

# MEMORIZE

## Chapter 041 – Make an Offer! #3

The users grew somewhat accustomed to the training during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh weeks. When they began the first week, they had a hard time just running, but now they could easily run 20 laps with a smile upon their faces. Seeing that no one gave up and were all giving it their all made a smile appear on my face.

Please continue reading on

As of now, there were only 80 users left. However, to have 80 users graduate from the User Academy at the same time was rare. As the last weeks of training quickly approached, the atmosphere within the academy became weird.

For example, the instructors' attitudes towards the new users changed. Not all of the instructors were from the Golden Lion Clan. A good 70% were indeed members of the clan that represented the country's largest city, but the remaining 30% were part of clans that represented various other smaller and ordinary cities.

The instructors had yelled continuously at the users in the beginning, but now they became gentler. An instructor calling out one or two of the users to go out to eat became an ordinary happenstance. There were also times when users were offered the chance to go out and eat with an instructor right after training ended. Of course, only skillful users ever received these invitations.

The dorm instructors were changed, which really surprised me. A beautiful female instructor was in charge of the male dormitory, while a handsome male instructor was in charge of the female dormitory. Anyone with half a brain would be able to figure out the Academy's purpose in doing so. As each training session was finished quicker now, we naturally had more time to meet with others. Whenever I met with An Hyun, An Sol, and Yoo-Jung, they always looked at me and questioned me about what I was going to do after graduation.

"What are YOU thinking about doing?"

"What do YOU think? I'm sure you've gotten plenty of offers. Are you planning on joining a clan?"

"..."

I appreciate that they wanted to follow me, but this... this was too much. It would have been a different story had they a plan of their own and only consulted me for my

opinion, but them wanting to just depend on me almost makes me want to leave them as soon as possible. As I tried to subtly hint my thoughts, Yoo-Jung started to pout.

“Who ever said we weren’t thinking on our own? We just wanted to hear your plan first!”

“I’m still thinking. What will you do if we have different plans?”

“What do you mean? I’ll obviously follow you!”

“Of course, of course. I trust you. Cheer up!”

An Hyun, who was listening to our conversation, commented while nodding his head sagely. They always depend on me for advice... When I asked them why, An Sol replied with a smile: “If we listen to you, good things always happen.”

A bitter smile crept up on my face, and I shook my head. The devotion formed from both the experiences during the Rite of Passage and my forming a reputation at the User Academy caused my little group to heavily rely on me. Secretly, I was glad that they relied on me so much although I decided to not say it. I’m sure I’ll leak it out before we graduate anyways, but now was not yet the time.

We never saw Kim Han-Byul anymore. From what I’ve heard, she and Yoo-Jung make eye contact they just pass each other without saying a word. In addition, many of the female users assume that she’ll be a top ranker, making her a valuable target to be pulled in by many clans.

Users that are somewhat capable are probably starting to choose which clan they will decide to join, while others haven’t received a single offer. Those users that haven’t were probably getting worried as graduation was fast approaching and they didn’t have a plan for what was after.

Even though they might not be able to join a large clan, graduates can join one of many of the smaller clans from the smaller cities. Of course, if possible they would like to join a large clan. According to some rumors floating around, there are even female users that are doing some daring things in order to force this possibility into reality. They would get really friendly with the instructors, and even seduce them with their own bodies. I could tell that there was even competition among these girls.

Seeing that users started to take things easy as the days passed, I advised them to continue focusing on their training until graduation. There was a reason why users were to spend three months at the academy. Although it may differ from user to user, the 90th to the 100th days of training was when a user’s attributes would increase the most.

They complained at first, but immediately stopped after hearing that they wouldn’t be able to increase their attributes later on no matter how much they wanted too. To be a

good example, I put in that much extra work into my training. In order to become a Sword Master, I haven't skipped out on even one day of training.

Time passed just like that and graduation season was fast approaching.

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It was the day before graduation. The throng of users were slowly preparing to leave the academy. The usually strict instructors didn't say much today and let us freely choose how to spend our time. Users either chose to pack their personal belongings or to talk with others.

The day passed by so quickly that soon it was already night. As it was the last night, I decided to have dinner with my roommates. The instructor told us to not get too crazy before letting us go. The users from the other dorms also had similar plans.

It wasn't anything fancy, really. We were just given dried meat and drinks. Many of the users that haven't had a taste of alcohol for this whole time jumped at the sight and happily chugged it. An Hyun and I shared a gaze, lightly nodded our heads in sync and stood up from our seats. Yoo-Jung had suggested that we sneak out of our dorms and celebrate amongst ourselves.

Hyun and I managed to successfully walk out the door. Everyone present was pretty much drunk and shouting celebrations like "We made it!" while having their arms around each other. In that kind of atmosphere, sneaking out was a piece of cake.

I searched my pockets out of habit before realizing that I didn't have any more cigarettes. I think I left it back at the dorm. I quickly told An Hyun to head over to the rendezvous first before turning and making my way back. An Hyun tried to persuade me to hold off smoking till another time, but being the heavy smoker that I was, I had developed a habit of smoking while drinking.

After sending An Hyun on first, I returned to our dorm, grabbed the cigarette, and walked out again. We had decided earlier to meet at a corner of the Academic Information Building. It was a pretty daring decision on our part to meet there, but it was highly possible that our little escapade would be overlooked even if we did get caught.

The sunset caused shadows to stretch all over the ground. I strolled across the large (and currently empty) training ground. Impatient, I started to walk faster towards the building. As I was about to pass the bathroom...

"Uhn... ah... ah... gahhn~..."

I heard an odd... moan escape out of the bathroom. It was like my sensitive hearing didn't want me to miss it. Curiosity got the best of me, and I ended up opening the bathroom... doors... slowly... I tried to open it carefully, but a creaking sound filled the

surroundings. Before I could worry about the sound, a strange smell wafted by my nose from inside the bathroom; my body immediately formed goosebumps.

“Ahhh... huh...MNNNH! ... ha... ha... ha...”

Huh. The bathroom was a mess. As I slid my eyes around my room my eyes first caught the clothes that were strewn all over the floor, then a person wearing an instructor’s hat. Under his stomach was the source of the moaning. The girl’s black hair was spread across the floor, while her slim legs were spread apart and her hips were lifted in the air. I’ve... seen that face before...

At closer inspection, the user on top of her was definitely an instructor. The harder he pushed his hips into her, the more her body rocked back and forth while loud moans escaped her clenched lips.

“Be... quiet! Your... moans... are... too LOUD!”

“Ahnnn!~ It’s ... because you’re... being... so ROUGH~... with... me... ah... ah... mnnn...!”

After their exchange of words ended, the instructor moved his hips more rhythmically. He decided to showcase his overflowing strength by grabbing the girl by the waist picking her whole body up — with him still snugly inside. The female user hugged him tightly.

It was obvious that the two were enjoying their moment. Then the entranced female started speaking and he stopped moving.

“You PROMISED~, right? You’ll... recruit me into your clan?”

“I told you, don’t worry about it. Wait for me after the exit ceremony. I’ll come and get you.”

After they finished talking, he started to move his hips again. Lewd moans floated about the bathroom once again. I understood the situation after hearing their conversation, so I closed the door. Although it didn’t seem like he forced her into it, this kind of situation was kinda unavoidable. Even if the Northern Country had stricter rules than others, nothing could be done if a female user wanted to use her body.

I thought that I should hurry and meet the others, so I turned around and-

Gasp!

“...”

I reflexively gasped. I wasn't sure when she had appeared, but Han-Byul was staring at me from behind. I was surprised that I hadn't detected her presence earlier, even if I wasn't really on guard. I think... that I was too focusing on the couple's lovemaking since I hadn't seen such things in a while. I calmed myself down before speaking.

"You surprised me. How long have you been standing there?"

"I went to your dorm because there was something I had to talk to you about, but you weren't there. On my walk back, I saw you walking in and coming back out of the dorm so I decided to follow you."

"Th-then, inside the bathroom...?"

*Did you see it?* was the silent question that I wanted to ask, although I think that she understood. As her face immediately flushed red and she avoided eye contact, she may have seen it from the very beginning. I felt like I was caught, but I confidently walked away as I did nothing wrong. It was necessary for me to leave this place so that they two could enjoy their time together.

I walked slowly in order to be quieter. I headed in the direction of the Academic Information Building. Han-Byul jogged towards me, then timed her steps to match with mine after she had caught up with me. We walked together side by side, under the glow of the moonlight. Maybe it was a result of the awkward situation we had glimpsed just now, but between us was only silence. Eventually, it was broken by Han-Byul.

"The female user that was in there... was probably Lee Ji-Young."

"Lee Ji-Young...? I think I've seen her a couple of times before."

"You don't know of her?"

Hearing her answer made me confused, and it was plastered on my face. Of course I didn't know who Lee Ji-Young was. She wasn't exactly a skilled user nor was she something that was often friendly with me, so how would I have got to know her? Honestly, she was pretty, but when compared to Yoo-Jung, Sol, or Han-Byul, she could only be called average looking. I switched to a stern expression before answering.

"Of course I don't. How could I have? I've never even talked to her."

After hearing my answer, Han-Byul was visibly relieved. I became curious about this Lee Ji Young. What is it about her would cause Han-Byul to be relieved after I said that I've no relation with the girl? Before I could further muse on it, Han-Byul spoke.

"It's better if you don't know. Her reputation among us isn't that great either. As you witnessed just now... those rumors that are spreading were true. Well, I never thought that I would see it happening in person. Anyways, why were you there?"

“We decided to celebrate our graduation by eating together. On the way to the rendezvous, I heard weird noises coming from the bathroom and decided to investigate. Turned out that they were doing... what they were doing. Anyways, since you’re here now, wanna come with me?”

*You’ll go too, right?* was the question that I wanted to ask, but seeing as how her relations with the others wasn’t all that great, I decided not to. She tilted her head down and stared at the floor for a moment. I thought that her ears poking through her long black hair was so adorable. While contemplating that important matter, I saw her mouth open.

“I...wanted to talk to you for a moment.”

Did she just say that she wanted to talk to me? There wasn’t a reason for me to avoid her, so I nodded my head. Now that I think about it, it’s been awhile since the two of us have talked alone.

“I got an offer from the Golden Lion Clan.”

“...Yeah.”

“They rarely accept new users, but they said they were increasing the number of recruits this time around. They also said that they’ll provide a lot of help to Spell Casters so they can grow faster. Also...they said that if I joined their clan, I’ll be a recommended candidate for a clan manager position.”

After her words was just silence. I had known that they would try to recruit her from the very beginning, but her words after surprised me. I didn’t really understand what she had meant by “they would help the Spell Casters grow.” Nevermind that, I wanted to check my hearing when she mentioned the recommendation. Even if Kim Han Byul had outstanding stats, a recommendation to a manager position for a new user was extremely rare.

If she had a secret class or even a rare class, it would be understandable, but— as I was thinking, I had a realization and stopped walking. Han-Byul looked at me with a questioning expression. I activated the Third Eye.

## **Player Status**

\* Name: Kim Han-Byul (0 Years)

\* Class: Jewel Mage Beginner

\* Nation: Unsettled

\* Clan: Unsettled

\* Alias/Nationality: Nova, One who Radiates Beauty / Korean<sup>1</sup>

\* Sex: Female (22)

\* Height/Weight: 170.5cm / 45.0kg

\* Character: Lawful, Chaos

## Skills

\* Power 44 / Endurance 52 / Agility 64 / Stamina 48 / Mana 82 / Luck 62

“Soo-Hyun?”

I was in a dazed state, and nodded my head instinctively to Han-Byul’s call. *Why?* and *How?* were both questions that filled my head; I felt that I needed to clear my confusion.

“You said to not tell other people about our information. They said that they’ll provide a lot of help to Spell Casters so that they can grow.”

A Jewel Mage will require a clan’s assistance in the beginning to grow. Since they use jewels, raising a Jewel Mage was costly. However, that wasn’t important right now. Kim Han-Byul never mentioned to me that she acquired the Jewel Mage class. The fact that she was going to be recommended for the manager position meant that she probably already revealed her class to THAT guy.

That moment, I felt a sense of betrayal flood through my body... but I calmed myself down. I told myself earlier that I would treat her like fate and would let her go if the time came, but seeing that I felt that way for even just that one moment meant that, somewhere within me, was the feeling of regret.

Jewel Mage is one of the secret classes. Truth be told, if she had told me from the beginning I probably would’ve treated her differently. However, I don’t plan on thinking on it purely from my objective point of view. That was something that I despised the most.

I decided to calm myself, think rationally, and organize my thoughts. *From now on, Kim Han-Byul will be just another user instead of a younger sister I got to know.*

“I heard that you got an offer from the Golden Lion Clan as well.”

Seeing as Kim Han-Byul spoke the words with a calm expression, I decided to answer with a stern mask.

“I told them I would think about it.”

“Have you decided now?”

“Yeah. I’m going to decline. I don’t plan on joining a clan.”

“... Why?”

After hearing that I planned on declining their offer, I could feel that she was physically startled.

I stopped talking and started walking again. She, too, started walking again and continued to follow me. I turned around and looked into her eyes as she looked into mine. In that moment, we shared a complex, frustrating feeling that couldn’t be expressed with words alone through our shared gaze.

1. The literal translation of her titles were “One that begins from the star” and “One that handles the beautiful light and shine.” [↩](#)

## Chapter 042 – Make an Offer! #4

I decided that if there was a chance, I would let Han-Byul go while we were drinking. Since it’s likely that she’ll leave us, I thought that it wouldn’t matter if I was honest about my feelings. I did feel a bit of regret, but it was obvious that we both had a change of heart.

Please continue reading on

“Why... is a difficult question to answer.”

“Is it difficult... because it’s me asking?”

I noticed her emphasize the word “me”, and simply shook my head in response. That wasn’t my point.

“That’s not it. Do you remember our conversation when we were talking in front of the stairs of the cabin?”

“... Yes.”

“I... um... was able to think about a lot of things during these last three months. My way of thinking changed after seeing this place called Hall Plain. I’ve decided that I wouldn’t join any clans— even if it was the Golden Lion Clan that offered.”

Even though I made my answer vague, Han-Byul was clever enough to see through it. She contemplated my words, then looked at me with a surprised look on her face. It seemed like she understood what I planned to do.



“Then, will you make a new clan?”

“Something along those lines. I’ve been toying with the idea of making one. There’s also the issue that the others weren’t offered the chance to join the Golden Lion clan but I want to stay with them.”

“I too...”

Han-Byul instinctively opened her mouth, but she quickly bit her lips. I felt her breathing become rough and saw a conflicted expression crawl up her face. She clamped her mouth for a moment and then as if she had finally made a choice, started speaking louder and more confidently than before.

“I feel that way as well. As I have said before, my way of thought has changed compared to before I entered Hall Plain. You were amazing during the Rite of Passage. You also proved that you were different from others by your performance after you entered the User Academy. I’m sure I understand your skills more than anyone. But...”

That word. But. It signaled her preparation to start talking about what was really on her mind. I carefully prepared to listen to her words with melancholy written all over my face.

“Hall Plain is an enormous place. It’s so large that anything can happen. It’s not like the Rite of Passage where one person can resolve everything with their skills. Wait. You’re probably about to say this: I had three other people with me.”

I nodded my head in agreement. Han-Byul continued talking while looking at me with a cold expression.

“I’ll say it now. It’s not that I’m trying to insult any of them, but... I still feel like... You may not acknowledge it, but it feels like you were doing everything. It’s dangerous for a whole group to rely on a single person in Hall Plain.”

Han-Byul wasn’t belittling their skills. She was pointing out their skill level and their attitude towards me. Basically, she meant that no one can do anything alone here and she wasn’t wrong. However, there’s one thing she overlooked that she can’t.

She took a deep breath and seemed like she had finished saying what was on her mind. I gave her time to catch her breath as I organized my thoughts. Then, I carefully began to speak.

“You seem to be very single-minded.”

“.....”

“It’s good to think rationally, but you tend to think in one direction.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I mean that you shouldn’t judge other people according to your standards.”

Hearing my cold voice for the first time, Han-Byul kept her mouth shut. I started at her coldly. I kind of felt bad after seeing her lips tremble a bit; maybe it was due to the fact that I’ve never spoken to her in this kind of tone before. I thought it was necessary since I decided to treat her as just another user.

“I’m...sorry about that. But I thought... I thought that you and I were similar... always rational...”

“Similar. Yes, that’s what you thought. However, I don’t think you can think rationally when it comes to joining a clan. Especially if it’s joining the Golden Lion clan.”

“...How come? Are you saying that I’m making the wrong choice?”

“Is it that important whether you’re right or wrong? No matter what kind of choice a person makes, there are always pros and cons. isn’t it considered rational decision making when one makes places themselves in the center of it and consider all the different factors?”

Kim Han-Byul made a rational decision based on the present. I made a rational decision based on both the past and the future. Despite my reasoning being simple logic, she looked confused. For the first time ever, I truly felt frustrated looking at her. We weren’t on the same wavelength anymore.

“The Golden Lion clan is both the best and also the largest clan in the Northern Country. What I’m about to tell you is a secret within the clan, but they’ve already built a base and are now preparing to advance into the mountains. They’re prepared, and they have a plan. I just don’t understand what advantage there is in following you and not joining them.”

“Who can guarantee that their advancement plan will succeed? They told you that they’ll recommend you for a manager position, but have you thought of the implications behind doing so? No. More so, do you truly believe that you’ll be able to trust the users within that clan?”

I said all this with a harsh tone. Despite that, Han-Byul simply stood there and listened to my words. Silence occupied the space between us, and coldness made up the atmosphere surrounding us. I was going to continue talking, but she spoke first.

“Are you... saying that you can be trusted?”

“.....”

One question. All she asked was only one question. The smothering silence between us seemed to chill and get more suffocating because of that one question. The only thing I could hear was our breathing. There were so many feelings on display on her face. Anger, sadness, regret were in the company of other negative feelings. This was the first time... I saw such a display of feelings on her face.

I carefully opened my mouth. My response, however, was filled with pure disappointment.

“You asked me a few months ago, about why I acted the way I did. If I were to answer that question now. I... “

I...

“I wanted to be the group’s shield. I wanted to give you guys my trust and in return receive your trust. If you haven’t realized yet, I have a hard time trusting people. I’ve thought about being independent. But like you’ve said, I can’t do things by myself. That is an obstacle I can’t overcome.”

I took a deep breath before continuing.

“That’s why I made the choice of choosing the trust the people that I started with. These people can learn to trust me, and these are people I can learn to trust. We are pretty much a small clan already, after all. When I eventually do form the clan, it would be optimal to have a couple people that I could truly consider family.”

Han-Byul’s eyes shook as I talked. The way her lips slightly trembled suggested that there were unspoken words she wished to make heard. However, the Academic Information building started to appear before our eyes.

There was a time when I and she were placed upon a split path. At that time, she had chosen to follow my lead. And now, further along that path, we’ve encountered another split. I’ve chosen my path, but she hasn’t yet.

I calmly walked up the stairs, then grabbed the handle of the door. Han-Byul didn’t move from her position. I pulled the door. It opened smoothly with nary a sound. I walked in.

Han-Byul didn’t follow me.

\*

An Hyun and the others seemed to have already drunk a lot by the time I arrived. In the end, I didn’t get to say what I wanted to say. Seeing them laugh, I let out a sigh deep within me. I started to feel cranky that these guys wouldn’t understand my pain. They were... so easy going...

But I decided to hide that feeling. We might never experience such lightheartedness ever again. All of us will be walking a difficult road starting tomorrow. I still think of the User Academy as a heaven within hell.

They soon finished drinking. An Hyun and Yoo-Jung started singing and eventually passed out. Thankfully, Sol was awake so we each grabbed one and lugged them back to their dorms. I placed An Hyun on one side of the room before laying down and organizing my thoughts.

My thoughts have changed thanks to this place. There were a lot of things we had to take care of right away. First, we have to receive our attribute point rewards and leave Barbara immediately. I fell asleep after thinking about another few items.

The next day. The morning of the big day finally arrived.

Frankly, graduation and the exit ceremony were boring. There were a lot of words spoken, but all they told us was that we did a good job graduating and that they hope that we contribute to the welfare of the Northern Country.

“You have completed the User Academy of the Northern Country’s largest city, Barbara. Your reward is 4 attribute points.”

After everyone received their points, the users split up into two groups. There were those users that received an offer from a clan, and those that didn’t. The users that received an offer were welcomed into the various clans, but those that hadn’t simply stood there.

For those that hadn’t been given an offer, there are still many clans in smaller ordinary cities. Seeing these users lingering around after everything was over made me feel a bit bad for them. It wasn’t any of my business though.

There are clans in ordinary and smaller cities. Seeing them linger around even after everything was over made me feel a bit bad for them. It wasn’t any of my business though.

I planned to run over to the warehouse to get the items I purchased with GP, but I couldn’t due to the guys gathering around me: An Hyun, Lee Yoo-Jung, and An Sol. As soon as the four of us gathered, I could feel clan recruiters eyeing us. We had rejected their offers, and it seemed like they had a sense of lingering regret.

Despite the fact that An Hyun didn’t receive as much attention due to me, Woo Jung-Min, and Seon Yoo-Woon, his skills were enough to receive offers from clans. Yoo-Jung’s skills were also above average. Both of them received offers from mid-sized clans, but they rejected them all because of me.

The gem of the group was Sol. She was the Brilliance Priest, the leader of all priests. That was the class that was as representative of the female users as the Queen of Shadows. Even if she hadn't acquired this class, her stats for a beginner was already high. Her mana was at a 75 while her luck was at 100.

Surprisingly, Sol didn't receive that much attention. I heard from An Hyun that she had a hard time controlling her mana. As she was a beginner, it would have been weird for her to be able to control it anyways. She'll become more valuable in time after she gets used to it...

The recruiter of the Golden Lion Clan looked at the gathering of users with disgust. I only found out after graduation, but of the five users that they offered the chance to join their clan, only two users accepted.

"I'm sorry, but I have a group already. I don't plan on leaving them."

As I once again politely refused their offer (for the last time), An Hyun and the others were obviously feeling bad for me. It seemed like they believed every word out of my mouth. This sort of misunderstanding wasn't a bad feeling, but I still felt uncomfortable. I decided that I would tell them the truth when the time was right.

As we left the Academy's front gate, new users and veterans alike could be seen socializing. One could see many various clans all at once.

There was something that caught my eyes. It was that wench, Lee Ji-Young. It looked as if she had joined a pretty popular clan since she had on an arrogant expression and looked down at the users that didn't receive any offers. She was standing next to that instructor, with her arm linked with his. She seemed nervous on the inside. I was curious as to how her expression would change in the next six months. I kept walking.

I thought that Kim Han-Byul was somewhere around here because I felt someone staring at me. I turned around, and saw Han-Byul staring at me and the rest of the group. However, I no longer wanted to be involved with her. Since I haven't heard anyone else speak of any rumors of a Jewel Mage, the clan was probably keeping it a clan secret.

The others carried excited expressions as they followed behind me. As we were preparing to leave, I heard someone call my name. I turned around, and this time I spotted Woo Jung-Min and his group. The first thing he chatted about was me refusing the Golden Lion Clan's offer. They probably declined as well, as I had assumed.

He offered us the chance to work with him as we continued to talk. I was actually a little tempted to accept. Before they have the chance to team up with the Red Fang Clan, it would be better to wipe them out while we have a chance. But before I could answer, his member Won Hye-Soo and my Lee Yoo-Jung looked at each other with open disgust, effectively ending the conversation.

Seeing that Won Hye-Soo glance at me, I thought that she still carried hard feelings for me. I understood that feeling, that pain. However, I couldn't help but see her in a bad light as she continued to act the way she did just now again and again. I'll let her go this time, but I'll fix that bad habit of hers next time. We quickly bid our farewells.

I turned around to find my teammates looking at me with odd expressions. I'm sure that they declined offers from decent clans just to follow me. Although they weren't independent just yet, I wanted to use them

To do so, I had to first tell them of my plan.

## **Chapter 043 – Prepare for Emergencies #1**

Each city within Hall Plain was structured like a web. Even though the cities that existed within various countries were in many different locations, they all look similar, yet they also all serve different purposes. If you looked at any two cities individually, they looked different. But when all the cities are looked at as a whole, you would notice that they all play a role and are linked with each other,

Please continue reading on

The Northern Country that we were currently at also had many cities. Barbara, the largest city, was located in the center, while the city Prinsika was to the east, Halo was to the west, Kan was to the south, and Pamela to the north. These four, the "ordinary" cities, were located around Barbara. Beyond each of these cities were two smaller cities that were under their jurisdiction and would aid each other in times of need.

In more detail, the smaller cities around Prinsika was Eden to the northeast and Dana in the southeast. The smaller cities around Halo was Dorothy to the west and Monica to the southwest. The smaller cities around Kan was Coran to the southeast and Monica to the southwest. The smaller cities around Pamela was Mule to the northeast and Montana to the northwest.

One large city. Four ordinary cities. Eight small cities. Say that a small city near Kan met trouble. Mid-sized clans in Kan would immediately team up, along with the Southern Freedom Alliance, and help the city together. Normally, however, there was only one representative clan in each city that took care of matters.

When clans take care for a city individual members are assigned jobs that fit their position. This would be unheard of in the Southern Country, as they value freedom above all else. However, it was possible in the Northern Country of today because the Golden Lion clan was the clan that was in power.

Anyone that wanted to get to the Central Country from the Northern Country has to pass through Kan, Coran, and Monica first. Each of these cities had their own policies that one has to follow. They served as outposts that you had to pass through in order to

reach the Central Country. On the other side of the Northern Country, Pamela, Mule, and Montana to the north were close to undeveloped locations. Those to the north of Pamela guarded the undeveloped land and made sure that it was safe. I heard from an instructor that they weren't allowed to explore and attack, but they did so anyways.

Everyone from the Northern Country knew that if you took just one step into the Central Country from the Northern Country, you would be under the jurisdiction of their large city, Atlanta. However, the Northern Country didn't possess enough power to take over that city. Not... yet. I was sure that the "truth" that I had remembered will happen soon, and that feeling was bolstered by Han-Byul's revealing of the Golden Lion clan's plans that night.

I originally planned on heading to the small city Montana, but I decided to change my course and head to Mule. There was a lot of factors that went into this decision, but the biggest reason would probably be An Hyun.

I don't remember all the details, but there was a rare class that wielded a lance called the "Energy Spearman." I wasn't sure exactly where or how it came to be, but I know that it was found within a cave in Mule. If one of my members can get a rare class, then it'll be a great addition to my power. Thus, I decided to go check it out.

"I plan on going to Mule first."

Everyone carried a confused look after I told them I was going to Mule. The other users were either heading towards a big or ordinary city, but the fact that I wanted to go to a small city probably caught them off-guard. An Hyun's face was filled with curiosity as he asked the reason for going to Mule.

"Soo-Hyun, isn't Mule the northernmost city? Also, I heard that that city was only recently developed, so it's still pretty dangerous. People said that it'll be dangerous to go there if you're not skilled enough because of all the vagrants there."

An Hyun would be right... normally. I wanted to travel a bit further than I would otherwise in order to train them to gain the skill to judge how things work in Hall Plain. Such things required experience. Regardless, I was proud that An Hyun was able to think of that, so I patted his head. He raised his head with a confused look but didn't push my hand away.

To explain my reason for going to Mule, then I would first need to explain Golden Lion clan's plans. As An Hyun and Yoo-Jung had already either assumed or heard the rumors about them elsewhere it didn't take long to explain. Sol had been quiet for a while, and when I turned my head to look I noticed that she was staring at my hand that was still on Hyun's head. I quickly put my hand down.

Many varying issues had to be resolved first before advancing into Atlanta. If you were to consider all of the various factors, then stabilization would be the word that

encompassed all of it. Have the nearby monsters been taken care of? Was it safe within the territory? Is there anywhere that hasn't been attacked? Lastly, can the Vagrant's intervention be prevented beforehand?

Stabilization was important within Hall Plain. If cities under a country's control were stable, they would be able to recover from disasters even if the military fails. Since the Central Country had a strong foundation, it would be difficult for anyone to advance into the Central Country with malicious intent. The problem was that users had different interpretations of what is "stable."

It was hard to say that the Northern Country was safe; cities like Mule were still being developed. Despite that, the Golden Lion clan was already planning for its expedition. The clan, known as the best clan in the Northern Country, will collapse due to their hasty decision.

I thought back to my experiences with the first war in my memories. One of the reasons for their failure was that their method of stabilization was insufficient. The only success during the war was with the city of Halo. There, a large war took place between the joint Alliance of the Golden Lion clan and the Sun Clan, who represented Halo, and the Vagrants. In the end, the clans won.

However, the clans were too flushed with their success. The Vagrants were called so because they were a discrete group that had users spread everywhere. As the clansmen's lives were typically short, they weren't satisfied with just one victory. Despite that, they celebrated too early and advanced into the mountains. It resulted in a tragedy that could have been avoided otherwise.

The first time they advanced into the mountains was about six months after I initially entered Hall Plain. This time around, since I spent 13 weeks at the User Academy, I still have around three months left before they begin their fated expedition. I had about a 100 days to become as powerful as I can.

In a sense, Mule and Montana were the optimal cities to go to for my plan. Right now, there were small hints that getting rid of the Vagrants was a part of their plan for this expedition. Sensitive users will be able to infer that preparations for war were beginning in the Northern Country.

Vagrants typically hid in shadows and carried out their plans from within. Before their group gets attacked, they will most likely meet in the Western Country and prepare an ambush. If my assumptions were correct, then the West and South countries will be affected the most. As those two countries will be focused on, the Eastern and Northern countries will most likely be safer.

"There's nothing to gain for us around the popular cities. It's not a guarantee that the attack will be successful, but the attack is pretty well planned for. As a result, many



users will be clamoring to join the expedition. Also, since we plan on making our own clan problems with clans that already control the cities will arise.”

“I’ve heard rumors too that, like you said, the largest expedition will occur soon.”

I shook my head at An Hyun’s statement. We weren’t qualified to even participate in this expedition. Rather than getting needlessly hurt by getting involved, it was more beneficial to take it a step at a time and start from the bottom.

“Who can guarantee the expedition a success? Barbara, the largest city within the Northern Country that we are standing in, took four years to develop. That development required numerous preparations, and countless sacrifices to make it what it is today. However, attacking the mountains is a much harder challenge than developing Barbara was. In my opinion, they’ll be hard to overcome with merely four years’ worth of preparation.

“Hm... really? It does sort of make sense after you say it.”

“Soo-Hyun, does that mean there’s a lot for us to do at Mule?”

I can feel their reluctance to give up even after my spiel. I understand their confidence being through to roof due to ranking high at the User Academy, but them joining the expedition was something I could not allow. I put more force into my voice, then continued talking.

“Well, for one, we won’t have to worry about the Vagrants. The majority of the users and Vagrants will be directing their attention to that expedition from now on. As of right now, the users in Mule have already departed to join the expedition so I heard that all development has halted. Since they gave up, this is a big chance for us.

Since I couldn’t directly tell them all the details, all I could do was contribute an assumption with the words “this could happen.” Since I know “the future,” I could explain with confidence, but the end result still depends on whether or not they accept my words. I looked at them with a serious expression.

An Hyun, too, had a serious expression as he brooded over what I said. Yoo-Jung also looked as if she was contemplating something. But Sol hasn’t said a word for a while... why? Why was she looking at me while pouting? Was she discontent? Was something wrong? I wet my lips as I broke the gaze. At that moment, Yoo-Jung raised her head and spoke in a serious tone.

“Soo-Hyun.”

“Yeah?”

“I have a question. Well...Can I ask?”

“Yeah...”

I thought that I was detailed enough that they wouldn't have any questions, but it seemed like there were still some vague parts. I nodded my head since I preferred those that asked questions and speak their mind, like Hyun, instead of following every word I said.

As soon as I nodded my head in agreement, Yoo-Jung walked up right next to me then held my hand. Instead of asking her question, she behaved peculiarly by first bringing my hand up to her lips. Next, she opened her mouth wide enough that I could even see her teeth. Then...

“Nom.”

With a provocative look, Yoo-Jung bit my hand.

“... ..”

“... ..”

“... ..”

Mine, An Hyun, and An Sol's expressions hardened.

“You said I could bite. So I bit.”

I couldn't help but look at her with a startled expression when she smiled brightly when biting my hand. Yoo-Jung let out uncontrolled laughter as she gently let my hand go. An Hyun looked at her with a pitiful expression while An Sol looked around, embarrassed.

I tried to put on a straight face, but the atmosphere bothered me. I even thought that maybe she was crazy because she was suddenly being random while we were talking about important plans. If this happened a long time ago and was another user (for example, Lee Ji-Young) instead, I would've been furious. However, it was Lee Yoo-Jung.

From my observations of Yoo-Jung, for someone that she disliked, she showed that dislike to a point where it was disturbing. Park Dong-Gul was a good example. On the other hand, when she was with people that she liked, she would act coy, like this time. I was able to swallow my anger since I knew of this. However, I feel like there was a need to tell her that there were moments when she shouldn't act like this. Perhaps An Hyun knew how I felt since he spoke and criticized her first.

“Hey, Soo-Hyun was talking about something important, so this isn't the time or place to be acting that way.”

“Sorry, I’m really sorry. Oh. Soo-Hyun, I’m really sorry. But, your expression was so serious that I did it without thinking.”

“Well our lives are stake here, so of course I’m serious.”

After hearing An Hyun’s retort, Yoo-Jung avoided his gaze, but she still looked somewhat happy.

“While we were training, whenever we asked Soo-Hyun about his plans he always said that he was thinking about it. But to think that he was thinking about this... Honestly, I wouldn’t have dared to think about something like this, but... but, we decided that we were going to follow him, right? Anyways, I agree with the plan.”

An Hyun showcased his agreement by nodding his head. Moments later, he mumbled that there was no way that Yoo-Jung has the capabilities to think of something like this anyways and got kicked in the shins. An Hyun looked at her in pain. When their eyes met, he clicked his tongue and turned his attention to me.

“After hearing your words, I also think that going to Mule is a good idea. How will we reach it though? It’s located so far north that walking would take a long time.”

An Hyun’s normal question was able to get us back on track. I let out a deep sigh inside before answering in a calm voice.

“It’s best for us to get there as soon as possible. There are probably other users that are thinking the same thing I am. It’s best to have as few competitors as possible. Users that lack the skill to do well will probably give up on the expedition and the ensuing battle and head towards the undeveloped areas. Let’s... use the warp gate.”

A warp gate was available in all cities. The cost to use it depended on the distance, so shorter the distance, the cheaper the cost. Since Mule was located in the northernmost region, on average, it would cost 2 gold per person (1 gold = 100 silver = 10,000 bronze).

An Hyun had an uneasy expression.

“I heard using the warp gate is expensive...”

Instinctively, I was going to mention the weekly pay, but I organized my thoughts and answered.

“I heard that in developed cities, the cost to use the warp gate is reduced. There are rumors that they might stop soon, but I’m sure they’re still doing it. You guys saved up your weekly pay, right?”

The three of them looked at each other after hearing my question. Did they use it all? No; what would they have used it on? I myself had 1,000 gold saved up. I was getting worried over nothing, and the three knew it as they looked at each other and laughed. For a moment, I thought they were all crazy, but then Yoo-Jung extended her hand and I was able to see the small bag within it.

I accepted the bag with a confused look while Yoo-Jung spoke with an energetic tone.

“Hyun, Sol and I saved up the money we received every week. There should be about seven gold and 80 silver.”

“...Why should I take this? You guys earned it.”

“Not you guys, us.”

Yoo-Jung corrected my words. With a sheepish expression, An Hyun added on to what she said.

“We thought it would be better if you took care of the money rather than us.”

“Also, I’m an impulsive shopper.”

I had a blank expression as Yoo-Jung stuck out her tongue. The look that she and the rest were giving me birthed a new feeling that I’ve never felt before; it was a strange feeling, and it was taking over inside me. I forcefully quelled the feeling, then threw the bag in the air and then caught it again. I was a meaningless action.

But the weight of the money I felt in my hand was heavier than normal.

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## **Chapter 044 – Prepare for Emergencies #2**

Please continue reading on

<Reminiscence>

“We’re working hard in the shadows. Even though we’re enemies, it’s still nice to meet you.”

“Yeah. I’ve heard a lot about you. The Conductor of the Battlefield, Han So-Young. And you’re the sword master under her command? Your name is Jin Soo-Hyu, right?”

“Oh. Sorry. It’s Kim Soo-Hyun, not Jin Soo-Hyun.”

“Y’know, if you had met her first, you might’ve decided to work under her. She’s that charming of a user.”

“Your joke is lame. Where I’m at right now isn’t so bad. Also, I don’t like to betray people.”

\*

Thankfully, they still gave discounts for using the warp gate. Normally, we would have to pay eight gold coins, but thanks to the 50% discount we only had to pay four gold coins.

The guys had a surprised look on their faces as they stepped through the calm ripples of the portal. One would think that they would be used to it, as they’ve experienced it before during the Rite of Passage. Their looking around was pretty much saying, “hey, I’m a novice user.”

I wanted to tell them that their smallest actions could make them become the Vagrants’ target, and that they should be careful. However, I didn’t want them to think that I nagged too much, so I ended up closing my mouth.

Entering the portal completely made my body feel like it was deep in the ocean, a cool feeling. I quietly closed my eyes. After this feeling completely filled my entire body with its refreshing energy, I opened my eyes again and the landscape of a shabby city appeared before me.

We had arrived at Mule.

To say that Mule was a prospering city would be a false statement. My members’ reactions were a sight to behold. Mule had straight roads and clean buildings. They seemed shocked to see a city like this after spending a long time in a large city like Babara, where it was always bright and bustling.

It’s safe to say that it’s hard for an undeveloped city to catch up to a large city like Babara, unless the city’s representing clan had amazing skills. I led the others along the uneven dirt road.

The roads of Mule were pretty quiet. The few users I spotted mostly had on shabby gear. As it was almost lunchtime, most were making their way out of the city. Unlike a large city, there wasn’t people every couple of steps— not that I was expecting to in the first place.

Yoo-Jung looked around and asked me a question as she was not used to this.

“Soo-Hyun, what are going to do now? Are we going to leave the city right away?”

That would be dangerous. We need to first arrange somewhere that we can return to. I shook my head.

“No. We need to find an inn that we can use as our temporary base.”

“A base? Inn?”

“We won’t be able to get neither a house nor a clan hall if we don’t first register as an official clan. We’ll spend our time at an inn for the time being.”

I planned on stopping by an inn as we can eat breakfast and lunch there. I’m not too sure what the others thought, but I thought that this wasn’t that bad of a plan. Users that weren’t recruited to a clan or abandoned the User Academy halfway typically had a hard time even surviving day-to-day.

The first place people looking for information within a city visit was the pub, but I chose an inn for a different reason. During the first war, there was a time when I briefly stayed in Mule and carelessly spent a few days at an inn.

The time I spent at the Inn passed uneventfully, but later on I was able to confirm an incidental fact about the inn.

I traced my memory as I walked along the main road, and ended up in front of a shabby inn. The others that walked behind me stopped as well. The sign of the inn was lit, and the name “A Modest Lady” could clearly be seen. Thinking that I’ve found the place, I was about to walk in with a small smile on my face.

Bang! Bam!

“Ahhhh! Someone save me!”

The loud noise came from inside and a dark bearded male user ran out of the inn. With a scared expression, he tripped while running out and ended up rolling in front of us.

But then he skillfully jumped to his feet and ran away without a backward glance. I smiled, as I was pretty sure I knew what was going on, but the others had on dumbfounded looks as they watched the guy run away.

“Don’t just stand there, come in!”

A thin, husky voice that belonged to a female came out of the inn. I noticed the mess as I dragged the others inside. There were tableware and tablecloths strewn all over the place. An Hyun let out a moan when he saw the broken chairs and flipped tables.

A lady stood in the center of the hall while carrying an arrogant expression. That expression manifested as a lazy smile; it was as if she was extremely satisfied. The one thing I would point out that would make her stand out was her light gray hair.

She glanced first at me and then looked at the others before talking.

“New faces. Are you guys guests?”

From her lovely lips, a soft voice escaped that could melt any guy’s resistance. Unknowingly, An Hyun’s face was getting red. I sighed. There he goes again. Since I was immune to this kind of seduction, I was able to answer calmly.

“Yes, we’re guests.”

“To eat? To sleep?”

“Both, but we would like to eat first.”

She lightly smiled after hearing my answer.

“I like guys that are polite. Good. Babies. Hm, it would be difficult as this place is a mess right now, so go wait over there.”

I walked to the place she pointed and quietly sat down. The rest probably hadn’t had the chance to look around since they were taken aback, but they were able to do so after they calmed down.

A Modest Lady was an inn that I hadn’t seen in awhile. The inn had a total of three floors. The first floor served as the front lobby and the cafeteria, while the second and third floors were used for lodging. The important thing was that other than us there weren’t any users inside the inn.

Soon, the woman walked towards us with a bright smile on her face. The tables and chairs were still in the position they were before. She lightly tossed us tankards, a cup, and the menu, but surprisingly after spinning once they all ended up in the middle of the table. The others saw this and their eyes visibly opened wide.

“You can order things that aren’t on the menu. I can make pretty much anything. What would you like to eat?”

The others all looked at me. Briefly looking at the menu, I answered. I only acted like I skimmed through it, but I already knew what was good here.

“Four servings of the A course meal.”

“Wow. Good-looking guys have good taste. It’ll take a moment to prepare the A course meal, so sit tight.”

Showing off her nice body, she walked into the kitchen. An Sol looked at me with a dissatisfied expression and Yoo-Jung’s expression was weird as well. An Hyun was the only one that looked at me with an envious expression.

“Soo Hyun. This place seems weird. Why did you come here?”

“Yeah. It’s weird. Can’t we go somewhere else?”

As soon as Yoo-Jung expressed her dissatisfaction, Sol immediately jumped on the bandwagon. I was confused. I didn’t think that they had much of an issue with this place; was it that weird? Hyun spoke after hearing the two’s opinion.

“No way! It seems fine to me. It’s not that weird. Is there really a need to go somewhere else?”

As soon as Hyun stopped talking, the two females stared at An Hyun. Yoo-Jung looked at him with disgust while Sol looked at her brother with a disappointed expression. Scared by the way they looked at him, he coughed and quickly changed the subject.

“I-I’m really hungry. Let’s talk after we eat.”

“Yeah right. Is it love at first sight?”

Hyun didn’t answer. He just looked in the other direction. Breaking eye contact with her, Yoo-Jung turned her attention to me. Her voice became sharp. Sol seemed like something’s been bothering her ever since we were at the Babara Plaza. The way she complained was not like her.

“Hmph. I don’t like the way she called us babies. We’re not babies.”

As soon as An Sol finished talking, Yoo-Jung quietly looked at Sol with a surprised expression. I’ve thought of Sol that way all this time, so I couldn’t say anything. Yoo-Jung briefly scratched her head and expressed her dissatisfaction. Hm. Why are they acting like this?

“You should’ve just chosen a better inn. It’s weird just from the looks of it. The inside is a mess. And that guy ran as if his life depended on it.”

*Your personality is weirder.* I wanted to tell her that, but I managed to stop myself and instead answered with a fake smile. It seemed like they weren’t satisfied with my reaction as Yoo-Jung and Sol kept complaining and gossiping about Hyun and me.

Swoosh.



“Ack!”

Yoo-Jung let out a weird scream. A woman was standing behind Yoo-Jung with a plate in her hand. An Hyun and An Sol looked like they were about to faint when they saw the woman. Despite the fact she was close, we couldn't feel her presence.

With the same lazy eyes and bored voice as before, she started talking.

“Wow...this is the first time I've heard a unique scream like that.”

“You bit...?”

Yoo-Jung was about to let her anger loose at the woman's calm expression. But then, her eyes widened and she stopped talking as the woman lowered her head and hugged Yoo-Jung's shoulder. From there, she pulled Yoo-Jung close to her chest. Soon, Yoo-Jung's entire was buried in that woman's chest.

“Honey.”

While Yoo-Jung had a hard time talking, a bright light started to emanate from the woman's body. That energy overtook our surrounding and soon, the air became heavy. An Hyun, An Sol, and Yoo-Jung's face became serious as if their body hardened in response.

The woman started whispering into Yoo-Jung's ears with her face still buried in her chest.

“Are you curious as to why that man suddenly ran away...?”

Yoo-Jung didn't answer. No. The better answer was that she couldn't answer.

I analyzed the situation instead of acting. The energy she was emanating was part of a spell called Mana Discharge, which was a basic spell for talented users. I admired her mana and the way she surrounded herself with that energy. I had wanted to fix Yoo-Jung's bad habit, and this opportunity seemed to just fall into my lap.

“That man came in and told me to take his order...but do you know what he ordered?”

An uneasy atmosphere was enveloping the table. It made it almost hard to breathe. I don't know about An Hyun and Yoo-Jung, but Sol should be able to resist it. Sol had a shocked look on her face. I knew they needed experience, however, and ignored the temptation to help them.

While thinking about various things, the woman kept on talking to Yoo-Jung.

“He said he wanted to suck on my breast.”

She laughed after saying that little tidbit, then turned her attention to Hyun and me and gave us a provocative smile. I wanted to her to continue I couldn't ignore the Yoo-Jung that was asking for help.

I slowly moved my right hand as I grabbed the cup that was on the table. An amused expression could be seen on her face as I took a sip and placed the cup down. A bit of mana gathered.

Tap.

The sound of the cup hitting the wooden table was atypically loud. At that moment, with my cup as the center, my mana spread throughout the area and neutralized her mana. Normally, I would shock the other user in retaliation, but I wasn't trying to be aggressive this time.

Moments later, the heavy energy that filled the room disappeared. An Hyun and An Sol leaned back into their chairs and looked at both me and the woman with surprised looks.'

Yoo-Jung was probably the most affected since she was the nearest to her. She was apparently breaking down as she turned her attention to the floor. Yoo-Jung instinctively felt it; she felt the vast difference in power between her and the woman.

"Huh...?"

Not knowing something like this would happen, the woman stood up and exclaimed. At first she was surprised, but then her expression changed to curiosity as I started talking.

"That man had every reason to be kicked out."

Hearing my deep voice, the woman looked at me interestingly. Then, she nodded her head and answered.

"...Right? But he is a customer. Business isn't doing so well...so, that's why I told him to pay 100 gold."

I had 1,000 gold.

"That man didn't seem like he had a lot of money."

"Yeah. Like you said, he didn't have any money. Instead, he said he would give me something better."

"Something better?"

Hearing my question, a wider smile appeared on her face.

“Yeah. He said he would give me a bunch of syringes.”

“Doe syringes exist in Hall Plain?”

An Hyun calmed down, and he felt fit enough to interrupt our conversation. Unlike his usual joking self, he spoke in a serious tone. The thought that men were sad animals briefly flashed through my head, as An Hyun obviously wanted to talk to her.

The woman thought that An Hyun’s act was cute, and answered with a seductive smile.

“Of course. I’m sure every man has at least one syringe that contains nutritional supplements.”

“Excuse me...?”

As he didn’t get what she meant, the woman pointed at Hyun’s pants with her slim finger.

“You have one too. A syringe filled with white nutritional supplements.”

“White nutritional supplements? Oh...?”

“Yeah. He said he would personally inject it into my crotch.”

An Hyun managed to figure out what she meant, then his face turned red and he, too, stared at the floor. Sol was the only one that didn’t understand as she still had a confused look on her face.

“I was going to break that syringe, but unfortunately... he ran away. He was lucky.”

She wore a disappointed expression as she said those words, then licked her lips. In response, An Hyun gulped and hurriedly squeezed his legs together.

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### **Chapter 045 – Prepare for Emergencies #3**

The woman gently placed the food on the table then carefully walked away. Her actions now were definitely different from how she acted earlier. The food that she placed on the table were salad, baked bread, cream stew, and meat pie. We had ordered the A Course, but it was hard to call this an A Course meal. Compared to other edibles, however, I remember it being pretty cheap and tasted pretty good.

Please continue reading on

We weren't really eating the food joyfully. As he was hungry, An Hyun was the first to pick up his spoon. Seeing the white steam rise up from the cream stew, I too took a bite. The aromatic smell and light texture filled my mouth and felt like it was melting on the tip of my tongue.

"Oh...this is really delicious! It feels like it's melting."

Seeing An Hyun compliment the food, An Sol picked up a piece of bread and carefully took a bite. Moments later, Sol's eyes widened at the taste and she started chewing faster. Seeing the two enjoy their food made me happy on the inside. However, there was one person that hadn't touched their food.

Yoo-Jung normally doesn't consume a lot (other than alcohol), but she wasn't the type to be picky with food. But right now, she was playing with her food with chopsticks. Seeing the blank expression on her face, she was probably still physically shocked. Well, she was the one that experienced the woman's magic first-hand, so she was probably affected more compared to the others.

I myself have experienced something similar before, so I was able to somewhat understand Yoo-Jung's currently feeling. Embarrassment. Disdain. Shame. Helplessness. Only those that have experienced it personally will understand this dirty amalgam of feelings. I felt bad, as it was somewhat my fault. The fact that her mana was no match to that woman's proved that her skills were inferior.

But this was a necessary process. This kind of thing will be a good experience for the others; who knows how many similar situations they'll be in in the future.

We were now a group of users that has entered the vast world of Hall Plain. Not only do we have to compete against the other new users, but we have to go against veteran users as well. Comparing the members to the veteran members, my users were no different from beginners. Complete rookies.

They didn't know what it meant to be hungry. They didn't know how to act cautiously, nor know whether or not they should meddle in certain situations. In short, they didn't know what it meant to be desperate. Of course, I'm partly at fault for the way they were; they've never left my side and truly acted independently even during the Rite of Passage.

For now, they can say that they were lucky, but if they were to keep acting like this would they even be able to survive the next 10 years? I would say that there's a 99% chance they won't. There were so many times when I wasn't cautious and meddled in situations I shouldn't have and brushed closely with death.

Right now, we were on the Maginot Line. As the Northern Country was being secretive about their plans, the veteran users were uncomfortable about killing each other since

no one knew with whom one's allegiance laid. For now, at least. The one enemy that people collectively recognize right now were the Vagrants.

However, after the First Alliance War breaks out, the situation will turn 180 degrees. In the latter half, even without committing PK, one will be able to separate allies from enemies. It was also common for your enemy yesterday to become an ally today— and vice versa. Users will have to survive in the rapidly changed Hall Plain.

I was planning on teaching my group some skills so that they can survive when that change comes. First, I needed to change their mindset. There were many chances to open their eyes in Mule, and A Modest Lady was one of them.

After we finished eating, I asked for two rooms. We had six gold coins left and forty silvers, as well as my stash of over a thousand. Food and lodging for a week costs 20 silver, so we had to pay 40 silver total.

I asked the girls to meet us in our rooms after de-gearing. An Hyun kept clenching his fist then releasing. His face was filled with excitement; he probably wanted to leave the city this instant. Yoo-Jung looked pretty down, and Sol seemed worried about her.

Still clueless about the current situation, Hyun spoke while continuing to exercise his hands.

“Soo-Hyun, this means that the four of us will act together while in Mule, right? We'll catch monsters, explore dungeons and caves, and discover treasure.”

I internally let out a deep sigh. Why do I sigh so much after meeting these guys? The excited An Hyun was suddenly looking at me. I wasn't planning on heading out at all. Before we do anything though, there was a desperate need to change An Hyun's mindset. Despite my unusual reaction, An Hyun didn't stop talking.

“Oh! We have to make a clan too! What do you want to name it? If you ask me, a name like the Golden Lion is way too cheesy...”

“I can't make it.”

“A different— huh? Are you not going to make one? Why?”

“It's not that I won't, but I can't.”

I scratched the back of my head with one hand, I let out a deep sigh. An Hyun was passionate when it came to combat training, but when it came to Hall Plain's history or its other intricacies, he would doze off. If he had paid attention, he wouldn't suggest that we make a clan right now. An Hyun saw the expression on my face and stopped talking.

After a moment of silence, I quietly started talking.

“The four of us lack the requirement of making an official clan.”

“Re...quirement? I heard that you can make a clan even with just one member.”

The requirement wasn't about the number of members. Hyun had only memorized the easy part. After calming myself, I continued talking. I'm sure that they'll be embarrassed when they look back to this moment once they were more experienced later on.

Clans are created when users with the same goal gather together.

In addition, not just anyone can make a clan. In each city only residents that have received the Angels' trust can give details relating to clans. They also operate the Clan Registration Center. It's fair, but also strict.

There was only one method open to us right now: increasing our experience. Of course, it's better if we stacked our achievements, but that would greatly affect Hall Plain as a whole; there wasn't a need for us to right now.

Unlike achievements, there are much more scenarios that can help one garner experience.

Caravans and the expedition will have to report their results after completing their task. They have to visit the temples located in each city and report the results of their task. The temple officials will read the report and if they find the results important, they will either create an Inspection Order or request the clan representative to check the facts.

They were able to check all the information on the report. They could check what monster appeared in which location, the location of a dungeon or a cave, and what their exploration was like. It's possible that every little result was connected to the report.

When one believes that their performance level is high, they can register to become an official clan, but the group has to be evaluated. Despite receiving hundreds of applications every day only a few are approved every month, proving how strict their evaluation was. Also, once a group becomes an official clan, their potential power can't be ignored.

“Oh...”

After I finished explaining this to them, An Hyun seemed to be amazed. What was amazing about this? Seeing Sol, I could tell she knew this. Seeing An Hyun nod in understanding, I took a step forward towards them. When the three of them had their attention on me, I turned my attention to Yoo-Jung.

“How does it feel to step out into Hall Plain?”

“It's not too pleasant.”

Yoo-Jung answered with a weak voice. I nodded my head and continued talking.

“Are you mad?”

“I feel victimized. I feel angry.”

Yoo-Jung answered right away. She realized how helpless she was earlier. However, knowing that the opponent can still grow stronger was somewhat of an advantage: it revealed to her how far and how hard she has to train to be competitive. As my provocation was effective, I continued talking.

“I’ve said this to you guys several times. Hall Plain is a constantly changing world. You never know what might happen. If that woman just now was a Vagrant, what do you think would’ve happened?”

None of them talked after hearing what I said. I wasn’t done.

“Be cautious. When there’s a great deal of tension you will be brought down, but you need to always exercise caution in Hall Plain. We’re not here to go on a picnic; we’re not here to find treasure. We’re here to survive so that we can return to Earth. Do you guys understand?”

An Hyun, An Sol, and Yoo-Jung all stayed quiet. An Hyun had his head down and Yoo-Jung and An Sol had a sulky face.

“As long as you know why you’re angry, that’s fine. But, there’s no need to feel victimized. That just means you’re that weak. If you feel victimized, train and become stronger. If you don’t want to experience the same embarrassment you did just now, change your mindset and train fiercely.”

I looked at their faces for a moment. I think they’ve somewhat realized their current situation. This meant that it was time to slowly execute my first plan in helping them grow.

I talked in a softer voice than before.

i

#### **Chapter 046 – Prepare for Emergencies #4**

“Yoo-Jung.”

Please continue reading on

“Yeah.”

“If you experience an unavoidable situation similar to the one just now, what would you do?”

“... I'm not sure.”

Yoo-Jung answered with a scrunched up face. I'm sure that she was frustrated with herself. Even if she experienced the same situation again, she doesn't know anything and there was nothing she could do about it. The only choice she had was to endure. I thought about saying words of encouragement as they all seemed down.

“All of you are familiar with <Mana Discharge>, right?”

Since I've gotten the weight off my chest, it was time to start encouraging them. The guys slightly raised their heads and looked at me as my voice softened. I wanted to laugh because they looked like kids that got in trouble by their mom. but I had to keep it in.

“The skill that the woman used at the table is part of Mana Discharge. It's a control ability that anyone can use as long as they can control their mana. It doesn't require any special or hidden talents.”

Technically, it was a skill that's somewhat a control ability. That's why Yoo-Jung's expression changed after hearing that it was a control ability.

“Control... ability? Soo-Hyun, are you saying that we can use it as well?”

“That's right. If you practice it then you can use it. In addition, if you're ever in the same situation as earlier, you'll be able to resist and defend against the attack. Depending on how you dealt with it, you may even be able to counterattack.

“Teach us!”

Seeing them with an excited expression made me smile. If they continued to feel discouraged, I would have been really disappointed with them. After hearing a solution, Yoo-Jung's expression was filled with fierce determination.

First, I needed to teach them the theory behind Mana Discharge, then show perform example for them before truly training them. Faced with Yoo-Jung's excited expression, I raised my head higher and talked with a wide smile.

“Do you any of you know what each level of Mana Discharge is called?”

“The levels are Sense, Occupy, Coerce.”

“Wow, that's correct.”



Surprisingly, the one that answered was An Sol. She was looking at me with a yearning expression. As I tilted my head towards her, Sol's expression brightened up. Maybe... the reason Sol was pouting earlier was that she was jealous of Hyun getting patted and she didn't?

...

No way.

Anyways, Sol's answer was almost correct. Above Coerce were the overpowering levels called Disassemble and There were definitely overpowering levels called Break and Destruct. Compared to the first the levels, however, they were so high leveled that it was impossible for them to learn now. I didn't bother mentioning them.

"Starting now, I'm planning on teaching you guys a really powerful skill."

The introduction was over. Now, it was time to get to the point.

Seeing is believing. Rather than hearing the same thing 100 times over, it was better to experience it to completely understand it. Slowly, I began to gather my mana as I turned half my body so that my back was to them.

While controlling my mana, I slowly dispersed all of it onto the floor. With my body as the focus, I drew a circle with my mana. Since I was so familiar with it, the mana was like an extension of my body. When my body finally stood still, I felt them looking at me with an odd expression. I closed my eyes and started talking.

"Hyun, Sol, Yoo-Jung. Starting now, don't say anything. Move anywhere within the room while trying to walk as quietly as possible."

They hesitated for a bit, but I felt them standing up one by one and quietly move about the room. They may be thinking that they were moving quietly, but if I wanted to I would be able to sense their every movement. When I heard a slight creaking, I knew all of them stopped moving. While my back still turned away, I talked.

"An Hyun, you're 38 degrees north from my left foot, standing in front of the closet. An Sol, You're 26 degrees southwest from my right foot, crouching behind the central table. Lee Yoo-Jung, you're 90 degrees from my body, lying on top of the bed.

They gasped when I finished talking. Were they surprised from just this? I continued talking with a smile.

"This is the very first stage of Mana Discharge: Sensing. Many say that it just allows you to see even if you're blind, but not many know that you can link mana to items in your sight. When you increase the radius at which you can use mana, you will also increase

your sensing level. Guys, you were surprised when that woman was suddenly by herself, right?

“Now that I think about...”

“Ye-yeah, you’re right. Soo-Hyun. Are you saying that once we’re familiar with Sensing, we’ll be able to detect whenever that woman approaches us?”

An Hyun had begun to understand. I nodded with my back still turned to them.

“Typically, yes. But it’s not omnipotent. There is a way to block your presence from being sensed.”

“Then...?”

This time, I gathered a larger amount of mana so that they could really feel it. After my mana started to overflow, I released it in the air. My mana filled the room as a heat haze filled the room. They started to look around the room in awe as I made another request.

“This time, hold up a number with your fingers.”

They got used to the atmosphere. After they fulfilled my request, I calmly started talking.

“An Hyun. Two. You raised your index and middle finger. An Sol. One. You raised your index finger. Lee Yoo-Jung. Four. You raised your index, middle, ring and pinky...two-four-one-five-four-five. Oh jeez...”

Maybe it was because she didn’t believe me, but in the midst of my speech, Yoo-Jung quickly changed her fingers. However, I was able to point it out without any issues so Yoo-Jung lowered her hand weakly as if she was amazed.

“Huh?”

“Huh...?!”

“Am-mazing...!”

After hearing their remarks, I finally turned around and looked at them. Their mouths were opened wide as if they had just seen a ghost. I continued to talk while maintaining the mana in the room.

“There are many ways to block Sensing. A person that notices the Sense could move fast enough that the Sense user can’t react, or he could enter from above. There’s also an advanced method of secretly mixing your mana within theirs. So in order to counterattack, you have to advance to the next level: Occupy.

“Soo-Hyun, was the skill that the woman used Occupy?”

I shook my head in response to Yoo-Jung’s question. Occupy was a level that can be divided into two sublevels. In addition... the skill that the woman used was the third level, Coerce.

“No. The skill that woman used was Coerce, the third level of Mana Discharge. One step beyond Occupy, it’s a high-level skill that instills one’s will into their mana. Of course, the power level varies depending on the person. Once you’re familiar with Occupy, you can defend against that kind of Coercion. At the least, you’ll be able to resist part of it.”

“Th-then, I want to learn it. I want to learn Coerce.”

Seeing Yoo-Jung talk hastily, I approached her with a small smile. Then I lightly flicked her forehead with my finger. Yoo-Jung pouted while rubbing her forehead as I continued to talk in a light tone.

“You can barely walk, let alone run. Unless you’re a genius, Coerce isn’t something you can learn overnight. You would have to train for at least three months. Take it one step at a time after learning Sense. Be patient.”

“Soo-Hyun.”

An Hyun called out my name while looking at me. Curious, I turned my attention towards him.

“About Coerce...”

“Jeez, guys. I told you, not yet.”

Hyun shook his head at my reaction and continued to talk.

“No. That’s not it. I want to learn more about Coerce.”

“Soo-Hyun, me too. What happened before was something that I experienced for the first time, so I didn’t know how to react, but...I want to see what Coerce really is. Please?”

I kept my mouth shut after Yoo-Jung added on to what An Hyun said. Mana Discharge is based on how focused the controller was and how effectively one controls it. You might be able to learn Sense fairly quickly, but going one step further and learning to push mana outside of your body and then instilling your will into it is much harder to learn.

However, I was able to sense a certain passion that I'd never felt before from Hyun and Yoo-Jung. For a moment, I remembered the first time I arrived at Hall Plain. That was the time I tried to do everything to try to learn something. I remembered the time when I had to teach myself instead of being taught by someone else.

Recalling those sad times, I started to talk as if I was possessed.

"The third level of Mana Discharge is different from the first two. Managing your mana effectively and with focus is a given, but beyond that, there can't be any mistakes when releasing based on the circuit. But the most important and the most difficult part is that one has to put their will into the mana."

"When you say will..."

"The key point is how effectively one is able to convey their feelings. There's no point in further explaining this process. As I've mentioned, mana with will show you everything. Think about earlier. What did you feel, Yoo-Jung?"

Yoo-Jung scrunched up her face and thought for a moment before answering.

"My body was tired...and I felt like I was in danger. It was a feeling that I could possibly die..."

"That's what you call a bloodthirsty spirit. That woman was telling you that she wanted to kill you, Yoo-Jung. She conveyed her feelings wordlessly by expressing her intention through her mana."

"....."

Yoo-Jung didn't say much in response. But seeing as her face was so thin, she probably had goosebumps. An Hyun, on the other hand, had a confused look since he probably didn't understand. I let out a small sigh. As my mana was still spread around the room, it might be a good idea to let them experience it again to satisfy their curiosity.

I called on An Hyun decisively.

"Hyun."

"Yeah?"

"Starting now, I will try to kill you."

"Huh? What are you..."

An Hyun shut his mouth after scrambling for a second to respond to my comment. He probably realized that I was going to show them Coerce, like what I did with Sense and

Occupy. He was probably preparing for it in advance, as he kept his mouth closed and hardened his expression. In my eyes, his actions were pointless.

I focused my mind after I closed my eyes. I set An Hyun as my enemy. I calmed myself, opened my eyes, and released my mana. Then...

“Ah! Argh!”

His reaction was immediate.

My energy that filled the room was previously like clouds; now, it instantly changed into deadly energy. That energy filled the room, and anyone within would feel like they were being ripped to pieces. A bloodthirsty spirit was starting to break free deep within me. Then, I focused all of that energy to one person: An Hyun.

I continued for five seconds. If I continued any longer, I probably would've fallen prey to the bloodthirsty spirit. I felt that it was a good point to stop, so I forcefully suppressed it. As soon as I gathered the energy back and stuffed it within me, An Hyun collapsed to the floor and started to shake. Yoo Jung's and Sol's lips were slightly trembling; they probably felt the spirit indirectly.

I slowly walked up to Hyun. Instinctively, An Hyun moved his body away as I approached. As if he realized something, he looked at me with a blank expression. I extended my hand to Hyun to help him up.

“No matter how prepared you are, once you're overpowered by mana there's nothing you can do about it. The will within the mana forces that person's unfiltered instinctive emotions onto you. Anyway, you did well.”

An Hyun shook his head sporadically. Suddenly, as if he had come to his senses, he grabbed my hand and struggled to get up; he was probably still in shock.

We looked at each other when he finally was completely on his feet, and I discovered something interesting: it was only for a brief moment, but there was a competitive spirit in his eyes. Maybe it's because he's a guy, but there was a warlike behavior not found in the girls.

After helping Hyun up, I looked at them, whose eyes were still glued to me, and continued talking.

“Anyways, even though you guys still have a long way to go until you can learn Coerce you now know what it feels like. As Sense is the first thing you should learn, you'll be useless out there if you don't know it. In other words, if you can't maintain Sense for at least an hour don't even think about going outside.”

Yoo-Jung quickly asked a question in response.

“Um, Soo-Hyun when did you have the time to learn these skills? We all took similar classes.”

I was surprised by Yoo-Jung’s question but was able to maintain a calm expression. Since I couldn’t tell them that I learned it before “returning”, I decided to leave a vague answer. I raised my index finger.

“I used my free time to train in addition to the allocated sessions. I also received a lot of help from instructors. Just so you now, it only took me a day to familiarize myself with Sense. Occupy took about two weeks. I was able to familiarize Coercion towards the end of training.”

“Oh. Then you were sleeping in that weird position to train the Sense skill?”

Thanks to An Hyun’s question, I was able to improve my credibility. While I was laughing, An Hyun continued while sporting a confused look. “I thought you were just meditating.” Since I wasn’t interested in their reaction, I continued talking.

“Anyways, it took me that long. If you can do better, do so. I’m excited to see who’ll succeed first.”

I intended to slightly provoke them, and it worked. I just wanted them to try to surpass me, but as soon as I finished talking, Hyun, Sol, and Yoo-Jung looked at each other with a determined expression.”

“Well, I think I’ll be the first one. Just you watch Soo-Hyun.”

“Ha ha ha. Are you saying you’re more skillful with mana than me?”

“H-hey...guys...”

Seeing the two of them stare at each made me sweat a bit. It was like seeing siblings competing against each other through their grades in front of their mom. As time passed, I was feeling more and more like the mom of my group.

I had explained the theory. I had also shown them examples. The only thing left was the actual training.

Regardless of their inner feelings, I couldn’t disagree that their mindset changed. Filled with determination, they started training right away. Mere moments later, their bodies were still and they started balancing their mana, eyes closed. I started to explain the finer details.

“Basic management of mana starts with a mental image. The basic principle of Sense is ‘ripple’ and ‘wave’. Imagine the calm sea; imagine... a single drop of water hitting the surface, then imagine... the resultant ripple. You can also imagine a drop of water

landing on a piece of paper. Just create an image that you're comfortable with and use that 'feeling' to move your mana within the 'circuit'— your body.”

Truthfully, managing Sense is pretty simple as it was a Control ability with simple principles. Coerce, Break and Destruct, however, required advanced skills.

The important thing about Sense was how much attention one paid to detail and how long one is able to maintain it. One had to efficiently divide the mana they had and maintain a consistent flow.

Hyun and Yoo-Jung were trying hard to disperse it, but they were having a hard time. They were able to gather their mana and successfully draw a circle beneath their feet. But their faces already showed that they wouldn't be able to maintain it for an hour. As time passed, the circles were becoming distorted. The circle's shape became uneven; their mana flow became inconsistent.

The confident smile that they had when they first started disappeared and sweat started to roll down their faces— an ability they'll use for the foreseeable future.

The advantages of Sense were endless. One can train whenever— and where— they want. Not only does it increase one's mana, it also puts one's body at its limit while doing so while simultaneously helping to increase other skills.

It's just an assumption, but I think that my Third Eye was greatly affected by Sense. After observing myself and the surrounding, I was able to fight while maintaining my composure. I was able to predict my opponent's attack and can respond with the best counterattack as a result. It helped to manifest my skill's potential. Mana Discharge training was a way to kill three birds with one stone.

It's been 10 minutes since they've started. An Hyun and Yoo-Jung were definitely a sight. Their determination had long disappeared and were both sweating a lot and breathing heavily. They looked as if they could faint at any minute.

I activated my Third Eye while observing them as I wanted to see how much they had improved.

### 『Player Status』

Name: An Hyun

### 『Attributes』

[Power 59] [Endurance 57] [Agility 74] [Stamina 61] [Mana 49] [Luck 61]

\*

### 『Player Status』

Name: An Sol

### 『Attributes』

[Power 16] [Endurance 21] [Agility 24] [Stamina 29] [Mana 84] [Luck 100]

\*

### 『Player Status』

Name: Lee Yoo-Jung

### 『Attributes』

[Power 48] [Endurance 52] [Agility 64] [Stamina 50] [Mana 68] [Luck 56]

\*

An Hyun Hyun had an advantage when it came to physical stats. Excluding mana and luck, his other stats were steadily increasing. He has the potential to become really strong as his agility, a stat very beneficial to Lancemen, was increasing rapidly.

Yes, his mana was low, but he still had points remaining that he can apply later.

Yoo-Jung's physical stats were about average. Her power and endurance were a bit low, but her agility and mana were pretty high. As she was a close-range attacker, having 68 mana is a big advantage and a blessing.

If I compared An Hyun and Yoo-Jung, I would say that An Hyun was in the lead. As a Lanceman he would be useful for uncountable scenarios in the future; my expectations in his potential rose. Had he chosen an Assassin then I would've been disappointed.

Sol had the lowest growth rate in stats when compared to the other two. However, I disregarded her other stats and focused only on her mana. Unless she chose to be a monk, there was no need to focus on power, endurance, stamina, or agility. Sol had high mana and high luck.

She had started out with 75 points in mana, and I was satisfied to see that it had increased to 84. Even though her improvement rate wasn't impressive compared to Han-Byul, the fact that the rate at which attributes increase decreases noticeably once in the 80s has to be factored in. For someone that had just left the Academy to have 84 points in mana, I was curious as to what her limit was.



## e Chapter 047 – Dungeon of the Alchemist #1

Please continue reading on

In the end, they couldn't master Sense within a day. Yoo-Jung managed to maintain it for 28 minutes before she passed out. To be honest, it was quite an achievement for her first time, but I didn't mention it.

As it was an undeveloped city, there were only a smatter of buildings when Mule was first discovered. New ones were only built when there was a necessity. There was nowhere for me to train their physical bodies here, so I had them train in Sense.

I stepped outside of the inn to gather information while the others trained. Even if I was able to glimpse my past that was to be "the future", there was no guarantee that the information that I "remembered" was accurate. Minor details were better to be confirmed first before moving ahead. There was something I had to take care of first.

I first headed to the warehouse dedicated to users. You can think of the user warehouse as an inventory space that you can't carry around. According to how Hall Plain was set up, each user was provided with their own space that no one could touch. However, the caveat was that one can only store items that were purchased with GP here.

I managed to find the warehouse based on my memories. I carefully looked through the items that were inside. There were items that would be useless to me later, so I decided to take them all. After taking out some of the potions, I started to drink them all one by one.

*You have used Angel's Tear. Six attribute points have been created.*

*You have used a potion to increase your physical strength. Your physical strength has been increased by two points.*

*You have used the potion of Vision. One additional attribute point has been created.*

Seeing the messages pop up one by one made me smile. Wanting to check my stats as soon as possible, I loaded the status window.

### < Player Status >

1. Name : Kim Soo-Hyun (0 Years)
2. Class : Sword Specialist Master
3. Nation : –
4. Clan : –
5. Title · Nationality : Owner of the Sword · South Korea

6. Gender : Male (24)
7. Height · Weight : 181.5cm · 75.0kg
8. Character : Lawful · Chaos

< **Attributes** >(You currently have 12 attribute points remaining).

1. [Power 94] [Endurance 92] [Agility 98] [Stamina 72] [Mana 96] [Luck 88]

< **Achievement(1)** >

1. Rite of Passage Boss Monster

< **Innate Skill (1/1)** >

1. Third Eye(Rank : S)

< **Special Skill (1/1)** >

1. Blade Master (Rank : EX)

< **Undeveloped Skills(4/4)** > (You currently have one unused skill point remaining.)

1. Close Combat(Rank : A Plus)
2. Last Man Standing (Rank : A Plus)
3. Mind's Eye (Rank : A Plus)
4. Battlefield Protection (Rank : EX)

The more I looked at my attributes and the unused points, the more proud I felt, but at the same time, inexperienced. An odd pleasure that I didn't feel even during the first war filled my body.

Two points from the boss monster, six points from Angel's tear, two points from the physical strength potion, and four points from the academy. Excluding the two points from the strength potion, there was still a total of 12 unused points. And, on top of that, there was one Undeveloped Skill point remaining.

I still wasn't sure where I should use these skills points. It would be reasonable to add them to my stamina, but I couldn't help but want to use them on power, mana, and agility. It's not that I hadn't been thinking of doing so in the first place, but looking at the points made me have second thoughts. The fact that I couldn't use the points to rank up my innate skills was a shame.

The attributes were power, endurance, agility, stamina, mana. My developed skills were Close Combat, Last Man Standing, and Mind's Eye.

If others, no, if any other *users* saw my skills they would get annoyed and exclaim that it was a joyous thing.

In the end, I couldn't make a decision, so I decided to continue saving them. Since I've already absorbed the potions, I could spend the points whenever I wanted. I also wanted to think a bit more before deciding since I didn't know what would happen in the future; I wanted to be prepared in case there was something I wouldn't be able to handle.

I briefly contemplated whether or not to take the sword and the elixir, but ended up leaving them in the warehouse. They'll only be useful later on so there was no point in taking them with me now. Also, while the sword may look ordinary, users with a keen eye might feel something and the situation may get out of hand. Once I obtain Subspace, the token of top-ranked users, I'll be able to take it out and use it freely. Lastly, I took with me the 300 Gold I saved and left.

I saw the city's empty road as I turned my head. The information that I wanted wasn't the Northern Country's current situation, but that of the task we were planning on completing. If we had the luxury of time then I would go to an unstable territory, get rid of the monsters there, and slowly grow in peace.

However, we didn't have that kind of time. Before the first Alliance war breaks out and the clans rise up, I wanted to at least have the qualifications of an official clan. Other than when a clan wanted to create a subclan, creating a clan in three months was nigh impossible.

In the end, the only option we had was to fulfill tasks at Mule and build experience.

A research institute of the ruins. The dungeon of the ancient alchemist, Vivian. Screaming Cave.

The first time around, the caravan that I was a part of accidentally found the Screaming Cave during my second year. However, I've only heard words about the research institute and the dungeon, so we had to do some research.

Most beginners had a mistaken preconception that caves and dungeons were easy to find. However, those places are hidden very well. Some were located within a barrier, and others required special items to enter.

I'm not sure if my Third Eye could figure out their locations; there were too many possibilities and not enough probability.

Anyways, I decided to head to the library first. The libraries in Hall Plain contained varied information and multitudes of books, and were open to all users to find whatever information they needed.

The current situation of Mule was a mess; the representing clan was making it a priority to maintain the developing city's safety. To decide to explore a dungeon or cave now was a dumb move. While "going to the library" was an absurd notion, I had no choice.

If the worst comes to worst, we could always explore the Screaming Cave. But if possible, I wanted to visit there last.

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Nine days passed. In that time, the others have definitely improved. Among them, Sol improved the most. At first, she had a tiring time controlling her large amount of mana. But after I taught her an effective way to manage and transfer her mana she started to rapidly improve every day.

As time passed, I gave them additional tasks. Instead of just using Sense, I had them move around the room while maintaining the skill. They were able to keep at it for 40 minutes while standing still, but they couldn't maintain it while moving for even a minute.

An Hyun and Yoo-Jung complained, but they became silent after I asked if they were ever going to fight while standing in one place.

I gave one additional task to Sol. Holy magic is one of the basic magic that a priest learns and among them was a spell called Shackles. After Cure, it was one of most useful spells in the priest's repertoire.

Ding!

After taking out a Silver coin, I flipped it into the air. The Silver coin landed on my hand after a couple of flips. Sol looked at me with a serious expression as I carefully explained how to train.

"Note where on the coin I'm holding. For magicians and priests, casting speed is just as important as the skills themselves. It's about how fast and detailed you're able to cast the spell. The key point is that you have to restrain it in the air before it hits the ground."

"Okay!"

Seeing Sol smile widely while confidently answering made me softly smile. Suddenly, Sol stuck her head out towards me, which surprised me. After realizing what Sol wanted, I extended my hand and patted her on the head.

After Sol left with a goofy smile on her face as I prepared to study the documents I brought back from the library. Moments later, I heard the next room's door open loudly. A few more moments later, my door, too, opened loudly. I wondered who it was so I raised my head and looked over my shoulders. Yoo-Jung's was face peeking in.

## Memorize Chapter 048 – Dungeon of the Alchemist #2

Please continue reading on

“Soo-Hyun, what are you doing?”

After poking her head inside to make sure that I was in the room, Yoo-Jung quickly walked in. Her voice hinted at some sort of complaint. Seeing her pouty face, I thought that it might be the beginning of one of her annoying rants. I placed the document that was in my left hand down and let out a heavy sigh.

“What is it this time?”

Noticing my annoyed tone, Yoo-Jung pouted even heavier before speaking.

“Sol keeps bragging about how you allowed her to train in a different way. She’s been tossing and catching coins in the air... such a show-off.”

“There’s nothing for her to show-off. Also, is Sol really the type of person to show-off like that?”

“I’m being serious. She keeps tossing and catching coins...”

“She’s practicing restraint magic like I told her to.”

As I cut her off a disappointed expression floated onto her face. Right when I was about to pick up the document again, I heard Yoo-Jung mumbling to herself.

“You’re so mean. You’re still having Hyun and me to train Sense.

“Because you guys need to. For beginners specializing in close range combat knowing Sense is enough.”

“But still...”

Despite me having warned her about it, Yoo-Jung still started to whine like a child. She was giving me a headache.

“Still what? Sol’s mana level was higher than yours from the beginning. For a support user to be at that level is more than enough. Also, Sol’s training won’t be really beneficial to you.”

Several days passed, and Sol had been the one to master the Sense skill the fastest out of the three. Sol was able to fully utilize the enormous amount of mana that she had— after she had been taught how by me. No matter who the instructor had been or how they had taught her before, she hadn't progressed as fast as she did under me. Seeing herself improve day by day, Sol began to look at me as some sort of God.

During my first battle, I achieved the title of "Sword Master" while possessing only 45 points in mana. That's why I was confident when it came to teaching Sol to manage mana level efficiently. It was reasonable for the others to believe that I was favoring Sol as I was making full use of my knowledge about mana management.

Yoo-Jung seemed really dissatisfied that Sol was progressing so fast. Even after that one incident, Yoo-Jung would always come into my room and beg me for private lessons whenever I returned to the Inn. I tried to reason with her in the beginning, but, as it happened so often, it quickly became a chore.

"All I taught her was how to manage her mana. Anyways, go train your Sense. Look at Sol. She's been practicing really hard because of how motivated she is."

"Je-ez~! You're always complimenting Sol! I'm going to go rest a bit."

Wearing a dissatisfied expression, she slowly walked forward and took a seat beside me. After shrugging my shoulders, I turned my attention back to the map. Yoo-Jung observed me doing so then grabbed a few pieces of paper lying on the table near her.

"Ancient times...alchemy...revival, and...end? Soo-Hyun, what exactly is this?"

"There wasn't much in it. You can just leave it anywhere."

After finishing the document on ancient alchemy, I circled part of the map with a pen. Yoo-Jung saw the several circles on the map then continued to question quietly.

"What is this? And what are these circles?"

"Recording notes. Analyzing the map."

"I'm serious. I'm curious about what you've been doing these days."

Frustrated with my answer, Yoo-Jung raised her voice and whined. I continued to talk while still focusing on the map.

"I'm analyzing the records. It's inefficient to just kill the monsters that are around the city. I'm trying to get a lead about a place by reading the old records on Mule in the past."

"I see...you can find this lead by reading these?"

“Winning the lottery would be more probable.”

I had a bitter look on my face while saying so, but Yoo-Jung giggled in response. There were stacks of documents on the table; I had brought every document related to the alchemists and any hinting at the laboratory.

Even after I get a good idea, I would often look over the records again to get a better idea because of how much there actually was. There was no way for me to confirm the legitimacy of the documents' contents, so following every word written on these pieces of paper could be seen as wasting time.

Yet that was exactly what I was doing. I didn't even bother looking at the other documents hinting at other potential discoveries; I was at least sure that there was both a laboratory and an alchemist dungeon in Mule. Else, I would've gone straight to the Screaming Cave.

Tired, I continued to talk.

“If it can be easily found, others would have chanced upon it much earlier. I have no choice but to put in my all...”

Yoo-Jung seemed to find this interesting as her expression brightened. She offered her help, which I readily accepted. I already knew what to expect in five minutes.

Barely past the five minutes mark, Yoo-Jung started to stare at me. Mentioning something An Hyun, something-something An Sol, she made the excuse that she had to train and left. With her personality, there was no way for her to endure this tedious chore.

Seeing her leave made me smirk as I turned my attention back to the map.

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More time passed. The once bare map was now filled with circles. However, the circle in some places overlapped. Nothing is confirmed until I visit the location, but here at least were some assumptions.

Thinking that I was done, I leaned back deeply into the chair. Looking out the window, I found that it was already night. I suddenly thought of the others, so I used Sense on impulse and heard their quiet breathing. It seemed like they had quickly gone to sleep after training. Thinking of how much they had improved, a smile appeared on my face.

They met my expectations after a couple of days. Their desire to leave the city was blatant, but thankfully they decided to listen to my suggestion to train first.

There was only one reason they were following me, and not mindlessly so: they just trusted in me just enough to believe that things will work out if they just listen to me. The Rite of Passage, the User Academy— by following my instructions, they hadn't experienced loss even up to this point.

Even though they complained about their current training, they still improved. They only trained in using Sense, but their mana and other attributes increased as well. I was envious of Hyun raising two points in mana as a result, as well as his subsequent happiness.

In the beginning, I had entered the academy with the four points rewarded as the goal. Even so, I was disappointed that my stamina remained stagnant even after the grueling training.

As it was an issue I currently had no solution to, I ignored it. I started to think that we were getting about ready to foray outside the city, but there was still a last, relatively minute issue I had to iron out.

That issue... was the group itself.

As long as it was monsters near the city, the exact makeup of the group didn't really matter. However, venturing further out exploring and advancing required a more balanced group. We had many close-range combatants, but an archer and a priest were common necessities for each party.

However, I wondered if it was truly a necessity right now. We needed a priest, but we had Sol. A magician wasn't crucial, and, if needed, I could act the archer and be the leader. My Third Eye, coupled with the fact that I've poured so much time into learning Mule, guaranteed that there was no chance of us getting lost.

But... if the others got too accustomed to the current group it could become a problem later. While I'm able to cover many of the roles of a group, I can't baby them forever; it wouldn't even be possible to on high-leveled explorations. This will be their first exploration so they'll learn a lot, but compliance will lead to issues in the future.

Knock, knock.

Someone knocked on the door while I was thinking about the group's makeup. My Sense detected a woman standing outside the door. I whispered quietly.

"Who is it?"

"It's me. You already knew it was me."

"....."



Without getting further confirmation, the woman opened the door and entered the room. Of course, I had known it was a woman, but it was hard to tell that it was the innkeeper. To be honest, I wasn't sure why a skilled user such as her was staying in Mule.

Her whereabouts were often unknown; the woman would disappear one day and reappear another. In the end, when she appeared again in Hall Plain she became the enemy of the clan I was affiliated with.

Her words to me then were still fresh in my mind.

If I had met this woman first I might've followed her. She was that charming.

There was a possibility that she was still unaffiliated with any clan as of now.

Operation Ragnarok Annihilation flashed through my mind. She had encountered the Princess of Death as her enemy and ended up executed. The power she displayed, however, was carved deeply into my memories.

The woman had a light smile on her face. She had slightly droopy eyes and the mole near her eye stood out. She was a woman with a lot of charm. She spoke in a friendly tone.

"Hello. Mind if I come in for a bit?"

I'm not sure why she asked since she was already in the room. With a bitter expression, I nodded my head.

"...What brings you here so late in the night?"

The woman didn't answer, yet she was closing the gap between us. The woman that stood in front of me could take my life in an instant in a moment of inattentiveness. Since I couldn't trust her, I slowly started to gather my mana.

She still had a light smile on her face. Within seconds, her eyes changed to gray. As I was on guard from the start, I instinctively activated the Third Eye.

**『Inherent Skill, Checking the Eyes of Temptation.』**

**『The Third Eye has been activated. Detecting Eyes of Temptation.』**

Wow.

"Wow...am I only allowed to seduce guys that I like at a certain time?"

"...The others are next door..."

You must be joking. I had experienced this sort of attack so many times that I've grown weary. That's why I was able to counter-attack, but I acted lightheaded and answered with while blushing on purpose. I needed to see what she was going to do.

"It's okay...don't worry about that. Anyways, today is the last day you'll be able to rent out the rooms. What are your plans now?"

Coming this late just to ask about rent? She was definitely up to something. She was probably testing whether or not I was actually charmed. I carefully opened my mouth, acting a bit hesitant.

"I'm thinking about leaving the city tomorrow morning..."

"Leave...?"

When I told her I was going to leave, she carefully looked at my table. I noticed her expression oddly changing. Briefly glancing at the map, she probably had an idea of what I was going to do.

"User Kim Soo-Hyun."

"H-how did you know my name..."

After saying my name, she took a step forward. We were at arm's length.

"You're that new user. The super rookie of the User Academy."

The woman took another step forward. While I was sitting on the chair, we looked at each other while she stood in front of me. With her grey-colored eyes, the woman started staring at me.

"No matter how you look at it...well, you've only been a user for four months."

The woman extended her hand and softly touched my face. I felt the woman's soft touch on my left cheek. I purposely started breathing heavily while letting out a slight gasp.

"I was really surprised that day. Even with a small amount of mana, I didn't think a new user that recently graduated from the academy was able to use Break."

"That..."

"That was why I've been watching you and trying to gather information...but I couldn't be certain of anything. I couldn't get a grasp of your plans. This is the first time a situation like this has arisen, so I'm confused. But the more I look at you, the more I think my hunch is right... there is something different. You're hiding something."

Oh, really?

She must've believed that I was completely seduced because she got closer. When she was about to withdraw the hand that was softly touching my face, I quickly grabbed hold. The smile on the woman's face grew wider after seeing my action.

"My hunches has never been wrong."

I purposely placed myself within the woman's chest. Like a baby that was being held in their mother's arms. To be honest, during that battle the first time around I did want to snuggle into her arms at least once. I wasn't sure if she knew, but with a satisfied expression, she pulled my head closer. I pushed myself deep into the woman's breasts.

"Hee hee."

I was savoring the woman's soft, tender breasts and her smell. Seeing me act that way, a slight smile appeared on her face. She petted my head for a while before stopping and started to speak.

"Are you hiding something? From the others, maybe?"

"A little...bit."

"Then will you tell me what it is that you're hiding...?"

"That..."

At my slight refusal, the woman hugged me even tighter. In a soothing voice, she spoke again.

"It's okay...just tell me."

Hearing her soothing voice, I slightly opened my eyes. I acted like I was contemplating for a bit as if I was about to confess.

"I won't lie to you, I..."

"Yes?"

Seeing her excited face, I slowly opened my mouth.

"I like shadows."

"What?"

I was looking at the woman's shadow that was in the room. Her shadow on the floor was what caught my attention. I answered her query while lightly laughing.

"Your shadow is really pretty."

After I finished talking, I looked at the woman and saw her expression hardening.

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### **Memorize Chapter 049 – Dungeon of the Alchemist #3**

Please continue reading on

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Shadow. I was surprised by the word. Puzzled, I looked upon the user in my embrace. Completely contrary to the expression he had before, his eyes were a still calm. For some reason, I felt goosebumps.

Instinctively, I felt the need to move my shadow, but before I could do so an inherent fear rose inside me, forcing me to a stop. There was something cold around my neck. Their arms, wrapped around my body, and their hands, soon upon my neck.

I was going to die.

I didn't think any stupid last thoughts, such as why life could be so fleeting to end and at moment. My keen sense has kept me alive up until now, and that warning was in high gear. The moment that I move my shadow, the user lying within my breasts will twist my neck without hesitation.

The energy gathered within my arms slowly seeped away.

\*

Her arms weakly fell. I had somewhat researched the woman's skill beforehand, so I had kept my Sense centered on her shadow. However, even if I knew about her skills I still had to be careful. If I had felt an ounce of danger, I was ready to break her neck.

The woman didn't do anything. Realizing that her judgment of her target had been wrong, she took a step backward. She was naturally talented, yet wasn't overconfident about her skills.

I was starting to like her a bit. The woman in front of me was someone that knew when to step back. As I didn't have to kill her anymore, I activated the Third Eye. This time, I wanted to know everything about her.

### < Player Status >

1. Name: Go Yeon-Joo (5 Years)
2. Class: Silhouette Queen
3. Nation: Babara
4. Clan : –
5. Alias · Nationality: The one that leaves a jet black silhouette at night · South Korea
6. Sex: Female (26)
7. Height · Weight : 169.4cm · 51.8kg
8. Characteristics: True · Chaos

### < Attributes >

1. [Power 89] [Endurance 90] [Agility 97] [Stamina 87] [Mana 93] [Luck 82]

### < Achievements(5) >

### < Inherent Skills (1/1) >

1. Eyes of Temptation (Rank: A)

### < Special Skills(1/1) >

1. Abyss Crowd (Rank : S+)

### < Potential Skills (3/3) >

### < Skill Comparison >

1. Kim Soo-Hyun: 540 / 600

(You have 12 attribute points remaining.)

[Power 94] [Endurance 92] [Agility 98] [Stamina 72] [Mana 96] [Luck 88]

1. Go Yeon-Joo: 536 / 600

(User does not have any attribute points remaining.)

[Power 89] [Endurance 90] [Agility 97] [Stamina 85] [Mana 93] [Luck 82]

I whistled in response to her stats. Adding up all of her attribute points, she possessed 536 out of a possible 600. There was only a four point difference between me and her. With her stats, she would be able to take command of a position with the Ten Tributaries.

Regardless, I was confident in beating her. Other than stamina, I had more points in every stat. On top of that, if I were to include the ranks of the inherent, special, and potential skills, I I would win without a doubt.

I made my decision. Once I'm finished with Mule, I will decide what to do with Go Yeon-Joo before I leave. If I recruit her and it doesn't work out then... Perhaps she was able to get an idea about my thoughts through my expression. When I looked into her eyes she flinched a bit. I quietly spoke with a stern face.

"I like women who have pretty shadows. And so, I like you."

"....."

"So..."

Go Yeon-Joo stood there with a serious expression. This time, I was the one that was touching her face. Now that the table had turned, I felt a certain pleasure course through my body.

"I hope you don't do anything stupid."

At Go Yeon-Joo's level, she knew exactly what my words meant. After seeing her weakly nod her head, I stepped away from her breasts.

Go Yeon-Joo seemed to be thinking about a lot of things. Her usually calm face was replaced with a complicated expression, showing how she felt at the moment. After letting out a heavy sigh, she started talking.

"I understand your words. I know how to keep secrets."

"Great. I also like women that know how to keep secrets."

Go Yeon-Joo suddenly started talking formally as she put on a bitter smile.

"I was just curious. I have no reason to hurt you, so please don't misunderstand what happened."

"I would like to tell you, but I can't because of what happened."

Even if she had used her Eyes of Temptation with good intentions, that skill still belonged to the group that affects the mind.

Disappointed by my refusal, she slowly stood up from her seat. I signaled her to leave with my eyes and she walked towards the door silently.

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When morning arrived, the others woke up and rubbed their eyes. Seeing them resume their Sense training immediately after yawning made me feel proud. If it were any other day, I would support them doing so, but since I was planning on heading out of the city I called the three of them to my room instead.

“Why did you call us?”

An Hyun mumbled while yawning with his mouth wide open while Yoo-Jung looked at him in disgust. Sol also looked embarrassed. I slightly smiled at Hyun’s actions and calmly started to talk.

“You guys are pretty familiar with Sense by now, right?”

Not used to compliments, they looked at each other with a confused look before taking on a sheepish grin and standing up straighter. Seeing them clear their throats was definitely quite the sight. I had a slight smile on my face, but I managed to hold any further reaction in.

“You guys trained so hard. Good job.”

“Soo-Hyun, does that mean...?”

Hearing Hyun ask in an excited tone, I nodded my head in affirmation. Today was the day we would leave the city.

“That’s right. I think it’s okay for us to leave the city, and also time for us to slowly start moving on.”

As soon as I confirmed, Hyun, Sol, and Yoo-Jung quietly cheered. Their expression clearly showed how excited they were about finally taking their first trip around Hall Plain.

“Hey. Listen carefully: unless it’s somewhere where it’s not possible, you need to get into the habit of training daily.”

I sternly advised them after seeing them get so excited, yet they just nodded half-heartedly; I knew that they weren’t really listening. I planned on saying more, but I decided not to. I wanted to see if they still felt the same way after we leave the city and experience various situations.

The laboratory. The dungeon of the ancient alchemist, Vivian. After contemplating about where we should head first, I thought the dungeon would be better. Both locations were of the same difficulty level, but based on the hints I found the dungeon should be a tad easier to tackle.

To arrive at Vivian's dungeon, we had to leave through Mule's north gate and walk deep into the Forest of Darkness. The Forest of Darkness is located between the Northern country and the undeveloped area and was so large that even Babara could only control two-thirds of the forest. It wasn't somewhere one can easily enter, so once we leave the middle part of the forest it would be safe to say that we would be in the undisturbed part of the forest.

Despite the threat, it didn't really matter to me. Since I have experience in exploring undeveloped areas, I didn't think it was necessary to recruit a long-distance specialized user. I decided not to form a larger group. If we had more members, we would have to split the reward that much more. I was already busy taking care of the members I had, so I didn't have the luxury to take care of more.

I took out a bag as Hyun and Sol were jumping around the room due to the excitement. It was a bag with a spell cast on it. As a bag with a permanent spell was too expensive so the one I purchased only had a spell that lasted for a week. Once this exploration was complete, I planned to sell part of the reward to add on to the money we currently had. Then, we wouldn't be short on money while in Mule.

"I got you guys gifts for training so hard."

Hearing the word gift, they all turned their attention to the bag. They might've learned of such bags while in the User Academy, but this was probably the first time they'd actually seen one. Like children who awaited Santa's present, their expressions were filled with expectation. An Hyun especially seemed to be looking forward to it, which made me feel a bit worried.

Seeing them wanting me to take out their present as soon as possible, made me sweat a bit. After putting my hand inside the bag, I carefully took out their presents: weapons. After seeing them train at the User Academy, I ordered each and every one after contemplating about what would be the best for them.

One long spear, two daggers, and a wooden staff.

"Oh."

"Huh?"

"Wow...."



After seeing the weapons that were set on the floor Hyun, Yoo-Jung and Sol expressed their excitement. After giving them the sign that they could partake, they each quickly grabbed their weapons. Hyun did mention his GP before, but I had instructed him to save it for now. There was no need for him to buy anything, so there wasn't a reason to waste money.

An Hyun grabbed the spear, swung it a couple of times and displayed a satisfied look. His stance was pretty stable; it seemed like he was somewhat used to the weapon.

"Wow, this feels amazing. I like how it feels when I wield it."

Contrary to my expectations, An Hyun's swordsmanship was different. Since he had used a sword during the Rite, I expected him to learn to properly slash. However, he stabbed a lot more during his training, thus the spear.

"You specialize in stabs rather than slashes. That's why I chose the Spear. As you can tell, it has the same form as a Long Spear, but it wasn't made to be thrown. During battles, I suggest paying attention to the distance between you and your opponent. Your defense will depend on how you perform."

"Soo, Soo-Hyun. I didn't think that you would think that far ahead...I'm touched."

Hyun seemed to be moved by what I said. I turned my attention elsewhere. Maybe Hyun's words were just a joke since I heard him giggling. Yoo-Jung was touching her daggers quietly and started speaking when Hyun and I let up.

"Soo-Hyun, what about me? These daggers... both of these only have a single edge?"

"That's because I ordered them that way. Oh, that's right. Yoo-Jung, I had to order custom-made ones for you..."

"Really?"

Yoo-Jung interrupted with a pleased voice that I had ordered custom weapons just for her.

"Your daggers were originally a katana— it's Japanese. That's why the lengths are a lot longer than ordinary daggers. It's more or less half the length of an ordinary Katana."

"Hm~ it does feel a bit awkward. I'm sure this will be better once I get used to it."

"Specializations tend to show during battles for close-range fighters like you. Regardless, just try using it. Finding the weapon that's right for you is yet another type of training."

“Right, but Soo-Hyun. Custom-made weapons are more expensive than ordinary ones, right?”

“Of course. Why do you ask?”

Immediately, in response to my answer, Yoo-Jung turned to An Hyun with a gleeful expression. Without asking, I realized why she was twirling her dagger with a boastful smile. Yoo-Jung turned her attention away from Hyun and back towards me.

“Then, that means my present is the most expensive one. Ha ha ha. Oh jeez. Hey, if you’re happy, just say so. Why can’t you just be direct about it?”

An Hyun listened to Yoo Jung’s comment with an annoyed expression on his face. Sol, on the other hand, looked at me with a disappointed look. Childish! The one that should’ve felt disappointed was me! I knew this sort of situation would happen, so I just looked at Yoo-Jung pathetically. However, I was surprised when Yoo-Jung suddenly looked at me provocatively and winked.

After letting out a deep sigh, I continued in a deep voice.

“Unfortunately, the most expensive weapon was Sol’s staff, not your daggers.”

“...What? Why? That’s nothing but a wooden staff!”

Yoo Jung’s voice filled the room. Sol pouted when she heard her say that it was nothing but a wooden staff. I just shrugged.

“Of course. The weapons that are usually used by magicians and priests are magical items.”

“Huh? Magic?”

Sol’s eyes widened when I told her it was a magical item. After nodding my head, I explained what kind of magic it was.

“Yeah. It calms the heart of the user and increases your effectiveness in managing mana. It’s only a low-level staff, so don’t expect too much from it. It’s still better than not having a staff though. With this, there’s no need to increase your mana now. Nice, right?”

“Yeah!”

A small smile appeared on my face as I saw Sol answer with a satisfied look on her face. For a moment, I thought of how nice it would be if I had a nice and cute sister like her.

It was only for a moment, but Sol looked at Yoo-Jung with a boastful look. I carefully glanced at Yoo-Jung and noticed how twisted her expression turned in response to Sol's gaze.

I suddenly remembered when Yoo-Jung complained about Sol showing off. I had told her then that it couldn't be true; I couldn't imagine Sol doing something like that. But perhaps... it was something I need to think about again.

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#### **Memorize Chapter 050 – Dungeon of the Alchemist #4**

Please continue reading on

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*“Did you hear the rumors? Another dungeon was discovered in Mule.”*

*“Yes, in the Forest of Darkness. The dungeon belongs to Vivian, an ancient alchemist. Should I go to Mule again? Who knows? Maybe there'll be something left.”*

*“You discovered the Screaming Cave. Don't be greedy. Hm... that's odd. I remember that there was a group of users that discovered it a long time ago.”*

*“Yes, they accidentally found it and were killed in the end. No, that doesn't sound right. Huh? A total of three people. No, or should I say one? What I mean is that...”*

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We quickly packed our belongings and left the Inn. Since it was early in the morning, I didn't see Go Yeon-Joo. An Hyun kept on looking back at the “Modest Lady” in a way that hinted at disappointment about our departure.

Mule's north gate was extremely bare in comparison to Babara's. There were two guards guarding the gate, but you could tell how shabby it looks just by looking from the outside. It was hard to say that the representative clan was doing a good job just from its current condition, no matter how developed the city was.

“Good job. Please take good care of yourselves. May the angels bless the users.”

“Thank you.”

After answering the guards that saluted us, we exited through the north gate. Hearing the residents speak for the first time, Hyun asked with a curious expression.

“Soo-Hyun. What kind of people are residents?”

“The residents? They’re people that have always lived in Hall Plain. It’s the same thing as you having lived on Earth all of your life.”

“Hm. Are they any different from us? I heard this from the other users, but aren’t users considered nobility and the residents commoners?”

Nobility and commoners... The residents were weak. They were so weak that if there weren’t any users in Hall Plain, they wouldn’t be able to survive. Of course, the situation changes after Atlanta and the subsequent return to Tera, but right now the residents of Babara still needed protection by the users.

Once Mule was discovered and started development, the residents were pretty much out of danger. As for cities that haven’t yet been developed, no one knew what would happen to them. There have been cases where cities were already in ruins when they were discovered in the Northern country. Of course, there hadn’t been any residents there. People only assumed that they were killed by groups that invaded and attacked the city.

The natives often called users that protected them Apostles of God. They believed in the existence of a god in Hall Plain as some residents even receive orders from an angel. The Apostles were named so because they received Divine Order and Protection from the angels to aid in them protecting the native residents.

In reality, those users had been kidnapped by the angels and were forced upon powers, and was not a gift from God as the natives believed. That was why the residents looked at the users in awe.

What Hyun said about nobility and commoners was only the way users saw the relationship. The Western country was known for its freedom, but their relationship between users and natives was so bad that the residents were often treated like slaves. The Northern wasn’t as bad, but the natives were often looked down upon and seen as being of a lower class than the users. They were both people, so I wondered if it was truly necessary to treat them that way.

While investigating the cities, dungeons, and laboratories that were being discovered all over the place, hints that Hall Plain was once a flourishing place were often discovered. From what I recall, they had lost it all and even their powers because of some issue. It was so bad that the natives of today were worried about the possibility of monster attacks at any moment.

I summarized this information to Hyun. The others seemed to be interested as they nodded their heads. There was no need to be particularly sad about the residents, but there wasn’t any reason to treat them badly either. With that, I finished talking about the native residents of Hall Plain.

Typically we would've passed a couple of users by now, but I hadn't seen any. The effectiveness of the Golden Clan's plans was surprising. As the northernmost cities were practically empty, the southern, western, and those around Babara were probably filled with users. For a moment, I had an urge to join that throng.

I was feeling sentimental for a second, but that feeling quickly disappeared as I continued walking. As we gradually traveled north of Mule, the surroundings started to change a bit. The roads became more uneven and there weren't traces of humans walking through here. It wasn't so bad.

It meant that I could enjoy nature in its original state. As untampered nature was very rare on earth, and we had also been living in absence of nature, this was a welcome sight. When the cool wind started to blow, the members had on bright expressions and would often look around at their surroundings. Once the woods became thicker, I stopped walking and took out a map.

To the left was a forest. To the right were the plains. The Forest of Darkness was located, well, in the forest, not the plains. I checked just in case, but my memory was correct. After neatly folding the map, I placed it back in my pocket. I saw that there were many split roads ahead, but I headed towards north without any hesitation.

I started walking through the vast, green forest. The field connected to Mule's north gate was a light green color. But as soon as the distance to the Forest of Darkness shortened, the color became duller.

As we continued walking, more and more dark blue trees started to appear. The tall trees had a massive presence within the forest. We were nearing the Forest of Darkness's entrance. After making sure that the others were still behind me, I started to talk in a low voice.

"This is the entrance to the Forest of Darkness. Pay attention and be prepared."

The deeper we walked into the forest, the more the gloomy atmosphere pervaded. The area we were at couldn't truly really be called a forest as hills could be seen clearly and the surface was too even. Here couldn't even compare to the forest that we were in during the Rite of Passage.

We were still near the entrance so there was some sunlight in different parts of the forest, but once we head in deeper, there wouldn't be any light at all. Since it was this dark in the morning, I'm sure that it'll be pitch black at night. I thought it would be best to find a safe spot for tonight, but since I was able to see my surroundings well I decided to look around a bit more. I looked back at the others and noticed them tightly gripping onto their weapons due to nervousness. Then—

"Wait."

Right when I turned my head towards the group, I noticed something odd accidentally. If I hadn't turned my head, I would've probably missed it. Since my senses were on high alert I was able to catch sight of tracks.

On guard, the others looked at me, surprised. I first headed towards where I noticed the tracks and kneeled down to take a closer look. After seeing my expressionless face, they slowly gathered around me.

Someone... had passed through here, and not just a few people. I hadn't seen anyone when we left Mule, but they could've come from a different direction. It had been odd that there weren't any users, but it hadn't been weird enough for me to take special note. These tracks were pretty fresh.

"Soo-Hyun, why are you looking at the ground all of a sudden?"

"....."

After looking at the ground for a bit, I activated the Third Eye in order get some detailed information. I heard Yoo-Jung ask a question as I looked towards the ground, but I didn't want to answer her right now.

"Soo-Hyun? Soo-Hyun!"

"Yoo-Jung. Soo-Hyun is Tracking, so wait..."

"Tracking...? Oh, but aren't long-range users or assassins usually the ones that use Track?"

"That's true, but I heard that if you have a lot of experience or if you learn it somehow you would be able to use it too. Although the information you glean might not be as detailed as those that specialize in tracking would."

"No way. Are you saying that Soo-Hyun learned it?"

While filtering through the incoming information, I heard Yoo-Jung and Sol talking. An archer has the skill to lead the group, but they also have the skill to read the tracks left on the ground. However, since my Third Eye was an effective skill, it wasn't difficult to gather data regarding the trace. I'm sorry Sol, but my inherent skill is far more superior to simple Tracking.

After analyzing the data, I stood back up. What I had done just now was exactly what Sol said. They all looked at me with a confused expression as I started to talk in a serious tone.

"I think a group passed through here two, maybe three, days ago. I think there were five, maybe six people. I don't think they came from the north gate. They probably came

from a different area...but I'm not sure if they were lost or if they came this way with the same goal in mind. It didn't seem like they were lost, so their archer was probably somewhat skilled. Anyways, they were all walking in the same direction."

I didn't know what happened to them. In order to see exactly what happened at that time, I would have to see into the past, like what I did during the Rite of Passage. It wasn't anything urgent though, so there was no need to. I was satisfied just from the inferences guessed through the tracks that I found.

Hyun and Yoo-Jung were at a loss for words after hearing my words. Even Sol's eyes widened because she hadn't expected me to explain in such detail. I just shrugged my shoulders in response to their gazes. Yoo-Jung tilted her head and asked, wearing a curious expression.

"Then, does that mean there's another group here?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe... or maybe not."

Yoo-Jung asked a good question. I didn't tell the truth, so I answered vaguely, but Yoo-Jung looked doubtful. After letting out a deep sigh, I continued talking.

"It's like I said. There are footsteps going into the forest, but there aren't any that shows them leaving. There's a chance that they left in a different direction, or they could still be roaming. If not those... then they might've all died."

At this, they all became worried and looked at each other. I glanced at them calmly then turned around. I had let them have their fun while we were in the city, but I wasn't going to go easy on them while we explore.

Noticing my serious expression and my silence, they started to walk even more carefully. Seeing how their footsteps became quieter, they were probably nervous. The deeper we walked into the forest, the taller the trees became and more of the sky was covered by the canopy. The sunlight that we saw near the entrance could no longer be seen.

We continued to walk for a while. The further we were from the entrance, the darker the forest got. It wasn't so dark that we couldn't see. But if it was this dark in the morning, I couldn't imagine how much darker it would get once the sun sets. Here was truly the Forest of Darkness.

I didn't tell them to do it, but the others were using their Sense. Thanks to me using my Third Eye and the others using their Sense, we were able to maintain our pace. There was nothing more I could say. Every step that I took was accompanied by the sound of legs sliding through the grass the huff of breathing.

Grr. Swoosh!

I heard a cry. Something was moving within the grass, disturbing the silence of the forest. I noticed its quick movements; it seemed to know who we were and was preparing to attack.

As soon as it stopped moving, the others held their breaths. They kept their guard up and were looking around at their surroundings. They probably missed that a monster was approaching us. Once it comes within the range of their Sense they would notice, but I warned them as I had already detected it.

“It’s a raid. There is a monster approaching. Get ready to fight. Sol, stay in the center. Hyun and Yoo-Jung, turn your backs to each other and protect each other.”

“Hu-huh?”

“I don’t like repeating myself. Create a barrier with Sol in the center.”

They all had a confused expression when I said it was a raid. Yoo-Jung asked again, but after hearing my cold voice, she grabbed her daggers while trembling. Hyun was also wielding his spear and Sol quickly started casting a spell. After seeing them quickly get into position, I moved next to Sol. I was going to be the Priest Protector. As soon as I unsheathed my sword, I heard movement within the forest.

**『 Special Skill. Blade Master has been activated. 』**

**『 Undeveloped Skill. Close Combat has been activated. 』**

**『 Undeveloped Skill. Mind’s Eye has been activated. 』**

Swoosh! Clank!

While maintaining our defensive position, something moved within the grass and, at the same time, a screech filled the forest. Once it felt that we had noticed its presence, it had hidden within the darkest parts around us. A shiny tail quickly extended out of the darkness. Its targets, Hyun and Yoo-Jung.

“Don’t dodge! Block!”

I shouted after seeing them preparing to dodge, but An Hyun and Yoo-Jung had already dodged in opposite directions. They were able to dodge its attack through the usage of Sense. After side stepping, An Hyun was confused after hearing my comment. However, when it saw the tail coming for him, he became surprised and immediately blocked it with his spear. With a dull sound, I saw him counter-attacking part of the tail as it swerved towards Yoo-Jung.



Yoo-Jung ducked and exhibited her agility, but wasn't able to completely block the tail. She had successfully dodged it, but that didn't mean it was done; the tail passed by Yoo-Jung and slightly changed its course. Its new target was An Sol.

As the tail approached An Sol mid-chant, her face became blank.