic rather than on physical combat. He is a disgrace for a warrior".

Unlike Lexus who uses magic as his primary attack, Garder on the other hand focuses purely on physical strength. He believed that only overwhelming physical strength could triumph over everything.

His attacks were also like beasts ferocious and heavy. Although it did not have any flashy aspects, it was refined to the extreme and had no shortcomings. Plus coupled with that ludicrous strength of his, he was like a berserk typhoon invincible and unstoppable.

[Raging Elephant Avalanche], [Vorpal Hammer Assault], [Mountain Shattering Slam]...

Garder came down with one powerful attack after another all the while carrying a smile of excitement on his face. This was the first time in a while he was able to let loose.

Ever since he was an adventurer, he was a fighting enthusiast. Perhaps a little too much which caused his other teammates to be discontent with him.

One day, the arguments with his teammates got out of control and he accidentally ended up killing one of them. From then on, he became blacklisted by the Adventurer's Association and was barred from entering any high ranking dungeon.

Except for dungeons which were basically teeming with strong monsters, it was practically very difficult for him to find any opponent that could last even a few minutes against him.

Frustrated and with no place to release his bloodlust, the instinct within him practically screamed every day wanting to draw the blood of his opponent and almost drove him mad. It was for this very reason that he joined the criminal organisation.

This way, he was able to fight every day. However, these opponents were nowhere close to his level and it was practically a boring day every day. That was until today, he had finally found an opponent that could last so long against him.

Not only that, this opponent was strong enough to defeat a member of the organisation like Lexus and give him a sense of dread and exhilaration.

Needless to say, it never appeared to Garder that he would lose after all, in his head he thought that the reason why the Aberrant was able to defeat Lexus was because it was impervious to magic attacks. Which practically put the latter at a disadvantage.

However, since he did not rely on magic and only pure physical strength and skills, there was no way that he would be defeated. That had always been the case for him.

Unfortunately, he couldn't be any more mistaken. Mars had yet to show any of his abilities, up until now he was only fighting with the pure physical stats that came from his race and level. He had yet to activate even a single skill.

It was all in his opponent's head that he was impervious to magic and all that nonsense when in actuality the magic in Lexus' spear wasn't even able to bypass his powerful defensive stats and numerous magic resistances.

Anyways, if Gardar knew who he was up against, there was no way he would be so conceited and smiling right now.

That being said, it was true that using just his physical stats, Mars was unable to defeat the opponents. They weren't just your average run of the mill enemies, but actual powerful adversaries with strength that couldn't be underestimated.

What's more, there were eleven of them.

BANG... Garder swung his hammer with a full body motion, generating immensely powerful berserk winds that slammed towards Mars, causing him to skid back.

"Defeating them one by one would take a lot of time. To impress my lord, I cannot allow these people to hold me back. I guess I will use that skill"

Finally as if having enough of this pointless battle, the Bloodthron demonic warhorse decided to become serious. His choice was backed by the fact that the opponent wasn't weak either.

Mars—There was a reason why Simon chose to give the Bloodthron Demonic Warhorse that name. To understand his reason, one has to first know about the fictional warrior whose name it was based on.

Mars, a mythical warrior who was known for his legendary feat of razing the fortress of Helldor which was said to be impenetrable, singlehandedly. It was said that his strength was like that of an army, his every strike akin to a legion.

On the battlefield, he was like an unstoppable juggernaut, mowing down enemies in masses. An impressive achievement indeed; however, as fate had it, Mars was once renowned as the strongest general of Helldor before its fall.

