

Level Up Legacy - Chapter 3: Jizo

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As the Golem came near, the warriors assumed formation and Alan took the lead to repel the first incoming attack. The tall warrior looked like a midget in comparison to the Golem, and he stumbled back more than one step with the first strike.

With a loud shout, he activated his ability for the first time today causing Arthur to almost forget to breathe. With blinding light, two more Alans appeared, although they were phantoms. With three of them now, they created a defense even the boss found it hard to breakthrough.

The rest of the party didn't stand idle as they started using their abilities to defeat the golem. With Alan blocking the attack on their behalf, they started damaging the Golem with their attacks.

With a roar of a beast, Juan grew in size and his skin turned red. It was a berserk ability that allowed short-duration amplifications of physical abilities. With his newfound strength, Juan used his claymore to inflict a deep wound on the Golem, although it regenerated almost instantly.

At the same time, Arthur saw something appear above the Golem. It was Beatrice with wings of light making her fly, she dived right at the Golem's head and stabbed it in the eye, causing a long gush to appear on its face. The Golem howled in agony as its face started regenerating.

With a streak of blue light, Yuran fired his gun who was now as tall as he was with shining blue engraving. The mana bullet pierced the Golem in its injured head. The Golem now went berserk and howled as earth spikes appeared around it, attacking its aggressors. As the spikes were too many to evade, the group braced themselves to take the hit. However, the damage and pain never came as holy light enveloped them protecting them.

"Quick, attack!" Rosie, the one who has casted a protective spell on the team, shouted in an unusually loud voice. The rest dashed toward the Golem preparing for another round of fighting to wear it down. However, at that moment before they reach the Golem, another earthquake happened as cracks began to fill the passageway.

With a screech that almost made their ears bleed, the walls broke down revealing a giant serpent head, with only the head revealed it was as big as three Golems combined. Even the Regenerative Golem was terrified by the arrival of such a gigantic beast, and everyone's faces turned pale.

Arthur fell on his rear in horror as he witnessed what seemed to be the most frightening creature he ever witnessed. The mere size of the beast made him look like an ant in front of it, making him feel like he would be obliterated by only a single breath.

"Retreat! This is the dungeon's boss!" Alan howled with a face so terrified that it was as white as a piece of paper. Their fear was justified as each Sins Dungeon's boss was at a realm different from others, with only seven in the whole world.

Thankfully, white light followed after the serpent as five more figures appeared. Each one of them was adorned with white armor or white robes. Arthur was a non-awakener but even he can feel the aura coming of these people and it almost crushed him. They contended with the aura of the serpent who howled with rage as it witnessed their arrival.

"Everyone, retreat, and leave this area." A girl with white hair stepped forward and said to Alan's group. From her hair and her clothes to even her eyelashes, everything about her was white. Everyone present knew her, she was The White Fairy.

Alan was too stupefied at the turn of the event that he stood there blankly. Yuran was the one who stepped forward and shouted for them to run away. As The White Fairy saw Yuran, her cool was shattered as she dazedly muttered something.

However, the serpent didn't give them time to retreat as it hissed and lunged itself forward, brushing the Regenerative Golem in the process and obliterating it. With the sheer pressure alone, the wall broke down and cracks formed underneath Arthur as he was flung away and hit the wall. He coughed blood and felt like his internals being crushed. As he opened his eyes, he got to see an armored man appear in front of the serpent and block its attack effortlessly.

The others were all flung away but they ended up in a much sorry state than Arthur who was very far away. Most of his group fainted with only Yuran being an exception, although he was also badly injured. Yuran collapsed shortly

after and the only person other than The White Fangs still conscious was Arthur, only because he was too weak to be close to the initial fight with the Golem.

'Should I run away? Alone?'

That was the single thought Arthur had. It was the most obvious question in the world. He knew it was the right choice. He wasn't an awakener and he didn't know these people very well. Another question appeared in his mind.

'How would I feel if I wake up tomorrow, after leaving someone who saved me to die? I would have died if it wasn't for him.'

It didn't feel right. Arthur knew he was being stupid. He knew this was futile and he would most likely die. He knew that very well. However, he also knew that sometimes we need to choose the wrong choice. Yuran saved him. He might not have risked his life to save Arthur, but the latter would have died if not for the potion.

His legs found strength unknown to him. The air entered his lungs burning them as he madly dashed toward Yuran. He jumped across the debris lying about and avoided the ones he couldn't jump. Even though he wasn't an awakener, he was still stronger than normal people.

As he saw The White Fairy and the rest engage in battle with the serpent, Arthur sprinted faster to get there. The air pressure coming from the battle was enough to make him fall and hit the walls several times, but he was too far away for the pressure to make him faint yet.

As he neared the battle, he hid behind a giant rock and looked at the battle for a chance to retrieve Yuran and the rest. If a hit accidentally went their way, they would most likely die. Arthur wanted to get them away, even by a little from the battle. If he couldn't, then he would just get Yuran away.

The battle reached a stalemate as each side blocked their enemy's attacks. Arthur took this chance and dashed toward Yuran reaching him in a few dashes, grabbing him, and starting to run again.

Luckily, Yuran was even lighter than Arthur. That was why Arthur was able to run as he carried Yuran in his arms. As they neared a boulder a bit far away from the battle, Arthur was about to put Yuran down before he heard a shout from behind.

"Watch out!"

Arthur turned around and it appears that The White Fairy used her glistening katana and slashed the eye of the serpent. The serpent howled and thrashed about with its tail. Unluckily, the tail drew an arc as it ripped the ceiling and headed toward Arthur.

Before he could react, the tail already slammed the ground a distance away from him. It slammed into the place of the unconscious group Arthur left behind. The ground broke down as Arthur and Yuran flew like a broken kite before slamming to the ground.

In a state of semi-consciousness, Arthur could feel the ground caving in underneath him. He started to feel like he was falling and he opened his eyes. From the slits of blurry vision, he could see The White Fairy grabbing Yuran's arm as he fell into the darkness.

"Who are you?" Arthur asked. He couldn't help being curious about the identity of the only being he found after roaming the darkness. If his thoughts were right, he fell outside of the dungeon into the darkness.

He didn't know into what exactly, maybe the infinite space, but he fell somewhere dark and he couldn't see anything inside except the black landscape. A black sky, a single moon, a black ground. That was it. Nothing else can be seen after he woke up. That is until he found a single man sitting in the darkness, closing his eyes.

The man looked ethereal, yet human. Arthur felt like he can touch him and make him disappear forever, but he was too afraid to try. The man had black hair and white skin, with age-lines decorating his face. As Arthur asked the question, the man opened his eyes and looked at Arthur. His eyes were golden. With a smile, the man said one word.

"Hello."

"Um, hi." Arthur awkwardly greeted back. He couldn't say a greeting was what he expected at this point. The man was unperturbed by Arthur's arrival, almost like he was expecting it.

"Why don't you take a seat?" The man gestured with his hand toward the place in front of him. Arthur paused for a second before walking there and sitting crossed-legged. As they sat facing each other, there was a brief silence. Arthur was about to repeat his question but the man talked before he had the chance.

"I am Jizo, the Scholar Guardian."

"Guardian? What's that?"

"Well, I guess too much time has passed for us to be remembered. Maybe we became a secret?" The man laughed audibly and his laugh diffused the tension, although Arthur didn't understand what he meant.

"Long ago, there were nine guardians that ruled over the world and protected the human race."