

## Level Up Legacy - Chapter 1: Avarice Dungeon -

"Your contract has been terminated."

The words felt foreign, yet expected. They left a bitter taste in his throat, making his voice crack and hollow. He saw it coming given the sheer number of new scavengers appearing, ones with dedicated abilities for the job. He didn't feel resentment nor a grudge, not toward his employers at least. For the world, however, he did.

"As stated explicitly in your contract, there is no reimbursement upon termination."

This was the second nail in the coffin. The bank's notice hanged around his neck, like a rope slowly strangling him. The rope grew a face and it looked like his mother's face, it grew hands that were his brother's, the rope had a name and it was life. His eighteen-years of it were of little happiness, as those days long faded under the mountains of stress and worry.

Arthur Silvera had to grow up before he wanted to. His hands were callused beyond their age due to the labor he had to go through. His young heart aging under the hammers of time. He, however, was only one of many.

His phone lagged a little before he could use it again. He left his email inbox and decided to read some job websites to solve his predicament. There were always jobs out there if one was willing to risk enough. After a while of searching and weeding out jobs' notices, Arthur found one that he fit its requirement.

"Porter Needed, Avarice Dungeon, High-Risk, High-Return, Responsibility-Clearing Contract needs to be signed. Message me for further details."

Avarice dungeon was a new dungeon that had appeared only recently, and it had yet to be conquered. The job notice didn't state that the contract was for conquering the dungeon, that would be the job of those guilds.

It was for a group of warriors and mages needing a porter, someone to collect the items and materials, carrying their extra-luggage, and making camp and cooking. Arthur worked as a porter before, but it was only when times were dire.

Furthermore, he worked in cleared dungeons only. This time, however, was much riskier since Avarice had yet to be conquered. It meant there could be unforeseen accidents.

"Hello, my name is Arthur Silvera, aged 18. I worked as a scavenger for four years, for the Lime Time agency. I'm not an awakener, but with enough experience to make up for it. I..."

Arthur typed his message for a long time and revised it several times before he sent it. He also sent his recommendation letter from Lime Time, which they kindly attached to his termination email, to further impress the employer.

He had high hopes because he read the comments and they were all saying that the job was too risky. Of course, it wasn't that he was brave or reckless, he was in a far worse state called being desperate.

The night was long and Arthur took several hours to research the Avarice dungeon. It was one of the fourth-generation dungeons, ones that appeared after the federal union of Yalveran was established. The dungeon appeared after a merge happened half a year ago.

Since then, several syndicates have tried to conquer it, to no avail. The dungeon was stated to be the next stepping stone for humanity, encouraging warriors and mages to challenge it. After several causalities rising, it was found out that this dungeon was one of the Sins Dungeons, causing an uproar in the world.

"Ok. Tomorrow at 11 AM, table 36. The pay would be 50\$ per hour."

The contrast of his long message and polite language with the reply was pathetic, but the reply made him thrilled nonetheless. The thrill was soon replaced by fear.

Being a porter was on the list of the riskiest jobs for non-awakener, if not the top one. There were many preparations to do, but Arthur checked his bank account and sighed. He had to go empty-handed.

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The next day at 10:45 AM, Arthur was in front of the dungeon's entrance. Every dungeon had a foyer for the warriors and mages to meet and hold strategic meetings before venturing the dungeon.

He walked to table 36 where he could see several people sitting around. They were five in total, three wore full-armor while the other two wore robes. The three people wearing armor were two men and one woman, the latter wearing light armor. The robes-wearing people were one cadaverous man and a petite woman. The group looked mostly in their twenties, while a warrior with a mace to his belt was middle-aged.

"H...Hello, I'm Arthur Silvera, the porter." Arthur gathered his courage and went forward, despite being intimidated. Being the youngest, while also the weakest, made his self-confidence hide deep inside, not daring to show itself.

The chatting ceased for a second and everyone turned their eyes toward him, scrutinizing him. Being examined like that, Arthur fiddled with his right thumb nervously.

"Hi, I'm Alan, I talked to you yesterday." The mace warrior, known as Alan, came forward and shook his hand. The warm gesture of respect sent relief in Arthur's mind, and he exchanged some pleasantries.

The rest of the team, however, showed little interest in him and resumed their chat over the monsters awaiting them inside, the latest weapons, and famous warriors and mages. The sole exception was the thin man wearing a robe, who smiled and nodded to him.

Arthur thought nothing of it as they were a league above him in status, so he sat in a seat not too far and not too close to the rest.

"As you all know, we're not going beyond the third layer today. I've run our combat power through a dungeon analyst app and it stated that we can manage, except for some difficult monsters we need to avoid. That doesn't mean that we can be relaxed, the Sins dungeons are always known to be, plus being high-risk, high-return, for their irregularity."

Alan continued his briefing and it lasted until noon. Despite being this information irrelevant, Arthur strained his ears listening to them in case they proved useful in the future.

At noon, Alan ordered some lunch from the dungeon restaurant for the team to eat before setting out. Arthur ate very little since he was a non-awakener, thus having lower metabolism. There were no toilets in the dungeon, so he had to be careful about his needs.

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The team had four members other than its leader, Alan, who Arthur judged to be a typical leader. From the conversations Arthur heard, he deduced the following. First was the most eye-catching, flamboyant, and sociable person, Juan Keizer, the other male warrior beside Alan. He talked a lot, with a big chattering box in him besides his protruding belly. He was, however, rather tall, almost taller than Alan.

Standing next to the man dwarfed Arthur, who was a solid 173 cm tall with a rather thin frame. Despite being of a friendly demeanor, Juan didn't spare Arthur a glance and treated him like air.

The other character was the person who replied to Juan incessant chattering, the female warrior Beatrice Faure, a woman with prominent muscles and a frame larger than Arthur's, towering over him as well. She seemed familiar with Juan and the two talked to each other comfortably, with Alan also sharing some words with them.

The person Arthur liked best was the thin and pale guy who talked with him a bit, although it was mostly idle talk. Nonetheless, Arthur felt grateful for the consideration he had shown. From their talks, Arthur found out that this young man, named Yuran Evel, had a rather uncommon yet infamous fighting style called Magic Gunman.

They fought using magic power weapons from afar, utilizing basic compressed mana to inflict damage. Seeing Yuran's gun, Arthur was awed by meeting a magic gunman for the first time. The last person was the petite young woman, who appeared older than him but not by a lot. He didn't get to know her name since she hasn't spoken a word the whole time.

The group headed toward the entrance of the dungeon as the clock rang midday, and Arthur felt tired just by seeing the waves of people coming in and out. Many were wounded, some were dead. Arthur wondered if he'd end up like the former or the latter, maybe neither of them. He can come back safe and sound or he can never come back.

He shook his head as if that would shake the thoughts away. After confirming the identity of the explorers, a term for people venturing the other worlds, the security let them in. Of course, Arthur had to sign a Responsibility Clearance Agreement, clearing the responsibility in case he died.

Going through the portal, the world twisted and their vision bent before they found themselves in a large underground hall, filled with explorers of every race and culture.

Being one of the Sins Dungeons, Avarice held a popular reputation. It was even called 'The Dragon Gate' as one can leap over it and be a dragon among men, although most would fail. Arthur never saw himself as a man worthy of becoming a dragon, but he couldn't help himself but wish he was special in some way.