

My Infinite Mana System

Chapter 12: First Encounter

The tunnel twisted and turned, its narrow walls pressing in on us.

Every step echoed faintly, and the air seemed to grow colder with each passing second.

The faint growls we'd heard earlier were louder now, reverberating off the stone like an ominous warning.

Tobias held up a hand, signaling for us to stop.

His expression was grim, his grip on his claymore tightening.

"We're close," he said, his voice barely above a whisper. "Everyone stay sharp."

I glanced at Evelyn, who nodded reassuringly, her staff glowing faintly from its enchantment.

Marcus was crouched low, his daggers ready, his sharp eyes scanning the darkness ahead.

Lily, as always, was calm and poised, an arrow already nocked and ready to fly.

We rounded a bend in the tunnel and came face-to-face with our first real challenge.

The chamber ahead was dimly lit by crude torches mounted on the walls.

At least a dozen goblins milled about, their hunched forms moving restlessly.

Some carried rusted swords and spears, while others wielded jagged clubs.

In the center of the room stood a larger goblin, its armor pieced together from scraps of metal and leather.

It carried a crude, oversized axe, its beady eyes gleaming with intelligence and malice.

“Leader,” Tobias muttered.

“What’s the plan?” Marcus asked, his voice low but eager.

“Standard formation,” Tobias replied. “Lily, pick off as many as you can from a distance. Marcus, take the left flank. Evelyn, stay back and focus on healing. Allen, cover Evelyn and use your lightning to disrupt their movements.”

“And you?” I asked.

Tobias’s lips curled into a grim smile.

“I’ll take the leader.”

No one argued.

Tobias exuded confidence, and even I, new to all of this, felt a flicker of reassurance.

“On my mark,” Tobias said, his voice steady.

The air grew tense as everyone took their positions.

My heart was pounding, my grip on my dagger slick with sweat.

“Now!”

Lily’s first arrow flew true, striking a goblin in the chest.

The creature let out a shrill cry, collapsing as chaos erupted in the chamber.

Marcus darted forward like a shadow, his movements almost too fast to follow.

He struck with precision, his daggers flashing as he took down two goblins in quick succession.

Tobias charged straight at the leader, his claymore gleaming in the torchlight.

The clash of metal against metal rang out as their weapons met, sparks flying.

The remaining goblins surged toward us, their guttural cries filling the air.

“Allen!” Evelyn shouted, her voice snapping me into action.

I raised my hand, summoning the lightning that had become my lifeline.

The energy crackled to life, a surge of raw power coursing through me.

I unleashed it, the bolt arcing toward a cluster of goblins.

The lightning struck with a deafening crack, burning them to ashes.

Or rather, erasing them.

The others staggered, momentarily stunned.

Evelyn stepped forward, her staff glowing brighter as she cast a healing spell on Marcus, who had taken a glancing blow from a goblin's spear.

"Thanks," Marcus said, flashing her a quick grin before diving back into the fray.

Meanwhile, Tobias and the goblin leader were locked in a brutal duel.

The leader was faster than its size suggested, its axe swinging with deadly precision.

But Tobias was relentless, his claymore carving through the air with terrifying force.

The goblins weren't done yet.

Three of them broke off from the main group and charged at Evelyn and me.

"Allen, watch out!" Evelyn warned.

I stepped forward, my dagger ready.

The first goblin lunged at me, its crude sword aimed for my chest.

I sidestepped, slashing at its exposed side.

The blade bit deep, and the goblin crumpled with a pained cry.

The second goblin was on me before I could recover, its club swinging toward my head.

I ducked, the wind from the swing ruffling my hair, and retaliated with a quick thrust of my dagger.

It wasn't a clean hit, but it was enough to make the goblin stumble.

The third goblin went for Evelyn, but she was ready.

A burst of light erupted from her staff, blinding the creature.

It screeched, clawing at its eyes, and I took the opportunity to finish it off with a lightning strike.

"Thanks, Allen" Evelyn said, her voice steady despite the chaos.

I nodded, my breaths coming fast and heavy.

The adrenaline was coursing through me, every nerve on edge.

This was... interesting.

By now, the tide of the battle was turning.

Lily's arrows found their marks with deadly precision, thinning the goblin ranks.

Marcus was a whirlwind of steel, his daggers carving through the remaining foes.

With a final, powerful swing of his claymore, Tobias cleaved through the goblin leader's defenses, his blade sinking deep into its chest.

The creature let out a gurgling roar before collapsing, its axe clattering to the ground.

The chamber fell silent.

The only sounds were our labored breaths and the faint crackle of the torches.

"Is that all of them?" Marcus asked, wiping his blades on a fallen goblin's tattered cloak.

"For now," Tobias replied, his voice steady but tinged with exhaustion. "Good work, everyone, let's wrap up the loots like always."

"Allen," Tobias said, turning to me. "Not bad for your first real fight."

"Thanks," I said, still trying to steady my breathing.

Evelyn gave me a small smile.

"You did well."

The compliment warmed me, even as the weight of what we'd just done settled over me.

But I didn't let it get to me.

I haven't even done my best yet.

I can't let all of the compliment get to me and make me think like I have done the best any newbie could do.

To me, compliments is only a distraction.

"Let's move," Tobias said, his voice firm. "This was just the first chamber. The real challenge is still ahead."

We regrouped after collecting the loots and pressed on, the shadows of the dungeon closing in around us once more.