

My Infinite Mana System

Chapter 9: Meeting the Team

The following morning, I arrived at the designated meeting point, a small corner a bit far from the association, with trees and rocks.

I tightened the strap of my pack, adjusting the weight of my new dagger at my side.

Today would be my first real raid, my first true test as a Hunter.

But before that, I had to meet my new temporary team.

I wasn't great with people, and the thought of working with strangers didn't sit well with me.

But I had no choice, rules where rules.

"You're quite early."

The voice came from a towering and powerfully built man, with a broad chest and thick arms that speak of years of combat training, leaning against a nearby tree, his stance is relaxed but exudes quiet strength.

His hair was short, dark, and slightly tousled, as if he's just run a hand through it.

The cut is practical, barely reaching his ears, with a faint stubble shadowing his jaw.

His deep brown eyes was sharp and observant, giving him a no-nonsense demeanor.

He wore a light but sturdy armor, made of reinforced leather with metal plating at his shoulders, forearms, chest.

A massive claymore rested against the tree beside him, its blade well-worn but meticulously maintained.

The hilt is wrapped in dark leather, and the crossguard bears subtle engravings, perhaps a family crest or mercenary sigil.

A few faint scars mark his knuckles and one along his temple, probably gained from past battles.

His boots are thick-soled, built for long marches.

“You are Allen, right?” he asked, pushing off the tree and walking toward me.

“Yes,” I replied, keeping my tone neutral.

“Jace told me about you. I’m Tobias, the team leader.” He extended a hand.

I hesitated for a moment before shaking it.

His grip was firm, his palm calloused from years of wielding that enormous blade.

“Lightning element, huh?” Tobias said, sizing me up. “We’ll see how that plays out in the dungeon.”

Before I could respond, another voice called out.

“Is this the newbie?”

A young lean and athletic woman, strode into the yard with the agile grace of a hunter.

She had bright hazel eye, and her long, fiery red hair, pulled into a high ponytail that sways with her steps.

A few loose strands frame her face, which is lightly freckled from sun exposure.

She wore a sleek, form-fitting leather armor, dyed in dark greens and browns, that looked perfectly suitable for camouflage.

A recurve bow slung across her back, its wood polished smooth, and a quiver of arrows at her hip, and a small dagger strapped to her thigh.

A fingerless gloves protect her hands, and her boots were soft-soled for silent movement.

“Don’t scare him off, Lily,” Tobias said with a smirk.

"I'm just curious," she replied, eyeing me like I was some kind of experiment. "I'm Lily, by the way. Resident sharpshooter."

"Allen," I said simply.

She grinned.

"Not much of a talker, huh? That's fine. As long as you can keep up."

The next to arrive was a wiry and lean young man, built for speed rather than brute strength, with a piercing, mischievous amber glint, with a smirk that suggests he's always plotting something.

His hair was dark and slightly unkempt, falling just above his eyebrows in a messy fringe.

He wore a fitted, dark tunic with reinforced stitching at the seams, paired with flexible trousers.

He carried twin daggers, their hilts gleaming under the morning sun, their blades are thin, razor-sharp, and looked well-balanced for throwing.

A few trinkets hang from his belt, lockpicks, a small coin pouch, maybe a charm for luck.

His boots looked lightweight, perfect for scaling walls or sneaking.

"Name's Marcus," he said, flashing a quick smile. "I'm the team's scout and trap expert. Stick with me, and you might survive."

Unsure how to respond to his playful yet slightly unsettling tone, I simply didn't answer.

The last member of the group arrived moments later.

A petite and slender, almost delicate in appearance, with short, silver-white, cut in a practical bob that barely brushes her jawline.

Her violet eyes were large and expressive.

She wore a flowing, lightweight robe over a fitted tunic and leggings, dyed in soft lavender.

She carried a tall wooden staff, nearly as tall as she is, topped with a glowing crystal.

Her fingers are adorned with thin silver rings, probably enchanted.

“Evelyn,” she said softly, barely meeting my gaze. “I’m the healer.”

“Glad you made it,” Tobias said, clapping his hands together. “Now that we’re all here, let’s go over the plan.”

He pulled out a small map of the dungeon we’d be raiding, a low-level dungeon known for its goblin infestations.

“Our target is here,” Tobias said, pointing to a chamber marked on the map. “A goblin den. Shouldn’t be anything we can’t handle, but stay sharp. Goblins are cunning little bastards.”

He glanced at me.

“Allen, you’ll be in the middle. Stay close to Evelyn and Marcus. Lily and I will handle the front line.”

I nodded, absorbing his instructions.

“Any questions?” Tobias asked, his gaze sweeping over the group.

Marcus raised a hand, grinning.

“Yeah. Can we place bets on how long the newbie lasts?”

“Knock it off,” Tobias said, though his tone held a hint of amusement.

Lily chuckled, and even Evelyn smiled faintly.

I didn’t rise to the bait.

Words didn’t matter.

Actions did.

“Let’s move out,” Tobias said, rolling up the map.

As we made our way to the dungeon entrance, the weight of the moment settled on me.

This wasn’t a simulation or a training exercise.

It was real.

I glanced at my temporary new teammates, each of them seasoned in their own way.

I was the odd one out, the rookie with no real battle experience.

But I wasn't here to prove anything to them.

I was here to survive, and to grow stronger.