

# Hunter Academy: Revenge of the Weakest

*Chapter 26: Chapter 6.3 - Lessons*

"Silence."

The moment this word echoed inside the room, the classroom got quiet. After all, everybody knew who this woman was.

The woman's stern expression softened as she scanned the room, her sharp eyes taking in every detail. She had an air of authority and experience that commanded respect.

'Professor Eleanor White.' I thought, seeing the woman.

"Good morning, class." She spoke as she calmed everyone down. "Let me take the attendance; then we will be discussing the proper usage and handling of weapons in combat."

Professor White had short, yellow hair that framed her face, giving her a distinguished appearance. Her eyes were a striking shade of deep blue, and they seemed to have an intensity that could pierce through anyone's defenses.

In fact, they were since she was also an active hunter that went on missions from time to time.

'Eleanor White, global hunter ranking 210.' I immediately thought, remembering her rankings from the start of the game.

The first female hunter to reach the rank of three digits at the age of 21 and the third human to do that naturally.

'The Invoker.' It was her name since she was one of the most talented people in the world right now. A person that reached her own realm in terms of using mana and manipulating it, giving her the nickname of 'The Invoker.'

Her attire was indeed that of an instructor, exuding a sense of authority and experience. She wore a neatly pressed white shirt with the emblem of the Hunter Academy embroidered on the chest, signifying her position as a respected teacher. Over the shirt, she had a dark blue blazer that added a touch of formality to her appearance.

Her pants were made of sturdy material, allowing for ease of movement, which was essential in the practical aspects of weapon training. On her feet, she wore simple yet durable black boots that completed the professional ensemble.

Her yellow hair was neatly tied in a ponytail, giving her a no-nonsense look that matched her stern demeanor. Her sharp eyes, a striking shade of deep blue, seemed to miss nothing as if they could detect even the slightest hint of mischief or laziness among her students.

While I was seizing her like that, she started taking the attendance of the students.

"Student rank 2450, Astron Natusalune."

And as expected, he started with me. Well, that was to be expected since this was how things always went.

The moment my name went passed inside the classroom, everyone's gaze momentarily turned towards me, some of them having mocking smiles on their faces. That was how it always went, so I didn't pay any attention to them.

"Present." Replying normally without minding anyone, I lowered my gaze and started listening to others.

"Student rank 2269, Jean Irwin."

"Present."

"Student rank 2154, Ethan Hartley."

"Present."

Since Ethan was not a student that started with a high-rank thanks to his awakening later than his peers, he was ranked in the last sections, just like Astron. That was what made Astron down in despair and inferiority... Seeing the one that was like him improving himself.

"Student rank...."

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As she kept going higher and higher in the ranks, finally, the first character of the main cast made his appearance.

"Student rank 756, Sylvie Gracewind."

It was Sylvie, with her signature bright smile, she was looking at the teacher with her hand raised. Since she was the future Saintess and healer, she was not someone with

high scores, at least in practical. Thus, the principal made her a special position where her rank would be evaluated with only her theoretical results.

"Present."

"Student rank 567, Asher."

Next one was the first lackey of Victor, who was sitting in the back rows, a man with a bulky build that used his fists as a weapon. He was found by Victor in the slums, and then he was recruited by him, seeing his combat prowess even as a child. After all, at that time, he beat five adults as an 8-year-old kid.

"Present!"

His huge voice echoed inside the classroom as the elephant growled like an animal.

"Tch." I couldn't help but click my tongue since my senses were a lot more sensitive, which also meant his loud voice made me more irritated. Though, he didn't hear me, and I also didn't want him to hear me either.

"Student rank 456, Kellan Stormrider."

"Present."

This time the guy who spoke was the second lackey of Victor, who was the son of a family that was the subordinates of the Blackthorns. His face was scarred, and he looked like a Viking with the dual axes he was using in the game.

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"Student rank 98, Carl Braveheart."

Reaching the first 100 ranks, it was Carl. The stoic man with a bulky build and noble aura around him.

"Present."

"Student rank 75, Lucas Middleton."

Then it was Lucas, the 'best friend of the MC.'

"Present, teacher."

The reason why these two were ranked this low, even though they belonged to the main cast, was because they missed the theoretical exam almost. They entered at the last thirty seconds.

Yeah, they really did, thanks to a dungeon appearing out of nowhere where they tried to save as much as people with Carl's stubbornness. Ethan was the same, but I don't think he could raise his rank with his tiny brain.... Jokes...

"Student rank 43, Julia Middleton."

Julia was individually strong, but thanks to her being a little dumb, she ranked lower than the others with her low theoretical exam results.

"Present."

"Student rank 5, Lilia Thornheart."

Then, there was Lilia. With her theoretical score being one of the highest, she was ranked fifth inside the academy overall, and she was the only archer that was in the rank of 50.

"Present."

"Student rank 3, Irina Emberheart."

Even though Irina had a fiery personality and was easy to anger, she was actually pretty smart when it came to theoretical things; since she was a mage, she needed to be able to perform good calculations at a fast speed.

"Present."

"Student rank 1, Victor Blackthorn."

And then, there was our cold prince.....No need to explain anymore since this guy was basically the first rival of MC; he needed to be strong...

"Present."

With that, attendance was basically taken when the students were busy doing their own things.

However, one thing that most other students hadn't noticed immediately got my attention.

'Their names are not here.'

It was the fact that the three students that left this world Saturday night were not even on the list.

It looked like Eleanor White didn't care about it, either. In fact, she was not going to, of course. Since she was not someone that cared about cadets who wasted their time bullying others.

"Then, let's start with our lesson."

She then proceeded to give a detailed lecture on the different types of weapons used by hunters, ranging from swords and bows to staffs and daggers. As she spoke, her passion for the subject became evident, and her knowledge was impressive.

Even though almost every student here knew how to handle weapons, that didn't mean they knew the advanced theory related to them. Also, getting some pointers about the weapons from a hunter who ranked 210 globally was something that no one would refuse.

"The sword is...." And the start was, of course, a sword. However, while she was speaking, I was observing the main cast as well as Eleanor. After all, it was my first time seeing them from the eyes of a person, different from that Necklace.

"Are you listening, student Natusalune?"

As I was seizing others' looks with my eyes, she turned her attention to me, probably sensing the gaze that was inspecting her.

"Yes, instructor White."

I replied, raising my head. However, her squinting gaze didn't leave me as she was constantly observing me, trying to see through me.

My relationship with most of the teachers was not good since Astron would mostly sit back there and would not participate in the questions, thus resulting in him having bad impressions.

And the way this woman was operated in her head was pretty much related to merit.

The more you bring to the table, the more things you will get.

Then, what can a student bring to the table?

It is their talent and hard work.... Or in other words, a future....

That meant if you were talented and got a future ahead of you, then you would get the attention.

If you are not, then fuck you.

That was basically how this academy operated in reality, not like how the headmaster talked.

Instructor White's gaze remained fixed on me, her expression unreadable. I could sense that she was planning something, perhaps to test my attentiveness during the lecture.

"Student Natusalune," she said with a faint smile, "since you seem to be so focused, let's see how well you were listening. Can you tell me the primary advantage of using a compound bow over a recurve bow?"

Hearing this, I almost couldn't contain my smile. The weapon I had just changed to came in handy.... I mean, it was not like I didn't know what other weapons did... No, I was probably one of the people who knew the best since I had no choice but to listen to these boring lessons all the time inside the necklace.

"The primary advantage of using a compound bow over a recurve bow is that a compound bow provides more power and accuracy due to its pulley system." Though, I had no intention of giving a random nerdy answer to gather attention on me.

"Correct answer. But why is it so?" However, Eleanor White did not want to leave me alone. The answer was correct, but she pushed the question.

'Because the compound bow allows for a let-off when the bow is fully drawn by utilizing the cams or wheels on the top and bottom limbs. This means that as I draw the bowstring back, the pulley system reaches a point where the weight required to hold the bowstring decreases significantly. It becomes easier to hold the drawn bow in that position, reducing strain on my muscles and allowing for a more stable aim and longer holding time.' I thought in that millisecond, remembering the definition I saw in the book.

"I don't know." But I simply answered bluntly, not caring. The notes I would get, the recommendations, or all other things, I did not care about any of those. I was not planning to enter a guild either. Thus, I didn't care if I got a higher grade or not.

Just staying in this academy was enough for me to use the resources given to us.

"You don't know?" She squinted her gaze, growing pressure on me. It was not on the level of Headmaster, but her pressure was also a no joke.

"Y-Yes," I responded, my words cutting down with the pressure. "Because you hadn't talked about it yet." However, she missed one thing. It was because, just to ask me more questions, she asked something that she had yet to talk about.

"Ah.... But you still needed to study before coming here." With a smug face, she turned her attention to the girl in the front.

"Irina, can you answer?"

"Yes, Miss White. The reason why a compound bow provides more power is that the compound bow allows for a let-off when the bow is fully drawn by utilizing the cams or wheels on the top and bottom limbs. This means that as one draws the bowstring back, the pulley system reaches a point where the weight required to hold the bowstring decreases significantly. It becomes easier to hold the drawn bow in that position, reducing strain on their muscles and allowing for a more stable aim and longer holding time."

It was the same answer that came from the textbook. It was evident that Irina came to the class after studying.

"That's correct. This is how you answer the question, understood Student Natusalune."

"Pffftttt...."

I could see the students around me mocking and smiling ear to ear, but neither did I mind nor did I get mad.

'A person who satisfies her ego by devaluing others.... Such a pitiful creature...' After all, I could also reveal that I knew about this thing and could satisfy my ego right here, right now, by embarrassing this woman before me.

'But, that wouldn't benefit me.'

At the end of the day, I was just a small fish inside the pot. And to achieve my goal, sometimes I needed to swallow the salt water, even if it burned my throat.

"Understood."

"Good. Now where were we." As she started speaking once again, explaining the lecture, I could see her gaze narrowing on me.

'Though it seems I was on her blacklist already, not that I care.'

Just like that, I lowered my gaze and stared at the lesson noting everything in my head.

-----A/N-----

Hope you liked the chapter.

Give me power stones if you like my novel; I am participating in WPC, so it helps a lot.

You can check my discord if you want. You will be able to see the illustrations here and engage in a conversation with me if I am available.

*Chapter 27: Chapter 7.1 - Dungeon Practice*

In a way, the way the Arcadia Hunter Academy operated was pretty similar to a college rather than a high school.

There would be courses that students would take according to their majors, but the time of the classes was slightly random; not all the classes were at the same hour.

But that was after the second semester, since the first semester, everyone would get the basic courses for every type of hunter-related job.

You can think of this as Calculus or Physics for engineers. No matter what type of engineering major you are in, be it Mechanical, Electrical, or Computer, you will always take the course Calculus in your first year.

The same goes for courses like 'Introduction to Dungeon Ecology,' 'Basic Combat Techniques' and many others.

Just as the first lesson of the day reached its end, Eleanor White finished her 'Basic Combat Techniques' lesson.

Normally the next lesson was going to be empty today we don't have any other classes until the afternoon. However, this time it was different, since today we will be starting the real Academy life.

"Please don't leave the class."

Suddenly signaling the students who were about to leave, Eleanor tapped on her desk, gathering everyone's attention.

"As you all know, we have finished our first month in our curriculum. Therefore, from this week and onwards, you will be actively participating in the practical dungeon explorations randomly." Instructor White announced, capturing the attention of all the students.

The room buzzed with excitement, and some students exchanged excited glances with their friends. Practical dungeon explorations were the highlight of their training, a chance to put their knowledge and skills to the test in real-life scenarios.

In a way, that one month of waiting made sense since the students entering the Academy would mostly be newbies that had never seen any type of dungeon before. Thus, they needed to be educated and informed before endangering themselves.

Looking at their happy faces, I couldn't help but shake my head.



'I wonder what face you will make when you see the monsters inside the dungeon.' I thought. It was understandable that those who strived to be the main character of their story would always dream happily, but when reality hits, it hits hard.

And this practical dungeon exploration will be the first lesson that the Academy will teach those little kids about the cruelty of the real world.

"In these explorations, you will be divided into teams according to your ranks. You will venture into various dungeons, each with its unique challenges and monsters. The goal is to assess your adaptability, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities under real combat situations."

She paused, allowing the significance of the upcoming experiences to sink in before continuing, "Remember, dungeons can be dangerous, and safety is of the utmost importance. Always follow your team leader's instructions and cooperate with your teammates. Failure to do so may result in severe consequences."

The students nodded, but at the same time, I could see the relaxed expression on their faces. They all thought it would be easy.

After she said that, she signaled the board behind her. "The dungeon you will be exploring is Academy's artificial dungeon. Thus, you won't be subjected to fatal wounds. But that doesn't mean you won't feel any pain."

She signaled footage where a cadet was blasted off by a monster as his chest was bleeding.

"Just like there, if it is determined that you got a fatal wound, your session will be finished by the examiner. Are we clear?"

""Yes."" A hearty sound of students filled the room, and seeing this, Eleanor had a smile on her face.

"Now, the message should have already arrived on your bracelets," Instructor White said, her voice commanding attention. "This message contains all the necessary information for your first dungeon exploration, including your team assignment, the monster you will be hunting, and the specific objectives you need to accomplish."

She paused as the students checked their bracelets, each receiving a notification. I glanced at mine and saw the message containing the details for our team's exploration.

"Once you have reviewed the message, gather your team members and make your way to the entrance of the artificial dungeon," Instructor White continued. "Your team leader will be responsible for guiding your group throughout the exploration. Listen to their instructions and work together cohesively."

"The dungeon will be monitored by examiners, and they will intervene if they see any potential risks to your safety. However, I must stress that your performance will be evaluated based on your ability to handle situations on your own, so rely on your teamwork and skills."

"Now, form your teams and head to the entrance of the artificial dungeon. Your adventure awaits, and I expect nothing less than your best effort."

As the students began organizing into their respective teams, I saw the main cast gathering together – Ethan, Victor, Julia, Lucas, Irina, and Lilia. They seemed eager and confident, ready to face whatever lay ahead.

Well, that was to be expected, since, different from normal students, almost all of them had already entered dungeons frequently. Even Ethan did enter a dungeon—a late awakener.

And from the game, I knew which person would be

I turned to my own bracelet and opened the message, revealing the details of my team's exploration.

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[Team 13]

Irina Emberheart – Student Rank 3

Gregor Harvey – Student Rank 135

Nora Berry – Student Rank 521

Astron Natusalune – Student Rank 2450

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Looking at my team, I turned my gaze to the girl who was looking at Victor with a wide smile. It was evident that she had yet to check her group.

'Sigh.... Out of all people, it is this girl.'

The first person on the team list would be the captain, and for ours, it was Irina. She was one of the hardest people to deal with at the beginning of the game, and I am sure it is still like that.

The other two of our team were also characters I knew of, but they were rather small characters. If you haven't played the game with side quests and stories, you probably wouldn't know about their names.

Gregor Harvey. He was a tank-type of character who would stand before the party and tank the damage first. His main weapon was an axe, and his trait Earth Guardian made him a reliable tank since he could defend himself using his Earth-based abilities.

And Nora Berry. She was a girl who used swords mainly, and her main focus was strength. Her rank would increase thanks to her talent in swords, as she would make a name for herself at the later stages of the game. Even now, her rank was not that bad, as she was on the better side of the spectrum.

Though for now, she was not someone that made a name for herself.

Looking at the team, though, it was pretty balanced. One frontline, one main damage dealer, one backline (rearguard), and one utility. Since I was a dagger user, I would act as a scout normally.

As I was pondering about the students, I felt a stinging gaze on my back, and turning my head, I saw bright yellow eyes looking at me with an irritated emotion.

It was just a moment, though, since after that, Irina turned her gaze away from me.

Seeing the other two already gathered at the corner of the classroom and walking toward where Irina was standing, I also made my way there.

As the team gathered around Irina, she looked at the two with a smile.

"Nice to meet you, Miss Irina," Nora spoke with a slightly stiff tone. Since she came from a slightly middle-ranked family, she slightly feared Irina. Even though she was normally a pretty energetic girl, she was still cautious.

"Don't be so stiff. Nora, right? You can talk to me casually." Though, Irina was not someone that liked to be formal. Her fiery red hair swung as she smiled at the girl.

"Ah...Thank you, I will call you Irina then."

"George, right? I remember you from the entrance exams. Weren't you the one that wrapped himself with Earth at that time?" Nora immediately turned her attention to the bulky boy beside her with a smile.

"Ah... I am embarrassed now." George looked bulky and intimidating, but inside, he was actually a pretty soft person that didn't know how to talk with others much.

"Ah, where is Ast-" Just as Nora was about to turn her attention to me, suddenly Irina butted in.

"We should head to the entrance now. No time to waste!" Irina declared with a cheerful tone, completely ignoring my existence.

Nora and Gregor seemed to accept her abrupt change of topic without question, and they followed her lead without a second thought. It was as if I was invisible to them, a mere afterthought. Even though I could see Nora throwing small glances at me, she couldn't do anything.

I could hear them talking amongst themselves, thanks to my increased senses.

"So, Gregor, what's your specialty in combat?" Irina asked with an excited tone, her eyes sparkling with interest.

"I'm an Earth Guardian," Gregor replied with a shy tone, getting overwhelmed by the attention Irina was giving to him. "I specialize in using earth-based abilities to defend and protect my teammates. With my Earth Guardian trait, I can create barriers and absorb incoming attacks."

"Nice! We've got ourselves a tank!" Irina exclaimed, giving Gregor an encouraging pat on the back. "And Nora, how about you? What's your forte in combat?"

Nora smiled and straightened her posture confidently. "I'm a sword user. I focus on strength and precision, aiming for critical strikes in close combat. My rank might not be high yet, but I'm determined to prove my skills in dungeon exploration!"

"That's the spirit!" Irina cheered, giving Nora a thumbs up. "With your sword skills and Gregor's defense, we've got a strong frontline."

Irina liked those that were confident, but at the same time, she didn't like those that always bragged about themselves. It was a small line that determined a person's character for her.

They walked, completely ignoring my existence, and that was to be expected. After all, Irina was such a person. She liked competent people and liked to show herself as an elitist in order to impress Victor.

Even now, I could see her throwing some glances at Victor from time to time, though the said one didn't even pay any attention to her.

'It is a pity that your fragile love won't get any answer.' I thought, since in the game Victor never stopped pursuing Julia until the very late stages of the game, where the feeling of love couldn't even be felt in the midst of all that chaos.

As we arrived at the entrance of the artificial dungeon, an imposing stone structure loomed before us. It was a massive structure that mimicked the dungeons found in the outside world, but it was designed to provide a safer training ground for students.

Everyone brought their weapons with them. My daggers were on my belt. After pondering about it for a while, I decided that using two daggers was more suited for me. Thus, I got one another in the training grounds as per allowed.

Irina stepped forward, her eyes gleaming with anticipation. "All right, everyone. Let's go."

Nora and Gregor nodded eagerly, ready to take on the challenge. But Irina's gaze never even grazed in my direction, as if she had completely forgotten about my presence.

Just like that, they stepped into the gate, which would take us into the artificial dungeon of the academy.

-----A/N-----

Hope you liked the chapter.

This is the last stocked chapter, and I caught Covid right now so I don't know if I can post another tomorrow.

You can check my discord if you want. You will be able to see the illustrations here and engage in a conversation with me if I am available.

### *Chapter 28: Chapter 7.2 - Dungeon Practice*

"All right, everyone. Let's go." After Irina said that, the other three entered the dungeon making their way into there.

Following them, I also entered the dungeon while signaling the instructor overseeing us. He nodded and let me in as well, though I could see a small bitter smile on his face.

As I stepped through the gate, I found myself in a vast, open natural field, surrounded by tall trees that seemed to stretch endlessly into the sky. The air was filled with the scent of earth and foliage, and the distant sounds of chirping birds added to the ambiance.

'To think I would witness this scene in real life.'

In the game, that was the second time we would be combating monsters, and one of the dungeon tropes was this. Seeing it in real life with such eyes made me feel weird.

Natural Forest Field.

The field was bathed in warm sunlight, casting dappled shadows on the ground. It was a serene and tranquil setting, but I knew better than to let our guard down. This was still a dungeon, and danger lurked behind the beauty of nature.

Even though the monsters in this place were created by the academy, that didn't mean they were weak either.

\*DING\*

At that moment, a sound of ringing came to my ears.

'It must be the coordinates.' I thought, and looking at my smartwatch, I confirmed.

"The coordinates are here," Irina said, looking at her smartwatch.

"The monster we're expected to hunt is a Rank 3 creature known as the Galewind Wolf," Irina announced, her voice laced with excitement. She was a bloodthirsty girl, and she was going to get the action she wanted.

"Its coordinates are at the heart of the forest, beyond the clearing," Irina continued, pointing in the direction we needed to head.

"Let's go; I am going to burn it alive."

With a proud tone, she declared, making her way toward the coordinates.

\*SWOOSH\*

Immediately dashing forwards, she started running while the others also followed her movements.

"Gregor, you will be facing the wolf while Nora will deal with restricting its movements. Galewind Wolves are known to be herd-type monsters, so they will probably call reinforcements, or they may not even be alone. But, if it calls other monsters, this is better for us since I can deal with all of them at once."

They were talking while walking toward the coordinates, but their speed was so fast that I had a hard time catching up, and soon the distance was immediately opened wide, as I could no longer hear what they were saying.

'Galewind Wolves, huh?'

It was a type of enemy I knew from the game. A wolf that evolved as the mana came and gained the wind attribute. It was a Rank 3 monster.

Monster rankings were not that hard to deal with. A rank-three monster meant a person with average stats three could beat the monster in one on one, in theory at least....

At least, the estimated stats of the monster would be averaged three, but most of the time, it was not advised to go against a monster of an equal rank one-on-one.

And that was especially dangerous when the monster was a herd type one.

'In the game, it would call Lesser Galewind Wolves, a rank two monster.'

Remembering the game, these wolves were one of the cringiest monster types. They were fast, agile, and they hunted in hordes, making them hard to deal with unless you had a crowd control skill.

'In any case, I should still at least watch how they fight. There is a high chance that I can learn something from them. I also don't want to get a disciplinary punishment, as well.'

With that thought, I kept running at the fastest pace I could without tiring myself. If, after getting there, I was going to be tired enough not to lift my arms, then there was no need to get there to endanger myself.

As I ran through the vast forest field, I kept my eyes peeled for any signs of their whereabouts while also observing the small signs that would give me information about the number of monsters.

The ground was covered in soft soil and fallen leaves, but I could still make out faint traces of footprints that led in a specific direction. From the depths of the marks and the small differences between paws, I could see that there were at least ten different wolves and one boss since that one had a rather deep mark.

'This is their territory.' And not long after, I reached a field filled with trees, and there were some marks on them, indicating this was the nest of monsters.

Following the tracks, I pushed myself to run faster, not wanting to lose sight of them. I kept my senses sharp, listening for any sounds that might indicate their location. The forest was alive with the sounds of birds and rustling leaves, but I focused on filtering out the background noise.

This was how dungeons operated. Somehow the natural life would also be there coexisting with the monsters, and it was a weird feeling.....

\*CLANK\* \*CLANK\*

As I continued to follow the tracks, the distant sounds of battle gradually reached my ears. The faint clashing of metal, the growls of wolves, and the whooshing of wind filled

the air. I knew I was getting closer as the pressure of the battle also enveloped me. I saw the traces of them first.

\*BOOM\* \*BOOM\* \*CLANK\*

The deep pit on the ground by human feet indicated one thing.

'Nora was the first one to strike; she must have used her dash skill.' Imagining the scene on my hand and playing it, I thought.

'Then, she must have been followed by George. He must have blocked the following attack of Galewind Wolf, and while all of them were happening, Irina must have been waiting for the wolf to call help.'

Focusing my senses, I activated my skill [Keen Eye], my vision sharpened, and I could spot even the tiniest movements from a distance.

Through the thick foliage, I spotted a blur of red hair— I knew it was Irina. She was moving with incredible speed, dodging and attacking with precision.

'As expected....She thought the wolf couldn't sense her, so she attacked first.' I thought.

Since the trees showed signs of burning and it was obvious that Irina attacked without waiting, it matched her personality as well.

Nora was right beside her, her sword technique elegant and powerful. Gregor, the Earth Guardian, held his ground as he defended the others with his massive axe.

And there, amidst the flurry of combat, I caught a glimpse of the Galewind Wolf. It looked like a majestic creature, but I knew quite a lot of intimidating and majestic figures from the game. The Mistwraith alone excluded ten times of pressure, though he was weak at that time.

Still, the wolf's silver fur glinted in the sunlight as it moved with agility and grace. Its large, luminous yellow eyes glared at the three with fierce intensity.

The Lesser Galewind Wolves circled around their alpha, snarling and lunging at any opportunity. Irina, Nora, and Gregor fought back relentlessly; their teamwork was shabby, but they at least tried to coordinate their attacks and defenses.

\*SWOOSH\* \*SWOOSH\*

At a rapid speed, Nora swung her sword as she deflected the attacks of the two Lesser Galewind Wolves.

\*SLASH\* \*SPURT\*



Following that, her blade passed through the wolf at a rapid speed dividing it into two pieces.

Observing the way she had used her sword, I started taking notes of how she imbued her mana with her sword.

Her stats should not be that overwhelming against Lesser Galewind Wolves, but the blade still cut through fast. It was because of the way she moved her mana while moving. It must have been related to her sword art, but that didn't matter to me.

I just observed her movements and tried to understand the essence behind it.

'Hmm.... That seems to be a better way of using mana.' I thought. Putting it into words was weirdly a bit hard, but thanks to my trait [Perceptive Insight] letting me understand the essence of the things I have seen faster, I somehow understood a way to improve the mana imbued on my daggers.

'As expected, it works.'

It worked, but I was still a newbie, so it didn't increase much.

'Anyway, Nora and George will deal with the Lesser Wolves; let's watch the main fight.' I thought, turning my attention to the Irina.

**SWOOSH! SWIRL!**

Irina's battle with the Galewind Wolf was a dance of fire and wind. She moved with incredible speed, her flaming red hair flowing like a wild inferno as she dodged the wolf's attacks and retaliated with precise strikes.

"This is too much fun!" She was smiling ear to ear as she sent fire against fire to the wolf. Thanks to the enhanced boots underneath her, her speed was fast, not expected from a mage.

"Now take this!"

She unleashed a burst of fiery mana, scorching the air and leaving trails of flames in her wake. The wolf tried to counter her attacks with its wind-based abilities, but Irina's increased agility allowed her to evade them effortlessly.

Her mana control was also incredibly perfect, as she almost ate the mana alive. Even though there were small amounts of mana being wasted, it was still close to the level of professional hunters, and she was just a freshman cadet right now. This alone showed how much potential she had.

Their battle was fierce and intense, and I could see the feeling of happiness in Irina's eyes as she faced off against the powerful monster. Despite its ferocity and strength, she showed no signs of fear or hesitation. She was a hunter, a warrior, and this was what she was born to do.

SWOOSH! BOOM!

With a burst of speed, she darted in and delivered a series of precise punches, each one infused with fiery mana. The wolf tried to counter, but Irina was too quick, too unpredictable. She dodged and weaved, leaving the monster frustrated and confused.

"You're going to have to be faster than that!" she laughed, her eyes gleaming with excitement. The Galewind Wolf snarled in response, but it was no match for Irina's relentless assault.

But at that moment, a chilly sensation welled inside me....

-----A/N-----

Hope you liked the chapter.

Give me power stones if you like my novel; I am participating in WPC, so it helps a lot.

You can check my discord if you want. You will be able to see the illustrations here and engage in a conversation with me if I am available.

*Chapter 29: Chapter 7.3 - Dungeon Practice*

"You're going to have to be faster than that!" Irina laughed heartily as she was toying with the wolf.

However, at that moment, just as I was watching how she fought, suddenly, I felt a movement around me.

RUSTLE RUSTLE

'Hmm?' Immediately sensing something was amiss, I grabbed my daggers.

GROWL SWOOSH

There, my eyes picked up a wolf with silver fur approaching me at a rapid speed.

CLANK

Immediately raising my daggers, I blocked the claws of the wolf. Though from the confrontation alone, it was evident that the strength of the wolf was higher than mine.

'Ho.... So, one of them sensed me, huh? It doesn't matter anyway.'

I was not planning to participate in the fight, but that didn't mean I was going to let myself get attacked and injured.

SWOOSH

With a fast speed, the wolf dashed to me again. But my eyes were able to see his movements.

CLANK

First was a claw attack coming at my chest; raising my daggers in a cross shape, I blocked the attack.

CLANK CLANK

However, that wasn't the end, as the wolf kept attacking me at a rapid speed.

'The instructors should be watching.' I thought, thus choosing not to use my shadow trait.

The wolf lunged again, aiming for my exposed flank. Reacting swiftly, I sidestepped, narrowly avoiding its razor-sharp claws. But the beast wasn't giving up so easily; it turned on its heel and lunged once more, this time attempting to catch me off guard.

CLANK THUD

I parried the attack with one dagger while using the other to counter, but my strike was deflected by the wolf's reinforced hide. The impact sent a jolt of pain through my arm, but I gritted my teeth and focused on my opponent.

'I knew I was weak, but to think that I can't even injure a rank two beast on my own....' That was to be expected, but reality hitting me still made me feel weird.

CLANK CLANK

The wolf kept attacking me, and I kept blocking his claws with my daggers.

In any case, that was not the time to be discouraged, as I saw others were about to finish.

Imbuing my dagger with my mana, I readied myself. This time, different from at that moment, it had a blue aura rather than a crimson.

'It is not the time to think about this.' I thought to myself, raising my daggers.

'Dash.'

With that simple thought, I felt the power entering me as my skill activated.

'Keen Eye.'

Using my other skill, my eyes immediately focused on the wolf before me, showing its weaknesses to me.

'As expected, this place was his weak spot.'

While observing the fight, I noticed the weak spot of the monsters, and just as I expected, my skill showed the same.

With a calculated move, I feigned an opening, baiting the wolf to attack.

SWOOSH

And it took the bait as it lunged forwards, trying to attack me on my right shoulder.

However, my speed was faster than it should have been; with a smooth move, I tilted my body to the side, dodging the lunging wolf.

People who did close combat would know the importance of one's footing and how fatal it could be if one were to jump forwards.

But, the wolf didn't....

Seizing the opportunity, I stabbed the wolf, my dagger aimed at a vulnerable spot between its ribs on its flying navel. The blade sank in, eliciting a furious yelp from the wolf.

HOWL

As the wolf stumbled back from my well-timed strike, I wasted no time and immediately transitioned into the Whispering Thorn stance—a deadly technique of the Basic Dagger Stance I had practiced through countless training sessions.

In this stance, my daggers moved like a flurry of thorns, striking with precision and speed, leaving no room for the wolf to counter. The strikes especially aimed at the weak

points of the enemy, making it reliant on the information the user needed to obtain beforehand.

SWOOSH SWOOSH SWOOSH

I darted in and out, exploiting the weak spots that my Keen Eye skill had revealed. Each strike was aimed at vulnerable points on its body, delivering quick, calculated blows that gradually wore down the creature's defenses.

My mana was okay, but my body was getting weaker and weaker with each passing second.

The wolf, now on the defensive, struggled to keep up with my relentless assault. Its silver fur became stained with blood as my daggers found their mark again and again. Despite its strength, the creature was no match for the precision and speed of the Whispering Thorn.

And, it became desperate since the pain was enveloping his body. In just three seconds of time, the fight has turned in its enemy's favor, after all.

Thus with a swift feint, I lured the wolf into a momentary opening, and with lightning-fast reflexes, I slid behind it. In one seamless motion, I drove both daggers into its exposed flank, hitting a vital area that caused the wolf to howl in pain.

My relentless barrage of attacks was taking its toll. The wolf's movements slowed, and its growls became weaker.

As the wolf tried to turn and face me, I anticipated its every move. My footwork was precise and light, allowing me to dance around the creature with ease. I became a blur of motion, and the wolf found itself surrounded by a whirlwind of strikes.

CLANK CLANK CLANK

The sound of metal meeting flesh echoed in the clearing as my daggers continued their deadly dance. I was in perfect harmony with my blades, channeling all my focus and energy into each strike. My heartbeat seemed to synchronize with the rhythm of my attacks, creating a symphony of battle.

The wolf's movements grew sluggish, and its eyes showed signs of desperation. It knew it was outmatched, and yet it refused to surrender. But I didn't show any mercy; this was a fight for survival, and the stronger one would live.

I mean, it was not that dramatic, but whatever.

With one final, decisive strike, I drove both daggers deep into the wolf's heart.

SHRIEK

It let out a guttural gasp.

THUD

Before collapsing to the ground, lifeless.

"Huff.... Hufff...."

I stood there, panting heavily, covered in sweat and the wolf's blood. No matter how easy it looked for me to beat the wolf, my body was weak. It was too weak to engage in a direct confrontation. At least, my constitution stat was too low.

As I caught my breath, I glanced over to where Irina had been toying with the other wolves, and there I saw she was also about to finish her job.

The others were also the same, as they also killed the remaining ten lesser wolves on their own.

From this alone, you can see how weak the original body of Astron was. Even with my increased body stats, I still had a hard time dealing with one wolf, while these two dealt with ten of them. And they were not even fully tired like me.

'Well, it doesn't matter.'

With that thought, I raised my body as a message came through my smartwatch.

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[Team 13]

Time elapsed: 34 Minutes 12 Seconds – 20/600

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The moment the notice came to me, I could see the expression on Irina's face stiffen.

'She must be regretting toying with the wolf right now.' I thought. After all, there was a time record for the students, and they were going to be ranked.

Though the time would not matter on grades too much aside from the performance evaluated in the dungeon by instructors, that didn't mean it was for nothing.

No.... It would actually ignite competition amongst the students since almost everyone would be competing with each other.

'20, huh? It was the same as in the game.' I thought. Though I did not have any idea about Astron, I knew Irina was ranked 20 in the game since the rankings would not change too much aside from the first 10.

But I got a feeling that Astron was on Irina's team and ended up getting ignored in the same way.

Just as I was thinking about that, I felt another sharp glare on me. Turning to face the source, I saw Irina was looking at me with a glare.

'You brought it on yourself, don't be a brat and do your own thing.'

Ignoring her gaze, I slowly started walking out of the dungeon; since this was an artificial dungeon, it would not throw the people inside out when it was cleared. There was no need to interact with those no more. After all, I got what I wanted.

'Real life experience against a monster and a good opportunity to observe how high-ranking cadets fought.' That alone was enough for me to be happy.

As I walked out of the dungeon, I could feel Irina's intense gaze following me. I knew she was not pleased with her own performance and was mad. But she was looking for a person to blame.

As I reached the exit, Irina approached me, her fiery red hair still glowing from the adrenaline of the battle. "What was that all about?" she demanded, her tone accusatory. "You barely did anything in there! We were fighting a whole pack of Lesser Galewind Wolves, and you just stood there like a statue! At least fight like a man!"

I didn't flinch under her gaze and just looked at her with an unbothered expression. To be honest, I did not want to be involved with the main cast of the game if not necessary. I had my own reason to be here, and I certainly didn't care about what they were doing.

"Don't talk to me," I answered with a cold tone. The way she was speaking at me like she was above made me slightly irritated.

"What?" With a tone of surprise, she asked, certainly not expecting such an answer.

"I said don't talk to me."

"You bastard! It was because of you we were this slow." Irina shouted in anger while her hair got stiff again. She was angry, as usual.

'This girl's personality is really bad....' I thought. In the game, just because of that reason, the player would get into trouble quite often.

"Umm....Let's stay calm, Irina. We shouldn't cause a scene here." Nora interrupted with a stiff expression throwing a short gaze at me. It was evident that she was also not favored towards me, but I didn't care about her either.

"But this bas-"

"If it is because of me, then it will show on our grades. If you have a problem, report it to the teachers. Don't talk to me anymore."

With those last words, I turned back and started walking, leaving the three dumbfounded. Certainly, none of them was expecting me to behave like that since making an enemy from one of the strongest cadets in this academy wouldn't do any favor to anyone.

And the words I said were also true. If it was because of me, the results would show itself on our grades already, so arguing right now would be pointless.

"YOU!"

I could hear Irina fuming behind me, but I ignored her words.

Just like that, I left the place, going my own way. After all, I needed to train until the weekend....

-----A/N-----

Hope you liked the chapter. You can see why Astron decided to become a ranger from this chapter alone. Just one wolf was hard to deal with in close combat.

You can check my discord if you want. You will be able to see the illustrations here and engage in a conversation with me if I am available.

*Chapter 30 Chapter 8.1 - Art Manual*

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[Team 13]

Time elapsed: 34 Minutes 12 Seconds – 20/600

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20th team out of 600.



This was the panel that appeared when Irina clicked on her smartwatch.

'What is this? We would be ranked?' Seeing this immediately, a question arose from the hearts of Irina.

'Fuck. If I knew it would be ranked, I wouldn't have played with that wolf.'

Since it was a rank three monster, at first, she thought this would be hard. But after fighting with the monster for a while, she realized it didn't pose much of a threat, so she wanted to play with it to test her magic, and as time passed on, she was having so much fun that she forgot she was even in an exam.

'I feel stupid now.' Irina thought. No matter how careless she was, it was blatantly her mistake, and inside her heart, she knew it.

But she was still annoyed to the point where she wanted to smash those trees and burn them alive.

Because the rank 20 was something she would never be satisfied with. After all, she was the third rank student in this academy, and she was the second strongest here. Thus, this score was unacceptable for her.

At that moment, she saw a person amongst the trees.

'Hmm? This guy is here?' She had completely ignored his existence. After all, he was just worthless trash who didn't deserve to breathe the same air as people like her. Those talentless dogs like him were the reason why she needed to step up like that all the time.

Her gaze wandered around him. He was breathing heavily as if he had just fought his life's battle. In fact, it looked like he had a battle since a little body of the Lesser Galewind Wolf.

'He even struggled against a rank-two monster. What a pathetic bastard.' The moment she saw his face, she grew more annoyed.

If it was another person, they would probably reach there faster, and they might even get an idea about this time score. She was already feeling angry, and now her anger stiffened.

And that bastard turned his gaze to her for a second, matching her gaze with his own. But it was only a brief moment since after that he turned and started walking back.

'He ignored me!' She grew more and more annoyed at that fact as her gaze followed his back, glaring daggers at him.

The other two, who were panting slightly, decided to say nothing as it was obvious that her mood was not great, and she thanked them for that since she didn't want to deal with flattery right now.

"Let's return."

Just like that, they started walking back as well. And since they were faster than that bastard at the entrance of the dungeon, they caught him.

At that moment, she couldn't help but want to turn all the attention to him. After all, she wanted someone to shift the blame.

So she shouted while calling out to him. She asked why he was standing and not helping others, making it look like she was not the one who ignored him in the first place.

"At least fight like a man!"

Knowing that most of the males would get mad over such words, she decided to press his buttons.

At least she tried to.

Since the response she got was nothing like she was expecting.

"Don't talk to me."

A simple cold answer that didn't contain any ounce of emotion. Cold purple eyes that were empty.

"What?"

She was really surprised, not expecting such a response. Irina Emberheart was getting ignored like that? No way.

But it happened.

That bastard just said if he did something wrong, he would see it on his grades. And it was logical.

Which was what made her more annoyed. Because she couldn't fight it back, and just as she was about to call him back, the instructor came and started explaining to everyone how the grading process was going to happen.

All right, listen up, cadets. The dungeon exploration is over, and it's time for the grading procedure. You will all be evaluated based on various criteria, including teamwork, combat effectiveness, adaptability, and problem-solving skills."

But she didn't listen to that intently since she was thinking about something else.

'Astron Natusalune....' It was at that moment his name entered her head with a bad impression.

'Next time, I will let you see who is the boss.' Though she was annoyed, it was not like she was going to bully a lowlife like him.

She was not like those other bastards after all. But still, she swore to herself that next time in a competition, she would humiliate that bastard.

And seeing that Julia smiling ear to ear while laughing with her team made her more mad. Since her ears were able to hear that her team was ranked 8th overall....

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The moment I left the Artificial dungeon, I made my way toward the library of the academy.

The reason why was simple. Because I wanted to grab a bunch of books related to mana control and also look for a simple hidden easter egg.

Now, I want you to look for a developer's perspective and think about an easter egg type of manual.

Where would you put it for an early-game easter egg inside the academy?

You would either hide it in the forest or...

Or you would put it in the library amongst the countless books that the player could interact with, right?

At the very least, no sane player would check what the books contained...Aside from some psychos...

Like me...

In any case, because the developers wanted to put a high-ranking art manual as an easter egg, they chose the location as a library since the forest already had one. Therefore, the only thing that was left for me was to find it and use it to my advantage.

As I entered the vast library of the academy, I was met with rows upon rows of bookshelves, each filled with countless tomes on various subjects. It was a treasure trove of knowledge.

Knowing the developers' penchant for hiding secrets in plain sight, I began my search among the vast collection of books.

'It should be in the mana control section.' I thought and made my way toward the mana section.

Since the library was filled with countless books written over time by scholars, naturally, there was quite a lot about mana as well.

Thus, the moment I reached the mana section, a 50-meter-long row of shelves welcomed me.

At that point, there wasn't anything that could help me since even though the name of the books that surrounded the easter egg was revealed, their location was not that definite. After all, nobody could create a game where 50000 books were shown, right?

Therefore, the only thing I could do was simply look at the books shown there and find the one I needed.

Just like that, I started looking at the books.

Hours passed as I meticulously scanned through various shelves, occasionally flipping through the pages of some books that seemed promising but turned out to be unrelated to my quest.

It felt like a needle in a haystack situation, but my patience and knowing I would be successful in the end drove me forward.

And at one point, I stumbled upon a section of the library dedicated to ancient arcane arts.

'Arcane Arts?' I thought. 'One of the books had a title like that.' It was at that moment that I felt like I was very close to finding the book I had wanted, and with a renewed feeling, I started skimming the books.

As I skimmed through the dusty tomes, my eyes fell upon a particular book that seemed out of place. Its worn cover and the faded title caught my attention. "Moonstruck Convergence: A Tale of Celestial Mana."

The moment I saw the title, I felt slightly weird. Like, this book was something I needed to grab, even though it was not related to the easter egg I was searching for at all.

'Moonstruck Convergence: A Tale of Celestial Mana.'

The name alone was enough to make me interested in it.

Grabbing the book, I put it in my bag and started skimming through the books once again, trying to find the easter egg.

Just like that, another hour passed in the blink of an eye. At this point, my head started to hurt since I felt like I skimmed through thousands of books.

At this point, it became a monotonic routine where I would be mindlessly opening the pages of the books without even paying attention.

I could see some students looking at me; even though this section was fairly empty, there were still some students, and certainly, their reactions were normal, considering a madman was randomly opening the books and putting them down after looking for three pages at most.

I absentmindedly picked up another book, its title barely registering in my fatigued mind. I opened it and casually flipped through its pages, expecting to find yet another normal book like the others.

But then, as I put the book down, I noticed something strange. The pages were empty, different from the previous ones; they were bright white like no ink had touched them.

The moment I realized what it was, I immediately felt refreshed as my attention returned to the book.

'Found it.'

My heart began to race with excitement as I opened the book once more, determined to find out if my hunch was correct. I carefully inspected each page, running my fingers over the seemingly blank surface.

'Finally.' I thought, breathing a sigh of relief. I had been picking up the books for a long time now, and I finally managed to find the one I was searching for.

When my fingers touched the book, I got a weird feeling different from any other book I have touched so far. Like this book was giving otherworldly vibes, and it was something I absolutely needed to explore.

With that, my tensed body was also relaxed. Closing the book, I looked at its title, and as expected, it didn't have any title at all, just like its papers.

I could finally leave this place and reach my dorm room, now.

Reaching the receptionist, I registered the first book, 'Moonstruck Convergence: A Tale of Celestial Mana,' as borrowed and said the other one was my notebook, so I didn't need to explain everything in detail.

Just like that, I reached my room.

There I could see a box inside.

This must have been my bow, but I didn't want to open it at that moment since my attention was on the empty book.

'Let's start now.'

Like that, I grabbed a needle from my drawer and stabbed the tip of my index finger, dropping a small amount of blood on the top of the book.

Only to make it shine.

Then, a bunch of unknown hieroglyphs started shining, and suddenly I lost consciousness slip away....

-----A/N-----

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