

Extras 401

Chapter 401 City Of Adventures [Pt 2]

"Ahh..."

As Burke raised her head to gaze upon the man who called for her, she found herself quickly overwhelmed by the presence before her.

There wasn't just one man, but two people: a man and a woman.

They both had a unique aura that only veterans gave off, but Burke didn't recognize them.

'There are over ten thousand Adventurers in this City, but there aren't that many that have such peculiar appearances and intense vibe.' Burke found herself gulping as she took in the sight.

The man in question had a hat on, and it covered a slight portion on his face, while casting a dark shadow on his dark purple eyes. He had a long black coat, while wearing a full suit underneath.

He had traces of silver as designs on his coat as well as his tie. His tie and belt also bore the same silver color, but he was mostly shrouded in black. This stranger held a briefcase in his right hand, its contents unknown.

Other than a small portion of his pale face, and his exposed neck, no other part of his skin was exposed. He had hand gloves on, and all other parts of his body were covered in the darkness of mystery.

Yes, this was an absolute stranger.

'If someone like this was an Adventurer, I would know!' Burke told herself as she examined his exquisite wear.

He wasn't the only one who took her attention, though. The lady who wore white, in contrast to the dark gentleman's attire, was equally astonishing.

She had a hooded cape on, with the helm covering most of her face. It was pure white, having gold designs and a tinge of blue to add an allure of beauty and regality to her appearance.

The rest of her outfit was the same.

The lady had an amazing blue-white top, with a brown belt tied and buckled at the top of her waist, along with a darker shade of blue as her trousers. Her boots were pure white, laced with blue as well.

Even though her face was hidden, she seemed like an angel in disguise—just from what anyone could see.

A sharp contrast to the devil-like wear of the dark gentleman.

'These two... just who are they?' It was rare seeing clients with this kind of presence, having this kind of equipment on.

Burke wasn't even the only who felt this way.

She could even see that literally everyone in the reception hall had their eyes on the two strangers, having the same look of wonder and awe in their eyes.

Of course, all of this observation lasted only a few seconds in Burke's mind. In reality, though, over a minute had passed and still the two were waiting to be attended to.

"Excuse me, Mi—?"

"Ahh, sorry about that. Welcome to the Adventurers Guild. How may I help you two today?" Burke quickly responded, a little mortified that she managed to get distracted twice.

This had been happening a lot lately, up to the point where a few people had made complaints about her absentmindedness.

'I'll have to beg these two not to give any negative reviews about my service to them!'

That also meant she had to provide them with the most exceptional service they could get.

'Okay, I'm pumped up now!' Her eyes were lit with determination as she awaited the words of her clients.

"We would like to register as Adventurers." The man in the hat spoke, his monotone remaining the same.

Burke nodded with enthusiasm as her thoughts flowed seamlessly.

'Adventurers, huh? Figures that they're not just ordinary clients.' Many would mistake them for aristocrats, but their attires consisted of nothing but Enchanted items, and the way they conducted themselves made it clear that they were experienced.

Burke could only wonder what line of work they engaged in before coming to the Guild.

"Alright, then. You'll need to fill out these forms."

She pulled out two pieces of paper from seemingly nowhere and placed them on the desk. Of course, pens were also provided for them as well.

"Take your time to—"

"We're done." The man's voice greeted Burke's ears the moment she blinked, causing both to bulge the moment she heard the statement he made.

'E-eh...?'

Her widened eyes looked at the two forms, and sure enough, they were already filled to the letter.

Most Adventurers, despite being rash and savage, took much longer when it came to filling out forms. In fact, a lot of them required help from the Receptionists since they were illiterates.

Of course, Burke didn't think the distinguished two in front of her were illiterates, but she also found it difficult to believe they could finish everything in the blink of an eye.

However, after examining their forms, she had no choice but to accept what had happened.

'Their handwritings are so fluent, and they took care of everything needed for them, while leaving the appropriate space meant for the Guild Staff to fill.'

... All without any prior instruction or explanation.

'That's impressive!' She went over the names of the two applicants and smiled. 'So the girl is Lux, and the man is... Jet.'

Burke found the latter amusing, considering how the strongest Adventurer in history had the same name.

'I suppose he also looks up to Jet Zephyr.' Burke smiled and nodded.

When registering as an Adventurer, it wasn't necessary to use one's real name. As a result, many often resorted to nicknames which would serve as their moniker.

Of course, there were many who chose the name "Jet" as their Adventurer name, but none of them managed to make it stick. All, without exception, returned to make rectifications within three days.

Burke thought of telling the two, but decided against it.

'I shouldn't ruin the rite of passage for anyone...' She smiled to herself.

"So, it says here that you two belong to the same Party. Would you like that to be officially recognized by the Guild?"

Doing so meant that the Guild regulated their profit-sharing, and would think of them as a single entity in circumstances of liability and so on.

Of course, it was up to the parties involved if they desired this.

Normally, candidates would take their time to consider this question, but there was no hesitation in the answer that came next.

"Yes. Yes, we would."

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Chapter 402 City Of Adventures [Pt 3]

The rest of the registration process didn't take too long.

Burke was soon finished with most of it. There were just a few things left, and that included their signature, a shot of their real face, and the Adventurer Test that they would each have to participate in.

Of course, depending on the rank they desired, they would have to pay the appropriate sum to take the test. This way, the Guild wouldn't suffer any losses from organizing the test and accommodating the candidate.

The duo didn't have an issue with the signature—which was essentially just them imprinting their Mana on the form.

Anyone who desired to be an Adventurer had to at least have a Skill, and since Skills required Mana, it was expected for candidates to be able to use it.

Imprinting Mana wasn't very difficult, as the paper itself would extract the Mana once it made contact with the necessary part of the candidate's body. It required no Skill or innate Mana Control.

After the signature was the face reveal, which was just standard procedure when it came to registration procedures.

"Do we really have to show our faces?" The gentleman in black asked.

His deep tone was calm, showing no hint of anxiety or skepticism. It just seemed like he was mildly curious.

"Yes, sir. It's standard procedure. If you want to keep your identity hidden, we can move to a private place where you'll show your face to the Receptionist in charge of you, i.e. Me. Of course, you'd also have to fill another form for—"

"There's no need for that. We'll do it here."

Burke nodded at his words, though she made a silent observation as the conversation progressed.

"The lady beside him isn't saying anything. Why?"

The gentleman was speaking for both of them as if it was natural. They both outlined in their history that they were partners, and they even opted to be recognized as a Party by the Guild.

'Are they married or something?' Burke wondered.

Before she could conclude her line of thought, the man took off his hat, revealing his silvery-dark hair. It had a certain charm to it, and the excess hair was packed behind with a dark band.

The few unruly strands fluttered around, revealing the pale and incredibly handsome face of the young man.

His dark purple eyes were charming, and his soft-looking skin was sharply contrasted with the stern look he had on.

Something about his demeanor felt threatening.

'H-he's so handsome! He's more handsome than any Adventurer I've ever seen!' Burke wanted to scream out loud.

He also had a very gentlemanly voice, with a calm face and a proper attitude. This man, Jet, was everything she looked for in a man.

Sure, he was just a newcomer, but merely looking at his equipment it was easy to deduce that he was a man of means.

'If I could have someone like him, then—!' Before she could conclude her line of thoughts, the woman beside the man took down her hood.

The moment Burke gazed upon the pristine beauty that stood before her, she didn't dare have another thought about the gentleman.

Lux had white hair, so long that they streamed past her back. Her clear blue eyes could captivate anyone. Even a woman like Burke was mesmerized.

Her heart nearly stopped at the sight.

Her skin wasn't as pale as the gentleman, but she had a similar soft-looking skin. Without a doubt, she was an unparalleled beauty.

As both of them—gods of beauty in their respective rights—stood before Burke, she nearly fainted from overexposure to pure attractiveness

'If this is his partner, I don't stand a chance!'

No... even if Lux wasn't his partner, did she really deserve a man as perfect as Jet?

'Ahh... I see now.' At that point, Burke had an epiphany. Her inner eyes became open to the very things she couldn't see in the past.

The things she chose not to see.

'All this time, I've always thought that the men in this city aren't good enough for me, but... I never bothered asking myself why I didn't attract the men that I desired.'

Men like Jet deserved women like Lux.

Likewise, if she was going to find the man of her dreams, then maybe she also had to be deserving of him. Perhaps...

'... I should find a way to better myself somehow, if I don't want to settle for less.'

Being a receptionist, with nothing to go for but her job and good looks, the kind of men she would attract were those who were interested in those things.

If she didn't want to work after settling down, that left only her good looks on the table.

'I'm thirty-five. These looks won't last forever...' In fact, they were already fading very quickly.

Many veteran Adventurers already knew how long she had been working in the Guild, and of all the receptionists present, she had the most experience.

'Perhaps it's time I advance and move on with my life.' Burke thought to herself, her eyes glistening in resolve.

'I should—!'

"What next, Miss?" Burke's introspection was interrupted by the words of the charming gentleman.

She nearly jumped out of her seat the moment she heard his voice.

"I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!"

To say she was flustered would be an understatement.

'Shit! Once again, I got distracted!' Beads of sweat appeared on her face. She quickly cleaned them off with her neat napkin and returned her mind to the task.

The two in front of her had calm, stoic faces. They simply waited for her to regain her composure and address them properly.

"W-well, all that's left is to take the Adventurer Test. As you know, the test is divided into categories based on difficulty, which determine the rank of an—"

"We will take the most difficult one." The man said, his tone so smooth that Burke nearly nodded in response.

That was until she realized what he just uttered.

"Huh? You want to take the Heroic Rank Test?!"

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Chapter 403 City Of Adventures [Pt 4]

Man isn't equal.

No matter where you go to in the world, there is always a hierarchy—some kind of strata that explains the natural order of things.

So also is the way of the Adventurers.

Among the ranks of the Adventurers, there exists a hierarchy of rank defined by stars; from One Star to Six Stars.

They define the strength and competence of the Adventurers, and also determine the kind of tasks they can undertake.

Within this strata, Six Stars remain the highest rank attainable by an Adventurer—no, by any human, period!

Only three Adventurers currently have this Rank in the entire Adventurers City.

Ah, it is also called by another name.

The Heroic Rank!

"Huh? You want to take the Heroic Rank Test?!"

Burke's voice was so loud that the entirety of those within the room heard what she said. It stunned even her, causing a look of shock to appear all over her face.

'I didn't expect to be so loud! I've just spilled confidential information!' Tears nearly welled up in her eyes.

If these people weren't planning on giving her a bad review before, now that she had done this, there was no way they would let it slide.

She couldn't escape the punishment for her negligence.

"Yes. We would like to take it."

"B-but..."

"There's no rule stating we can't, is there?" The moment the man asked this, Burke had to fall silent and shake her head.

The Adventurers believed in freedom above all else, so there was no rule confining the candidates to a particular set of tests, or placing a ceiling on the options available to an aspirant.

As long as they had the guts and money necessary to take the test, there was no limit to what they could or couldn't participate in.

"Then, we'd both like to take the test. How much is it?"

Burke sighed and decided to tell them the price. Perhaps once they heard it, they would change their minds.

"One platinum coin each. And there's no refu—"

"Here you go." Two platinum coins were placed on the table before Burke could even complete her sentence.

'Ahh... what did I expect? They were dressed this fancily, looked this attractive, and they both want to take the Heroic Rank Test.'

Nothing about these two was ordinary, and she was a fool to have expected their actions to make any kind of sense.

"O-okay." Burke took the Coins and inspected them, per procedure.

They were legitimate, but after placing it in the appropriate coin register, she pulled out two tags and handed them to the candidates.

"Please return here after twenty-four hours to take your test."

"Hm? I thought we could take the test immediately after registration." Jet asked, his brow raised in inquisition.

Of course, he still looked despite his confusion, so Burke was happy to clarify the whole thing.

"If this was any other Test, that would be the case. But, it takes a lot of preparation to organize the Heroic Rank Test, which is why you'll have to return tomorrow."

Jet stared at Lux, and they both nodded as if they just exchanged a message telepathically.

"Understood. Then, we will return tomorrow."

Burke nodded and smiled at the two. "There's no doubt about it. They're definitely together!"

"Is there anything we need to know before tomorrow? Any further thing to process?"

"N-no. Once you're done with your Test, you'll be given your badge, and that's about it..." Burke answered, but quickly realized her unconscious choice of words.

'Why did I assume that they would pass?'

"Very well. Thank you for your time." Jet bowed his head slightly and wore his hat while Lux pulled up her hoodie and hid her face.

It was already too late to hide their identities, as pretty much everyone had caught a glimpse of it—though most of them didn't get to see their whole face.

There was even an uproar in the reception hall, though all of it was ignored by the three parties who were engaged in their conversation.

"T-thank you as well..." Burke didn't even attempt to plead for a good review, but her tongue slipped and she ended up saying what she shouldn't have.

"What a nice couple..."

Once again, her voice was louder than expected. As a result, the two who were already leaving stopped dead in their tracks.

"Eeeek!" Burke knew she was going to get in trouble this time for sure.

However, rather than reprimand her for speaking so carelessly, Jet merely chuckled and responded in the calmest manner possible.

"We're not a couple. We're siblings."

With those words of correction uttered, Jet and Lux casually stepped away from the reception area and headed straight for the exit.

Burke watched their backs as they left, her jaw wide open as only one thought filled her mind.

'H-he was... single all along?'

"What an amusing lady..."

"Indeed..."

As the partners—black and white—stepped out of the Guild Building, their whispers faintly filled the air around them.

Their silent footsteps and gentle strides showed just how graceful they were. Even the briefcase that the man held was as graceful as the man who wielded it.

It was practically evening already, with the sun setting in the distance—the perfect time to settle in an inn.

Despite knowing this, the two halted their steps.

This wasn't due to some kind of negligence on their part. Instead, their sudden stop was caused by a group of about six men who stood in front of them.

They all had rough appearances and reeked of alcohol. Despite this, there was an air of intensity about them that made it clear that they weren't mere novices in the game.

These were veteran Adventurers.

"Is there a problem? You're in our way." Jet spoke, his voice the only echo of reason among the annoyed grunts that the six made.

"A problem, huh? Yes... you could say that..." The one who seemed like the leader stepped forward.

He was very tall, with dark skin and a muscular build. He was clearly a Barbarian. If his ebony skin and plaited hair didn't give it away, then his terrible attitude made for the perfect introduction.

"I hear you plan on taking the Heroic Rank Test..."

"Yes. That is correct."

The moment the man heard this, he drew his face closer to Jet and slightly turned his head in a threatening manner.

"Oi... wanna die?"

For a moment, tense silence took control. That was until the remaining drunk Adventurers 'oooohed' and 'ahhhhed' at the entire scene.

They seemed amused for some reason.

"Pfft! Sango is gonna beat them good!"

"Take it easy or they're gonna piss themselves."

"Intense from the start, eh? As expected of the Vice Captain!"

Their cackles were unpleasant to the ears, and despite them making a scene, no one seemed to be stopping them.

Despite there being quite a number of onlookers, it seemed like many were intrigued by the confrontation and wanted to see what would happen.

Finally making a move, Jet held his hat and lowered his head, his voice spreading throughout the area despite being a mere whisper.

"I would appreciate it if you did not bathe me with your foul breath, you fool."

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Chapter 404 City Of Adventures [Pt 5]

"W-what did you just say?"

Sango's face seemed to depict a fair bit of shock as soon as he heard the response of the stranger in black. His brows were raised in genuine surprise.

"You heard me well enough. Step back if you know what is good for you."

More surprise filled Sango's face.

"Do you... not know who I am? Who we are?"

"How would we know that? We just got here." The response from the hatted man made Sango nearly frown.

Surely, his name was known even beyond the confines of the City. Any aspiring Adventurer would know the name of one of the strongest Adventurers in the City, as well as the top Party in all of the City.

Yet, none of that recognition seemed to be coming from the fellow before him.

The girl beside him also said nothing. She just stood there like a statue, almost as if she wasn't witnessing anything that was happening.

'Do they both not recognize me? Are they messing with me, or...?' Sango's thoughts trailed.

The cackles of his subordinates brought him back to reality, though, as they started making fun of him.

"Seems like your popularity has plummeted, Sango!"

"Being Rank 7 is apparently not enough for the newcomers to recognize you!"

"Pfft! You're not gonna let it slide, are you?"

At this point, Sango couldn't help his frown. He raised his voice at the drunks that he called subordinates.

"Would you stop already? You guys are already drunk!"

He was only met with more ridicule.

"We're drunk? Look who's talking, pfft!"

"Maybe we're all sober and you're the one that's drunk!"

"Hahahaaha!"

At this point, Sango slapped his hand on his face and stood upright, removing his face so close to the gentleman who stood before him.

"These guys are bumming me out..." He sighed.

Despite having lots to drink, Sango wasn't drunk in the slightest. He had his Barbarian genes to thank for that fact. Unfortunately, the embarrassments caused by his comrades was enough to wish that he wasn't sober.

"I-in any case, let's not waste any time and get to the point..." Sango pointed at the two, who patiently waited for him to recover from his mortification.

"You two should withdraw from the Heroic Rank Test!"

"No way."

"WHAT?!"

"I said... no way?"

"Why no way?"

"Because it's not possible?"

"Why isn't it possible?"

"It's just not."

"Why not, you stupid bastard?!" At this point, Sango was exasperated.

He was nearly running out of breath due to the quick back and forth. He wasn't used to this kind of defiance from people—especially from people younger than him.

Only those who had proven themselves as stronger could do that, and he wasn't getting that vibe from the two of them.

"Look here, you punks..." Sango's tone took a deeper and more aggressive tone. "You're just a bunch of newbies. Do you have any idea how insulting it is to opt for the most difficult rank from the start?"

The man with the hat cocked his head slightly and asked a very, but pertinent question. "It's not against the rules, is it?"

Sango felt slighted by that response.

He really wasn't used to people talking back to him like this, so he responded in the only way he knew how to.

"LISTEN HERE, IT MIGHT NOT BE AGAINST THE RULES, BUT IT IS STILL WRONG TO DO!" Sango simply raised his voice.

That always did the trick for him.

As his thunderous voice filled the area, the air itself vibrated, and everyone who watched the scene shivered.

Well, everyone except the two who stood right in front of him.

"How is it wrong? It's lawful."

'H-he's still running his mouth? How...?!' Sango's eyes widened.

The man in front of him clearly wasn't normal. However, that didn't stop the Barbarian from speaking even more.

"It's wrong to the Adventurers that are here. Your seniors who have been working their butts off for so long... how do you think it looks like to them when a bunch of amateurs show up and want to skip the process?"

"If you're strong enough, I see no reason why you can't just get a Rank suited for your strength." The response of the gentleman was reasonable, but Sango did not accept it.

After all, that line of reasoning only applied to those who were 'strong enough'.

And these two... Sango wasn't sure that they qualified.

"Look, you don't get it. When guys like you just pop up and throw your money around to get the exams, it pisses off honest Adventurers who look up to that Rank and work hard every day so that they can get to that level one day."

Sango wasn't just pulling words out of his ass. Majority of the Adventurers who watched this entire scene nodded in agreement to the Barbarian's words.

"We have the way we do things here. I'm saying this for your sake too. So you should just go back there and change the kind of test you want to have."

Silence engulfed the area, and the gentleman placed his hand on his chin as if deliberating on what to do.

Sango grinned widely, happy that he was able to knock some sense into the haughty newcomers without resorting to violence.

Unfortunately, his happiness was cut short by the hatted man's response.

"No. It's not possible."

"Why is it not possible?"

"It's just not."

"Why not, YOU STUPID BASTAAAARD?!"

In response to this, the gentleman merely shrugged. "Now, if you'll excuse us, we'd best be on our way."

The dark coated man and his white-clad maiden walked past Sango in a calm and elegant stride.

But—

"Hold on..." Sango held the shoulder of the man, his frown deepening to a monstrous degree.

Sparks of lightning flashed in his eyes, and his muscles began to bulge to an unbelievable extent. Everyone who saw this took the hint and stepped back.

"It seems you weren't paying any attention to what I was saying..."

Sango until he became at least twice as tall as the man whose shoulder he held. His deadly gaze echoed violence, and his overwhelming power overflowed through all parts of his body.

"YOU WILL CHANGE THE RANK OF YOUR TEST."

"And if I refuse?" The man responded, his calm voice an antithesis to the rough echoes of Sango's growl.

Upon hearing this, the ebony giant grinned like a maniac and gave the only response he could render at this point.

"Then... you DIEEE!"

~BZZTTZZZ!~

Sango's hand crackled with electricity as it rushed towards the face of the stranger faster than the eye could process.

This blur of a fist was capable of breaking the toughest boulders and tearing apart buildings. Against a single man, it was overkill.

~WHOOOSH!~

The blow neared the target, and all closed their eyes, expecting hear the squishing sound of flesh. What they heard, instead, was a slapping sound.

... Almost as if, somehow... the blow had been stopped by a palm.

All opened their eyes, and to their unanimous shock, that was indeed the case. Sango's blow was stopped by the white partner of the dark gentleman.

"W-WHAT ARE YO—!"

~BWOOOOOOSH!~

Before Sango could even say anything, an invisible gale of wind blew him away, sending him flying far away.

... Perhaps into oblivion.

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Chapter 405 City Of Adventures [Pt 6]

~BOOOOOM!~

The resounding eruption caused by the destruction of the earth spread throughout the city.

Everyone within earshot could hear the loud crash, and those who were still too far to listen were greeted by the rumbles that rushed from the ground.

All of this chaos stemmed from a single location.

... The same place where Jet and Lux stood.

"E-EEEEK!"

Upon seeing their leader completely lose consciousness from a single hit, the remaining five stooges began to squeak in fear.

Sango's ebony body was buried in the ground, covered in dirt and debris. He was literally foaming in the mouth, his eyes completely white due to the shock that sent him straight to sleep.

Vestiges of lightning crackled from his body as smoke rose all around the crater that formed on the ground.

Everyone was dead silent, holding their breath as they stared at this amazing sight in awe.

Sango was among the strongest Adventurers in the City, having a Five Star Rank. He was a Master Adventurer, and everyone treated him as such.

Seeing him get his arse handed to him just like that was a surreal experience for everyone who watched.

It didn't take long before murmurs began to echo forth.

"Are you kidding? Just one hit...?"

"Even stronger Adventurers would not have ended it with just one hit..."

"Maybe it's because he was drunk..."

"You idiot! Have you ever seen Sango pass out due to alcohol before?"

"He was sober? You're joking!"

"I couldn't even see the strike. What kind of move... was that?"

All eyes shifted from Sango, and the curious gazes of everyone rested on the perpetrators of the entire mess. The gentleman in black and the maiden in white: their existence caused the hearts of many to tremble.

"If she was able to do that, does that mean that man is also capable of that much?"

"They're partners, after all! It's a given!"

"B-but... even Master Rank Adventurers wouldn't have knocked Sango out like that!"

"Oi, oi! What are you saying? That they're somehow Heroic Rank? Come on!"

"Shh! Don't be so loud, or they'll hear you..."

The Adventurers were terrified, sure. But beyond that, they were fascinated.

Perhaps the two strangers recognized this, because instead of departing the way they previously intended, they remained still.

After soaking up all of the attention for a few seconds, the dark clad gentleman took off his hat, revealing his incredibly handsome face.

Following his lead, the woman did the same.

Instantly, all the noise surrounding the duo sizzled out. Everyone's jaws went loose as they opened wide in reaction to the beauty that they were faced with.

Before they could even take it all in, the confident tone of the man filled the air.

"My name is Jet, and my partner's name is Lux. I won't ask you to remember our names, because soon you will have no choice but to know them."

These would have been viewed as haughty statements if they hadn't just trumped one of the strongest Adventurers in the City.

"My goal is simple... to surpass Jet Zephyr as the strongest Adventurer in the history of this City... and spread my name to the entire world!"

With this declaration made, all the widened eyes served as witnesses.

On that very day, a promise was made to every denizen of the Adventurers City, and it was not received with scorn.

For deep within their hearts, the Adventurers hoped that they would be able to see the time when the young man's dream would ripen and bear fruit.

They all desired the day of the promise's fulfillment.

"Hmph! How pitiful..."

A particular figure stood beside the window of her room and watched the events that unfolded beneath her with a scrutinizing gaze.

Her lips were pursed in disapproval, and her cold gaze narrowed upon hearing the declaration of the man called Jet.

"Surpass Lord Zephyr? What a foolish statement." She muttered with her moist lips.

Her dirty blond hair flowed behind her as she folded her hands beneath her modest chest. She couldn't help but glare at the ridiculously attractive man and woman who were now the center of attention.

'So just because the lady managed to beat Sango, everyone suddenly takes the man's declaration seriously? My goodness, Adventurers really are a bunch of simple-minded buffoons.'

The lady shook her head and sighed, leaving the window as she heard a knock on her door.

'I've seen fools like them more times than I can count, thinking they can make it big in the Adventurers City just because they're a little strong.'

The Six-Star Badge on her chest glistened on her chest as she reached for the doorknob.

She had specifically made sure no one disturbed her in her living quarters. The only exception to this rule was if her urgent attention was needed.

"What is it?" She asked, once her hand was placed on the doorknob.

"Y-yes, Miss Britta! Two Adventurer Candidates wish to take the Heroic Rank Test! I-I came to deliver their forms to you for screening since you're their designated examiner."

The woman closed her eyes and sighed. fr eewebn ovel.com

Somehow, she already knew this would be the case. That wasn't all she figured out, though.

"Let me guess... the names on those forms are Lux and Jet."

"Y-yes, Ma'am!" The voice from behind the door swiftly answered, though the stuttering made her response too clumsy to be considered proper.

Regardless, her tone indicated surprise. Heroic Rank Adventurers were known to do some pretty amazing things, but clairvoyance was a little too much for a fighter-type Adventurer like Britta.

How could she have perfectly guessed the names?

~CREAK~

The door opened and Britta took the two forms from the trembling delivery staff, who instantly scrambled off once she was done with her delivery.

Britta sighed, closed the door, and took a good look at the document—her green eyes taking in every single detail that was on the pieces of paper.

"Foolish newbies..." Britta smiled as she threw the forms aside and grinned to herself.

Fools who went so far to take the Heroic Rank Test were very rare, but they existed.

Britta had supervised her fair share, so she knew what happened to the few overly ambitious folks who bit off more than they could chew.

Without exception... they all died.

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Chapter 406 Jet and Lux

"Haa..."

This heavy sigh came from Jet as he took his seat on a sizeable bed at the far right corner of a spacious room. His gaze was on the girl with him, who sat on the other bed, which was located at the extreme end opposite him.

There was a large window at the corner of the wall that stood beside both beds, causing the dim evening lights to shower in.

There were also Enchanted Lamps to give the room a bright-enough ambiance. Objectively speaking, it was a neat room. A bit minimalistic with the furniture—having only a wardrobe, two bedside tables, a study desk and chair, and of course, their beds—but everything seemed to be in good order.

They had more than enough space to put whatever stuff they wanted to add to the room. It was clearly designed this way so that Adventurers could set everything else up according to their preferences.

Any normal person would look at this place and be genuinely impressed.

However, both Jet and Lux had to admit to themselves as they looked around them... compared to the places they were used to, this place was mediocre at best.

"The bed is pretty uncomfortable." Jet broke the silence, sighing even more.

"I thought I was the only one who noticed."

For the first time ever, Lux responded with her own voice. It was so enchanting and smooth that anyone who heard it would instantly fall in love with it.

The two laughed as soon as they heard each other speak, instantly getting rid of the dreary atmosphere that existed within the room.

"It is what it is. This is the most expensive inn we can get in this City. Unless we want to get a proper house, which won't be worth it since we're just going to be here for a week or so."

"Yeah, I get it." Lux responded to Jet's elaborate explanation with a shrug.

They both took off their hats and hoods, revealing the incredibly attractive faces that they both had. Suddenly, they laughed at each other once again.

"Is that really what you look like underneath the mask?" Lux giggled as her previously human ears became pointy.

Other than that small difference, she remained the same.

"Of course not. You think I'll reveal my face to anyone here? If you had some kind of shapeshifting ability, I would have preferred it if you could also have a different appearance."

Jet put on a dark mask, and soon, his entire body transformed into a completely different form.

His pale skin took on a much more normal complexion, he became a lot taller and bulkier than he previously was.

In no time, he left the identity of Jet behind and took on a completely different one—Ralyks!

"I wonder if you're really buff like that in real appearance." Lux—no, more like the Half Elf, Esme—smiled as she looked at the new person in front of her.

"I am."

"Pfft! I don't believe you."

"For real. I'm pretty buff... I think."

"Then prove it. Show me your true self, Rey... ah, I shouldn't have said your real name, right?" Esme looked a bit nervous, but the guy opposite her merely shrugged it off.

"Sound Magic is active, so I guess it's fine."

"Ah, yeah. I forgot about that." She laughed, itching her white hair.

"You know I won't show you my true form, right?" Rey said with a playful tone.

"Yeah, yeah! It's not fair, though. You've practically seen me naked, yet I can't get even a glimpse at your face."

"H-hey! Why are you bringing that up now? Y-you know it wasn't on purpose or anything..."

The moment Esme heard this reaction from Rey, she made a naughty smile and stared at him in a particularly unnerving fashion.

"W-why are you looking at me like that?"

"How about a trade?"

"A trade? Don't tell me...?!" Even with the black mask covering his face, Rey's bulging eyes could be seen.

"Yes. I'll let you see me nude again. In exchange... I want to see your face."

It was a strange thing for a girl to say. Most guys would never hear those words from any lady, especially if the lady was as drop dead gorgeous as Esme.

Yet... she was willing to make such a bargain?

Rey's silence after hearing this was evidence of how difficult it was to reject such a tempting offer.

The last time, everything happened too fast for him to burn the image in his mind.

But now... now things were different!

"I-I think I—"

"Just kidding! Haha! As if I'd do something like that... hahahaha!"

Esme's loud giggles drowned whatever response Rey would have given to her offer. Thanks to that, hollow silence reigned supreme after the laugh was done.

No one said anything for a while.

Then—

"At least let me see your body."

"No."

"Come on! You can cover your face with your mask, so it's pretty much the same thing!"

"I refuse!"

"Please? Pretty please? I'm dying of curiosity here!"

After an exhausting round of back and forth, Rey finally gave in with a very loud sigh.

"Fine, I'll tell you..." He mumbled, almost as if he was being shy about it. "This is... my true form."

"H-huh?"

"I sort of grew taller and buffer after Leveling Up a lot. So, yeah... I'm pretty much as tall and as buff as my Ralyks persona."

"You're serious?" Esme's eyes widened at the realization.

That meant, all this time, she had been speaking to the real Rey

—with no barrier that wasn't the mask present.

That meant, right now... Rey was—

"Of course I'm kidding. Why would I show you how I truly look like?"

"Y-YOUUUUU!!!!"

If not for Rey's Sound Magic, the next round of arguments—especially from Esme—would have blown the whole room apart.

Fortunately, it all eventually sizzled out.

... Only after a few hours, though.

"Huff... huff! Are you... done?" Rey asked, his hoarse voice a clear sign that he too had to raise his voice at some point in order to match Esme's.

"Y-yeah... I think so."

With peace and sanity restored within the room, both Rey and Esme finally had the clear mind to discuss what they should have talked about from the start.

"Now that we've made it this far, I suppose it's time to talk about what our next move is." Rey said, looking straight at the smiling Esme.

"Yeah."

As fun as it was to put on new costumes and pretend to be different people, there was a very important reason why they had chosen to do all of this.

"It looks like the plan to establish ourselves worked well, though." Esme commented, recalling the events that led to their current predicament.

"Yeah. A little too well, though."

"What do you mean? I know you used Sound Magic on that receptionist so that everyone in the hall could hear what she said." She stated. "We got the attention you wanted."

It was for the same reason that he agreed to expose their faces in public.

"Yeah, but I had nothing to do with that Barbarian from earlier."

"Really? I thought you controlled him or something." Esme responded casually. "Guess I was wrong."

"Yeah... that guy was just being a natural idiot."

Thanks to that, though, their names became known among the Adventurers pretty early.

"The initial plan was to pass the Heroic Rank Test today and spread our names using that method, so when that receptionist said we would have to take it tomorrow, I was a bit disappointed..."

Esme couldn't see this, but Rey was smiling underneath his mask.

"It's a good thing that idiot approached us and caused such a scene." Rey plopped on the hard bed and stared at the ceiling with a look of gratification imprinted on his face.

His tone also did well to convey his satisfaction.

"Now everything is going according to plan. Right on schedule."

*

Chapter 407 The Adventuring Plan

'What should I do now?'

That was the question Rey asked himself when he thought of the Grand Calamity Dungeon.

It posed too much of a risk to him, and everything he had built thus far, if he decided to go as Ralyks. If Adrien was indeed behind what was going on, there was a huge chance he was being lured in.

The mere possibility that he was being used made Rey rule out his strongest card—Ralyks.

That wasn't the only reason, though.

Rey wasn't sure how far the name of Ralyks had spread, so it would be too much of a risk if he used his most influential persona. He would stick out like a sore thumb, and that would ruin the point of everything.

Of course, not all attention was bad. However, in the case of his identity as Ralyks, it was much better for him to get no attention at all than for him to get any.

'Ralyks is someone who is already an Adventurer, but is keeping his identity secret. It would be weird if I had to register as an Adventurer while being Ralyks.'

It would literally cause his persona to crumble.

Besides, until he could confirm if Adrien was behind the incident or not, perhaps even figure out what his plan could be, Rey decided it was best not to use his Ralyks persona.

That was probably what was best for everyone—himself most of all.

What then?

If not Ralyks, then how was he going to get the freedom to properly explore and investigate the city?

The answer was pretty simple.

'I'll just make another Alt Account!'

That was how the Dark Gentleman Jet came to be. He decided on a new set of clothes and chose a different aesthetic—even abandoning his staple mask.

This way, people would be able to differentiate him from Ralyks, at the very least.

Also, despite still pretty much being the same person, Rey knew he would have to use completely different sets of abilities as Jet in order for any observers not to draw any kind of connection between him and Ralyks.

He also had to be considerably weaker.

Despite how much Rey disliked Adrien Chase, the guy had a very good point.

'There can't be two Ralyks.'

Jet would simply be a powerful Adventurer who had reached a considerable height in power—enough to rival the strongest of Adventurers.

Nothing more... nothing less.

It was all of those thought that led to this exact moment; Rey and Esme journeying to the Adventurers City together.

For Rey, it was to investigate the entire Grand Calamity Class Dungeon, while for Esme, this would be a good opportunity for her to Level Up and grow stronger.

Of course, Rey was also going to get as strong as possible, but that just wasn't his primary goal.

"Well, things are certainly looking up." Esme smiled as she wore a more casual outfit, her white hair still dripping with water despite tying a towel around it.

It seemed she just had a shower, though her oversized sweater and shorts showed that she changed before coming out.

Her slightly moist legs gave an alluring glow, but Rey looked away before his senses could get sucked in to the beauty.

"I mean... I had no idea that I would get the chance to Level Up this fast." She added.

Sitting on the bed opposite where Rey was, she crossed her legs and rested her face on one of her open palms.

"Thanks for considering me for this mission."

"Well, it's not like I can let you remain weak forever..." Rey commented, still refusing to look in her direction.

"Wow... that one seriously burns. But don't worry, I'll catch up to you in no time."

The moment she said this, Rey snickered and gave a sarcastic nod,

His response naturally made Esme's face turn beet red, and she looked around for something to throw at him. Unfortunately, after their earlier argument... she was all out of ammunition.

Besides, after thinking of it for a few moments, her anger sizzled out.

Rey wasn't particularly wrong, after all.

"Yeah, you're right. I am pretty weak." She smiled, narrowing her gaze on him as she did so. "I owe you one. Thanks."

This time, it was Rey's turn to be slightly flustered. Of course, Esme could see none of it since it was hidden behind the mask.

"W-well, it's no big deal. Besides, I'm not doing it just for your sake anyway. I'll also get stronger."

If he was lucky, there would be some powerful Monsters who could give him some pretty sweet EXP. Also, the chance of him obtaining some pretty neat Skills were also high.

"But you could go on your own, right? Bringing me along will only split your EXP. I could also get in the way if we encounter an absurdly strong Monster." Esme responded, her smile becoming more warm and understanding.

"What's your point?"

"Nothing. I just really appreciate your consideration." She giggled, before flexing her small hands as if there were muscles there.

"Don't worry... I'll make you proud and get crazy strong!"

It made Rey break character for a moment and laugh his heart out. "Pfft! You better!"

Both sides enjoyed their conversation after that, with the moon watching over them atop the night sky.

[Meanwhile...]

Within the base of the strongest Party of the Adventurers City, a certain individual sat on his grand seat—the spot reserved only for the Party Leader.

A dark shadow was cast over this figure, so nothing but the yellow sparks in his eyes were displayed.

Perhaps this was a good thing for the six who were kneeling in front of him—Sango and his five drunk subordinates.

"So... you mean to tell me that you guys went and harassed the guy out of nowhere, and still got your asses handed to you?"

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Chapter 408 The Test Commences!

The looks on Sango's bruised face showed just how badly his body and pride had been damaged. There was no fury on his face, however.

... Just pure reflection.

"I'm sorry, Boss! I'll take full responsibility for all this!" Sango groveled even further, perhaps to satiate their Party Leader's anger, but his actions were misdirected.

The Boss wasn't upset at all.

Instead, he appeared curious—having a smile on his clear and youthful face.

"How interesting. Tell me more about those two Adventurers."

"Well, they called themselves Jet and Lux."

"Jet and Lux? Hmm... go on." The Party Leader said with a smile on his face.

"Well... also..."

Sango went on to fully describe the entire incident, including how he shamefully got his arse handed to him and couldn't remember what happened after that.

His story was met with a round of laughter from the leader—naturally.

"Well, you guys are definitely going to apologize to him." The Boss finally stopped his laughter, wiping away the beads of tears that formed on his face.

"Don't worry, I'll go with you." He smiled.

"B-but—!"

"No buts. A Party Leader has to take responsibility for those in their party." The silhouette commented with a broad grin.

"Besides... I'm a bit curious about those two."

Narrowing his gaze, almost as if something new dropped in his mind, the Boss rubbed his chin and parted his lips.

"This Jet... did he have a mask on?"

"Um... no."

"Then you saw his face? How did he look?"

"He was... very attractive, or so I hear. I was knocked out cold before I could get a good look, and those guys were too drunk to serve as any reliable source of information."

Of course, Sango's retort was met with loud comebacks from his kneeling subordinates.

"W-we saw!"

"He was very handsome!"

"The lady with him was also pretty! So pretty that I sobered up the moment I saw her!"

Their words seemed exaggerated, but everyone knew it would be unwise to lie to the Party Leader.

The moment the seated man heard this, he rubbed his chin and narrowed his eyes even further in order to scrutinize the information even more.

"It's not him, then..." He muttered, barely audibly. "This doesn't seem like his style at all."

He sighed, the wide grin on his face vanishing as he rose to his feet, his frame seeming like an intimidating silhouette compared to his kneeling comrades.

"I still want to meet him, though. This Jet fellow..." He walked past them, his hand in his pockets as his jet black coat fluttered flailed behind him and his Six Star Badge gleamed under the dim light of the room.

"... He seems interesting."

[The Next Day]

"Good afternoon, you two. My name is Britta, and I will be the one supervising your Heroic Rank Test today."

A fierce-looking woman with dirty blond hair stared at both Jet and Lux with a piercing stare.

She wasn't particularly beautiful, but she had a certain cuteness that came with being so serious and stern all the time. A few freckles could be seen on her nose, and a black birthmark in the form of a dot sat underneath her left eye.

She was dressed in full gear—light armor that seemed to be made from a combination of Monster hides. Her chest was covered with proper breastplates, with her back, shoulder, hands, lower legs, and other relevant areas covered in denser armor than the rest of her body.

Most of everything else were fabric, though based on the way they gleamed under the sun, it was clear that they weren't just normal clothes.

Britta was garbed with her full set of Enchanted Items; including a blade behind her, a dagger strapped to her waist, and several pouches attached to her belt.

Her boots were squeaky clean, but they looked aged due to how many times they had been used.

Last, but not least, her Six-Star Badge was firmly placed at the center of her belt, perfectly enunciating her Adventurer Rank to the two candidates.

All in all, she was the perfect representation of an Adventurer—

the pinnacle of what everyone in the City strived to be.

"Good afternoon, Britta. We will be in your care." Jet responded with a slight bow.

"What's with that casual tone? Call me Miss Britta."

"Ah, apologies... Miss Britta." Despite Jet correcting himself and even bowing lower than before, Britta couldn't help but frown even more.

Somehow, she felt like he was being sarcastic.

"Well, whatever." She sighed, shrugging the whole matter aside.

Britta didn't consider herself petty enough to get hung over little things like that.

"We're going to be taking a bit of a tour inside there." Pointing towards the dense forest that stood to their left, she went on to explain.

"This place is known as the Dead Zone. It's considered dangerous, even by Adventurer Standards, and that's because powerful Monsters reside inside."

It was home to an entire ecosystem where the strong devoured the weak, creating a boiling pot for Monsters to grow and evolve into stronger entities.

The only reason Adventurers didn't bother clearing the forest—

assuming it was even possible to do so—was because the Dead Zone helped them to breed Monsters for free.

As long as they occasionally patrolled the forest at scheduled times, and conducted the systematic culling that held every year or so, there was no risk to the City.

An outbreak had only happened once, and after that there had been more safety measures put in place to ensure it was not a danger to the City despite being a dangerous place by every right.

"I'm sure you were already told this by the Receptionist when you returned to the Guild and she directed you here, but your goal for this Test is pretty simple."

Britta folded her arms and gave a wide smile, with a deadly gleam explicitly exposed within her eyes.

"Both of you must defeat at least one A-Tier Monster each."

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Chapter 409 Heroic Rank Test [Pt 1]

The hierarchy within the Adventurers City wasn't arbitrary.

There was a reason why the Adventurers were divided into cadres, and it wasn't just for status and wealth. The most pertinent reason was competence.

How strong a person was determined their Rank.

How, then, could this strength be examined? It couldn't be properly gauged by mere exhibitions of Skills, or written exams. Even combat training or duels couldn't properly bring out the full potential or power of a person.

There was only one true way for an aspiring Adventurer to prove their strength.

—Hunting down Monsters!

An Adventurer did many things, but the specialty of the trade remained Monster Extermination and Dungeon Exploration.

No one did these better than Adventurers.

"Novices can only handle E-F Tier Monsters. Commons can easily handle E-Tier Monsters, but will find it difficult to beat a D-Tier Monster. Veterans can easily handle any D-Tier Monster and below, but their limits are C-Tiers. An Expert can handle a C-Tier Monster on his own, but it will be very difficult to win against a B-Tier Monster... though they can win."

As Britta explained this, the two candidates in front of her were silent and listened.

"5 Stars, that is, Masters, can pretty much handle B-Tier Monsters, but can't beat A-Tier Monsters on their own." Her tone suddenly took a serious tone. "That is where the Heroic Rank comes in."

Everyone knew just how powerful and amazing those in this Rank were because they were the only ones who could stand up to the strongest kinds of Monsters.

That made them the strongest humans.

"6 Star Adventurers like myself can beat at least one A-Tier Monsters without any issue. As you know, the strongest Tier a Monster has is A... same as we humans."

The key difference, however, was that Monsters were far more suited to combat than human beings.

They had sharp claws, tough hides, immense Mana Levels, and their instincts were geared towards violence and destruction. In all areas of combat, Monsters outranked humans.

As such, A-Tier Humans would find it incredibly difficult to win a head-on fight with an A-Tier Monster. Thankfully, humans had intelligence on their side.

With the right strategy, it was possible to win.

Also as important as strategy, if not more important, was having proper equipment.

There was a reason why Enchanted Items were so costly, and that was simply because having supplementary power from external sources was a big game-changer when it came to combat.

In fact, in many scenarios, the boost that Items gave Adventurers was the sole reason they could maintain their rank and survive till date.

With these equipment, A-Tier humans—referred to as Heroic Rank Adventurers in this city—could easily handle one or two A-Tier Monsters without even needing strategy.

The existence of Enchanted Items remained the perfect representation of human innovation.

"Since you two desire to become Six Star Adventurers, all you need to do is kill A-Tier Monsters each. As long as you can do so, you pass."

Of course, it went without saying that they couldn't rely on teamwork to win. The Test was for the individual and not the Party.

Both Jet and Lux nodded their heads, displaying their readiness for what awaited them.

Britta couldn't help but scoff at this.

"Since you now understand the rules, let us depart."

'These two... what fools they are.'

Britta found her thoughts trailing as they walked through the dense cluster of trees. Her full sense was active, so even if she couldn't properly see through the shrubbery, she could detect every movement around her.

The weather was pretty cool in the forest, and thanks to the taller trees serving as canopies to block the sun, it got pretty dark despite the day still being in session.

Britta had no problem seeing despite the darkness, though. Her incredible senses never dulled, and even now she could clearly see the movements of those in front of her.

They were walking very casually despite being in a Dead Zone.

'They probably have no idea how dangerous this place is—especially the current path we're treading on.'

There was a reason why the Guild had to request for her to supervise the two, despite how high-ranked she was.

Only Six Star Adventurers could survive this particular portion of the Dead Zone.

'The Guildmaster and that brat won't take on the role, so that leaves only me to take care of losers like these.' Britta's frown only deepened as they advanced even further.

Since this wasn't the first time doing something like this, she made a general rule when it came to supervising Heroic Rank Tests.

'I have no responsibility to save the fools who brought this upon themselves.'

Candidates were the ones who made the choice to come to such a dangerous place, and as such, they had the full liability for their actions.

It was that simple.

"We're close." Britta said as she called for the two candidates in front of her.

Her role was to observe them, so naturally they were the ones who would take the lead. Still, she had to at least inform them when the Test would begin.

Now that she had done her part, the rest was up to them.

The two nodded at her and proceeded, still having the same casual air about them. It pissed Britta off, but she let the matter go.

'I hope they trip on an undergrowth or two...' Her thoughts ended up revealing her true feelings.

Then—

'H-huh? What's this?!'

—A sudden sensation assailed Britta, giving her instant goose bumps.

Before she could fully comprehend what her senses were telling her, it was already too late.

~WHOOOOOOSH!~

A sharp, powerful gust of wind instantly blew from the direction they were heading, instantly clearing everything in its path.

The tress, undergrowth—literally everything—flew away, carried away by the wind torrents that rushed forth.

In a single, blurry moment, the entire forest where they traversed had become nothing but a large clearing.

"T-this is...!" Beads of sweat fell from Britta's face as her eyes widened in shock. As a 6 Star Adventurer, she knew precisely what this meant.

... And it wasn't good at all.

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Chapter 410 Heroic Rank Test [Pt 2]

~BOOOOMMM!~

As the several trees flew and crashed against their fellow trees, sending the resultant debris flying in multiple directions, a disjointed echo of destruction followed.

Layers of catastrophes caused the ground to shake violently, almost as if an earthquake was about to occur and swallow everything whole.

Britta shook amidst this literal disaster, realizing that the walls of trees that once stood beside her were no more.

She was even more surprised that, despite what just happened, she wasn't harmed at all.

"Are you alright, Miss Britta?" Jet approached the shaken Adventurer, his tone still calm despite the crazy thing that just happened.

"Y-yeah, I am. It seems the two of you are alright as well."

Britta was just as surprised—if not more surprised—by the fact that the two candidates were unscathed as well. Even if her case was luck, it was impossible for the two of them, who were right in front of her, to not have been affected.

They were literally the ones closest to the powerful winds that blew everything away.

"Lux used her barrier to shield us, so I guess none of us got hurt." Britta twitched the moment she heard that.

'A barrier, huh? That makes more sense than mere luck.'

She couldn't believe that the very two whom she looked down on—or at least, one of them—was responsible for saving her life.

'To think she would have a barrier that strong. Is it an Item?' It most likely was.

Britta also had an Item that generated a barrier around her, but it could only be used for a limited number of times, and she had to activate the shield normally.

'There's no way their reaction speed exceeds mine. They were also closer to the blast, which means they had less time to prepare.'

Once Britta thought about all of these factors, she determined that Lux' Enchanted Item had to have some sort of Automatic Response function.

'A barrier that strong should most likely have a long cooldown duration.' She sighed, staring cautiously around her.

That meant they had no way of properly protecting themselves if the same wind blast came again.

'I don't like this. I still don't know what caused the blast, but this is a Dead Zone. Nothing about it makes sense.'

Besides, Britta didn't even have the time to go over what could have caused it.

'My hands are going to be full with what comes next!'

The consequences for such a huge blast of wind was that it would literally send a signal to any Monster in close proximity to the area of impact.

Naturally, the Monsters would have to responses.

The first would be to run away. However, this reaction was only given by the weaker creatures of the forest.

The second response, which was the one Britta was personally worried about, would be to gather at the point of impact.

In essence, strong Monsters would see the destruction as some sort of beacon—an invitation, if you will.

And, as was the nature of the wild, they always answered the call.

'Ahh...' Looking around, Britta could already see the silhouettes of the Monsters that hid within the cluster of trees that now surrounded the clearing.

'... They're already here!'

Beads of sweat began to sprout from her face as she gulped down the saliva that was forming in her mouth.

'This is bad! This is really bad!' Her thoughts echoed as she struggled to find a possible solution to the problem at hand.

'Thanks to the winds blowing away the trees, which took some parts of the ground with them, we're on lower ground.'

The Monsters had the higher ground, and them being in a clearing meant they could be surrounded from all areas. By the looks of things, that was exactly what was happening.

'Just how many are they? Twenty? No... I think even more.'

The only Monsters who could possibly respond to such a loud explosion were A-Tier Monsters. Since this was their territory, it also made sense to expect them.

"GRRRRRRRRR..."

Britta's body trembled as she looked up and saw the savage creatures emerge from the forest.

Just as she expected, they were incredibly large, with bodies that varied depending on their race. Four distinct kind of Monsters could be seen from the multiple sides that surrounded them.

There were Serocis—incredibly huge ones—to the left. Their lion-like bodies and multiple scorpion tails made them impossible to miss. Not only were they huge and deadly, but one sting from their poison was all it took to kill most people.

Then, there were Hydras to the right—each having three heads, with slithering bodies of snakes.

North and South, there were High Orcs and Rakgoblin Champions.

The former were practically giants with the biggest builds, while the latter were more nimble and lanky—though the Mana emanating from them was far superior.

'I can see about ten on each side!'

That meant the number she initially suspected just doubled.

Britta struggled to think at this point. At most, she could only handle three A-Tier Monsters if they charged at her at once. However, even those had to be of the same race, so she could predict their attack patterns and employ a less complicated strategy to win.

If you threw in Monsters of different races at her, things would get exponentially more difficult. Not only would she find it very difficult to deal with their varying attack patterns, but it would be difficult to keep up with their multiple Skills.

She would undoubtedly lose!

This was true for pretty much any Adventurer, which was why Parties were so important. If she had a reliable Party on her side, she could deal with over ten A-Tier Monsters—even if they were of different races.

As long as the Party Members did their jobs, alternating between defense, buffs, and taking the heat off her in critical moments, she would emerge victorious.

Unfortunately, she had no such thing at the moment. There was no reliable Party, and no chance of victory.

At this point, Britta was pretty sure of one fact.

'I... I'm going to die here.'

*