

## Master 1211

### Chapter 1211 – 1211. Just Not Right

"Ha! Take this!" Remey's fist was covered in blistering flames while Gil jumped back and took the dagger from his chest strap sheath. He had allowed for her to get too close while they trained. The game of Remey dodging projectiles or deflecting them had turned in to one of him trying his best to avoid the insanely quick swapping of elemental fists. He didn't even have a hope of using his bow in between. But this was the pressure that he needed.

"Just try it. You can't lay a hand on me!" His words were enough to push Remey even further. He had the tactic of annoying her down to a science. Now he just needed to put it in to practice so that he would be able to win this sparring match.

The two had decided to test themselves to their limit. Gil had been training with the young archers and other forest elves. Especially his arrow making techniques. To say that he had missed out on close combat training with daggers would be an understatement. He had not done any at all! Remey, on the other hand, was attempting to balance herself better. She had to let out the frustration of a learning alchemist who decided to nearly blow up a lab that day by rushing their potions.

You move so quickly but you can't make a decisive hit, that's why I have you use your dagger and not a wooden one! You can't touch me!" Remey had a very good point. Since Gil had not trained properly, he was still very uncomfortable using the dagger as defense. He had also not been very well trained using the bow as a melee weapon instead of just a ranged weapon. The techniques and skills that the forest elves used were very good and an arcane archer that worked as an enforcer was happy to show him. But for whatever reason, the style didn't seem to fit for Gil. Therefore, he had the idea for him to create his own.

Being able to use both the dagger and the bow as melee weapons would make Gil more flexible. But he had to upkeep his training and maintain a good example for those he was teaching. It was all too impressive to have accuracy and long distance sniping. Unfortunately, those that he trained were not of that level. They would not be fortunate to always have far away targets or never be ambushed. "Come on, move your feet and arms together. It will give you faster and more powerful hits!" Remey was getting fed up. She started to coach Gil instead of just pushing him.

"That's it! I'm using Ice. you will feel the cold and the heat. If you don't dodge then you will be at a loss. If you can't hit me in the next ten tries then I will make your entire academy escort my students for free!" Remey knew that Gil's pride would not allow him to just let this go.

"Never! I will break you down right now!" Giving up on his speedy dodging that he had worked so hard to achieve, Gil used a method that Remey was famous for. He charged in. As much as Remey would have been surprised, she had known her battle style well enough and was also adept in dodging. She easily sidestepped the charge from Gil and added insult to injury by extending her leg for him to trip on. What she didn't realize though, was that Gil had been getting more muscular lately from his archery training. He had also grown taller.

The additional weight pulled her off balance as well causing both to tumble down. Gil's arm flung out and managed to hit Remey's arm while she managed to have a grazing punch creating frost on Gil's side. They both looked at the cuts on their clothes and at the fact that their trash talking had ended up moot.

"So, I think I am going to look in to some different dagger styles to see what fits me." Gil caught his breath and made the full decision to take a break from the bow and fully focus on using a dagger since he had lost a lot of his fluidity in using it.

"That sounds good. I might try and train a little more. I feel like I lost some weight just sitting in the lab. Maybe some heavier armor to lug around." Remey still didn't wear much metal in her armors which made her faster but not as heavy. This in turn made her attacks a bit softer or, as had just happened, her being unable to pull someone down with her weight.

The two split ways at the point with a lot on their mind. But Gil was pointing himself away from his archery academy. He had seen many close combat skills and dagger arts that related to archery. All of them didn't feel like the right fit. He was an arcane archer but that was unheard of in the world. A human taking a system that elves were known to use. He thought that he might need to replicate this and look outside the human and the elves for ideas. That was why he was looking toward the outer areas of Genesis. Specifically toward the place that the merfolk had begun to make their homes since it was close to water.

He had seen some of the merfolk that migrated this way carrying thin knives that they would use in the water. They were made of some tough forged coral that was extremely sharp and light in the water. From what he knew it made them able to move faster while delivering decisive blows to fish. Then they would have a meal right there. If he could somehow learn it and change it to suit him he might just find what he had been missing.

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## Chapter 1212 – 1212. Train With...?

When Remey looked at the door of the wandering blacksmith's shop, she knew that it had been busy. There was not a single piece of armor or basic blades outside. Nor as she pushed the door open did she see anything. "You sold everything. This is insane." Her exclamation brought a surprised smile to the wandering blacksmith's coal dusted face.

"Orders." The single word was his excuse. He had finished all of his private orders for the day and had not made any basic items to stock his shop. He had a hard time deciding what he wanted to make since he had been letting his whims decide what he would make with the materials he had. The simple fact that Walker had handed over so many materials of various tiers also didn't help.

The wandering blacksmith already had too many materials. So many dwarves or nobles sent over materials to garner favor from him. There were so many one day that he had no idea who they had come from. But who was he to turn away materials that were rare and exactly what he wanted to experiment with? He would be a fool!

"I have a very good reason to look for you today." Remey didn't hesitate to give her best serious expression. "I have a huge problem and you are the only one that can fix it..." The pause drew out and the wandering blacksmith looked at her dead in the eyes. "Gil was heavier than me and I didn't take him down because I was too light. I need to get heavier and get more muscles."

The judging raised eyebrows of the wandering blacksmith asked the question if Remey was actually being serious or pulling his leg. He couldn't imagine that she would be trying to lose some of her speed by gaining weight and muscles to just take down Gil. But as he thought, he did notice that she had become taller and skinner. He could also smell the lingering scent of herbs breaking through the smoke. It all made sense after a few moments.

"Training armor?" His simple words were like an answer from the heavens. They were exactly what Remey needed. She needed heavy training armor made for her to be challenged at all times. Not for her to go in to real battle with.

"Yes! It can be ugly or super heavy. I don't care. As long as it can make me tougher and harder to beat. I need the weight behind my fists to beat Su's defense. I need the speed to be faster than Walker's and Gil's arrows. I need the flexibility to dodge Midnight when she leaps at me. And I need to sharpen my mind so that Onyx won't sneak attack me with light or shadows." The last one was something the

wandering blacksmith could not help with. But he could make an armor that would assist Remey in improving her physique.

The pile of unrefined ores on the ground were tossed aside one by one until the wandering blacksmith uncovered a chunk of basic looking copper. He pointed it out to Remey who realized that he wanted her to pick it up and bring it to the forge for him. She was sure that she would be putting in the work to help since she was the one asking for armor. This wasn't a problem at all, well, until she actually placed her hands around it and pulled.

"What is this!? It's heavier than anything else in this pile." The weight that the large chunk of copper had was too much. Remey swayed step by step just trying to move it toward the forge.

The moment that the wandering blacksmith stopped laughing at her movements he started to speak more than Remey was used to. "Condensed magma hardened copper. Terrible name. Great weight. It forms right alongside magma spouts in the volcanic areas of the world. I never use it because it is too heavy. Unless you are that berserker from the adventurer's guild." Remey dropped the condensed copper on the ground with a thud leaving a small dent. She was stunned that he had spoken so clearly. But that just led to him laughing even more when she tried to pick it up again.

"Of course I can help you! You are a brother to me just like the rest of your party is family. You came to help my people when we were in need. So what do you need?" Leon had seen Gil coming from a mile away. His reaction was to greet him with open arms since he truly felt that the party and everyone in Genesis had become his family once they accepted and helped his people.

Gil would have been uncomfortable if it weren't for the genuine smile that Leon wore. It was strange to see someone so openly proud and happy about everything in life. It was as if Leon had been blessed with an unrelenting joy after coming to Genesis. "Dagger arts. I need to learn more dagger arts to find the best melee combat for me. A dagger fits well and the elven dagger skills somewhat work. I used to think they were perfect since they fit with the style of archery I use. But after not using them for a while I found that I lack something. It's just not complete. I can't fight properly until I find it."

"That is exactly how I felt before I was given my spear. No spear felt right until this one. It was always uncomfortable in the smallest way. Or I would break them. The worst time was when I got blisters all over my hands from the poor wrappings on a bad spear." Leon laughed while he turned Gil toward a solitary merfolk watching over a few children training with swords. "Just go join them and say exactly what you just told me. I will make sure something interesting happens." Gil was at a loss. Train with children?

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## Chapter 1213 – 1213. Flow Of Water

"You need what? You're an archer and you are asking for me to..." The merfolk looked behind Gil to see Leon waving with a smile. His eyes returned to Gil and just shook his head. "I have told that kid multiple times that I have retired from hunting and guarding anything. I teach on the side now and that's it. If you think you will get real world experience then go elsewhere."

"Um, so you are actually going to teach me dagger arts that the merfolk use?"

"Don't ask questions and just get in line with us. I had to wait a week for the fastest swimmer in the guards to train me!" One of the kids using a sword to train yelled at Gil making him wonder if he was actually doing the right thing.

"So apparently today we are going over dagger techniques. You can thank Leon for that even though I had all of you train with your swords first. Again, yell at Leon., not me." The man pulled a set of wooden replica daggers from his bag on the side. "These are made with the same weight and balance as our traditional water slicing daggers. Just take them and get ready to follow me through. If you are lucky, you might have the skills to match my flow."

The thought that the dagger skills used to battle for the merfolk were related to the flow of water made a lot of sense. But that still did not mean that Gil would be able to grasp it. He was more in tune with the forests than the water. It was just the simple upraising he had on the farm along with his training with the elves.

"Being able to stab at something one way is great, but we focus on slashing and severing. As long as you leave the tail undamaged the fish will still get away. your dagger is to incapacitate and end the prey you chase. It adds to maneuverability so that you are not finding yourself slower than anything else. Make sure that you think about how you move on land and in the water. One day you may find yourself in the shallows having to adapt." This made sense since it was one way that the merfolk would hunt, it also made sense that they were near the edges of the river training.

"Is this guy going to be able to do it then he's a human, right? He can't swim like us." The same boy that had yelled at Gil before was judging him yet again. It was the young attitude that hadn't learned to respect those older than them yet.

"If you say another thing about him I will let him duel you. With his bow. By the time you realize your mistake, you will easily have fifty arrows where you were standing. Not to mention ones that could freeze the entire area you swim and breathe in. He's one of the founders of this city and is standing right next to you to learn." The man obviously knew who Gil was but had just been flat with Gil in the beginning because of the schedule he kept. It wasn't that the man had any disrespect himself. The boy on the other hand was a little lost. Gil just stayed focused.

"Watch me demonstrate how we flow on land. We are less controlled by the currents of water and can use what we have felt and seen to replicate a flow comfortable for us. The more you have stood in the shallows and felt the way the current s move, the better because you will have a natural feeling for how it should flow." The demonstration began without another word.

The man that the boy had called the fastest swimmer started to move slowly. One foot back and another forward so that he could change his standing in an instant. That was exactly what he did, he flowed from back and forth while being able to move side to side easily. The pace changed in an instant making Gil struggle to keep up with the slashing motions that seemed to involve the entire body. What shocked him was the moment that the man started to move around them. He was close to cutting them but never did so. It was as if he could move through them without any risk of injury. One of the younger boys even tried to touch him as he passed but it seemed that the man just slightly moved to avoid it. The same way when someone tried to grasp something floating in water and it would be missed due to the change in water pressure around the hand.

"What are you waiting for? Copy my stance and practice. If I see anyone flat footed you will be running to the river jumping in and swimming back home. It would be a waste of time to just stand when you can flow." Gil couldn't agree more. He had long lost his flat footed style of using a bow. If he did he wouldn't be able to rush to another location or to adjust his distance. Therefore, he easily adapted to this style of using a dagger. But he still felt something was missing.

"I can tell you grew up on land. Go to the water and try to do exactly as I was doing. Stand there and move slowly. Don't resist the slow current around you. Just see what it does to you when you are knee deep." Gil was sure the advice was good. The man had called him out after just a few seconds of him moving. But Gil looked down at his shoes, he had to mentally prepare himself for walking through the city soaking wet at the end of the day. But if this was the price, then he would pay it.

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## Chapter 1214 – 1214. Weight And Flow

"All that holding for bracelets and a belt? How can that do anything? Wait...shoulder straps? What is this thing?" Remey was lost as lost could be. She was looking down at the set of training "armor" that the wandering blacksmith had made. It consisted of interlocked segments of the condensed copper.

There were bracelets that easily fit around her wrists and ankles. Then a separate belt that attached to shoulder straps with hooks. From what she could tell the hooks would be oriented to fit on her back, "I can add weight to my back if I want!?" She was pretty excited to grasp this effect. It would mean that she would be able to continue to add weight if this was not enough.

However, she looked at the "armor" and wondered if she would even be able to wear it. The amount of condensed copper used had only increased. After the first [piece had been used, Remey had been sent to get another and another and another. All heavier than the last. Overall, it had been a significant number of unrefined condensed copper. All of it was probably heavier or just as heavy as Remey herself. She had held everything in place with great struggle while he had worked on them to shape and cool them properly.

The wandering blacksmith slowly watched as Remey grasped the uses and benefits. He had gone against making traditional armor so that Remey would be able to still wear her armor but also the training armor on top. It would be an extension of what she was already using so that she would be able to improve and remain comfortable. It was these small things that truly caused him to be better than any other blacksmith in the entirety of Genesis.

Just the bracelets alone made Remey feel as if she was unable to pick up her arms from the floor. When she clipped the ankle bracelets on she found taking steps was ten times harder than it had been. The look at the belt that would strap on to her shoulders and waist made her wonder if she would even be able to make it out of the door or towards the mansion. Training in these was out of the question until she actually built up her strength again.

"Stop holding back your laughter. I can see it on your face. You want to make fun of me for this. But you won't be able to get away with it. I will be stronger than everyone!" Her shout was enough to break the calm smile the wandering blacksmith had. He laughed even harder as Remey strapped on the heavy

belts to head out. Her movements were much slower but the strain of her muscles was clear. He had balanced them perfectly to train every movement she made without them shifting and hurting her. It all came down to her determination now.

While Remey was slowly making her way back to the mansion so that she could attempt to get used to her new training armor, Gil was struggling in his own ways.

"Just see how he is trying to fight the flow of the water. The current is pushing him down stream. Those rockets there cause changes in the flow. Instead of letting his legs be pulled with the flow and go around the rocks, he is forcing himself to go opposite them and avoid them too early." The merfolk that had been instructing had begun to throw the kids in to the same situation behind Gil. he used Gil as the main example.

If this wasn't for self improvement, Gil would think he was being targeted. However, the more he was trying to master this technique, the more he realized that he was the least knowledgeable. He was the one that should be learning the most. The other children that were learning may be young merfolk, but they were more victim to the flow of water than he was. Every single time they moved, the water would change them drastically. Gil just worried about his legs.

"Throw the rest of your body in to the flow. You need your arms and torso to move and shift with them." Gil had not realized he was holding his body steady and just moving his legs and hips. It was leading to a very unbalanced stance which caused him to nearly fall at that moment. He was blind to the way he looked and needed to rely on the guidance he was being given while they slowly moved down the shallow river. "Come on, even a minnow can do better than that." The comment was to all of them as their instructor watched.

A single thought occurred to Gil, he had nearly fallen but somehow found himself back on his feet. He gave a little hop and found that the water dragged him forward slightly around the next rock in their path. It wasn't a heavy push but one that made him move faster and change the way he faced. It also opened up his view ahead of him and showed off the broad side of the rock.

"Finally, you caught on. If you didn't I would use my undercurrent skill to drag you under with the current and see you learn the hard way." The merfolk instructor laughed as if this was a joke. However, the small hums of fear behind Gil told him that the other students had this happen to them when they were learning for the first time. "Now more, we are going until it looks like you can do this in your sleep!" The training ramped up yet another level. Gil didn't know that grasping the concept would prove to be a curse. The only thing that he told himself was that he might be on to something here.



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## Chapter 1215 – 1215. Truce

"And how did you end up...like that?" Gil found Remey laying on the floor in the middle of the dining room as if she was completely dead. He noted the new accessories but didn't think anything of them.

"Pfft, it's just meditation. It strengthens your mind. Obviously." She couldn't admit that she had lost her strength and was currently stuck until she was able to rest her muscles a little. "And why are you soaking wet and look like you have legs made of jelly?"

It was a little too obvious that Gil was having trouble walking in a straight line. If Remey didn't know better she would say that Gil had somehow been drinking. However, she found it hysterical that he was completely soaked.

"What do you mean? This is training. I'm still training." There was a long silence before the two finally got the courage up to admit that they had gone a little too far.

Their eyes met and the two let put held breaths. "Weights. I asked for new training armor and these were forged for me. They are too heavy and I am basically a rock now."

"The river. I was trying to learn the flow of dagger arts from the merfolk and I ended up an hour down river. The instructor made us run back. I nearly died."

They were both too proud to admit that they didn't like the training that they had come up with in a bid to get better than the other. However, it was nice for them to be getting out of their routine to do something different. "So, think you can use a dagger better?" Remey was a little curious. She didn't think that Gil would really leave with nothing learned.

"Actually? Yes. I think I am starting to get the hang of how to move. Attacking is another thing but I will be able to learn more tomorrow. If I can actually move my legs. How about you?"

"Oh, I'm staying here. No way I will be able to move. This is too heavy. I can get stronger but I won't be able to do anything normally. Some condensed magma copper or whatever. This stuff is like having three plates of armor on each arm. It's too much." Gil had sat himself next to Remey and was attempting to stretch his legs. He reached out to see if he could pick up one of the bracelets on Remey's wrist.

"Seriously!? This is too much. How did you even walk?" He knew well that if he had the same armor on him that he would be lost. Gil had his pride and would never say it to Remey, but he knew that she was stronger than him. She had the skills to fight head on and deal real damage. He only truly shined when he was at a distance.

"Says the person who was dragged by a river. You know running back after fighting the current is dangerous. You even left Genesis a little ways." Remey was not as adept at swimming and could only imagine that Gil had been fighting the river the entire way. Just because he said he was learning flow did not mean that he was able to go against it. The river was a powerful force of nature within its' own right.

"Both of you seem to have found some common ground. It's rare to see you this way." Onyx managed to surprise Gil and Remey when he slithered in. "But I really think you two should clean up. Alice is here to eat with us since we had to order more light crystals today. I invited her back. Maybe we can all train in the morning." The reaction Onyx witnessed was a lot of eye rolling since Gil and Remey were both trained out for the day.

"What have you been doing other than that? Anything fun?" Gil attempted to change the topic as best as he could. He knew that Onyx had been equally busy.

"I have been. I managed to make friends with a few tamers and gained information about strange sightings involving shadows. I have a cave that I wish to investigate soon. I want Alice and everyone to come with me. I want to see if there are more of my species if possible." While the two were physically exhausted, they had not been put through the wringer mentally. Now they felt that they had been thrown a curveball.

"You have a lead!? That's great. I asked around too but none of the traveling herbalists had heard anything."

"The same here. No hunter or archer has seen anything in the forests that pointed to abyssal serpents. But I still have the flyers posted for information. I was ready to see if we should put a post up in the adventurer's guild."

Between the two, they were shocked and surprised. But they were also extremely excited. Onyx had been very calm and quiet about how he gathered information. He didn't really want to trouble anyone and they respected it. They were always impressed by how fast he learned and how mature he was. Onyx was a league above when it came to intelligence.

"I didn't want to ask for help until I was ready. It's a ravine in the fields that was thought to be caused by a natural earthquake. I have heard the news that some of the caves split open may have exposed strange egg shells. But no one found the monsters that hatched. There were reports of odd shadows causing those that found them to retreat for fear of ancient ruins and ghosts. There is a quest to investigate them. I want to go." Truth be told, Onyx had already accepted the quest. But he had been waiting to ask everyone to come with him. He wanted his family there if he discovered something.

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#### Chapter 1216 – 1216. Raccoons

"Midnight, that's the third silver haired raccoon you have used your flame claws to shred. You need to calm down. If you use that skill over and over you won't be able to rely on others." Walker was making a decent point. Both he and Su had caught her multiple times trying to fool around with the skill since she had learned it. They had a decent journey back yet, but it was not to mess around with skills.

"Don't huff at him like that. You are going to be in charge of other hatchling dragons soon. What if they see you messing around like that? They will learn it and be a menace to Genesis instead of helping. What will the other dragon villages say after that?" Su also made good points but it seemed that Midnight had reached a slightly rebellious phase.

"Fine, alright. Use the skill. You can have all the fun with it that you want before we get back to Genesis. Get it out of your system. But that means I am going to be learning a certain skill of yours too." Walker felt that it was better for Midnight to learn by doing than just by being reprimanded. He also looked back at the times his mother had told him to do something after a hard day of not finding his system. His

automatic reaction in his bad mood had been to do the opposite of what she asked. He wasn't ready to act like a parent.

"A certain skill?" Su was staring at Walker quizzically. She had no idea what he would be trying to learn. A single thought did come to mind though, "Don't tell me you are trying to breathe flames? I can't even do that yet. Don't get too far ahead of me." To say that Su didn't have some misgivings while Walker shook his head would be a lie. She knew that he excelled in learning new things. So much so, that he would have so many skills he would not always use the most optimal or the ones he learned because he favored the newer ones he had come up with.

"Oh, it will all be fine. Just let me take the back for a while so I can train." Walker let Su take the lead and watched as Midnight quickly forgot that she was curious about what Walker had been talking about. She returned to letting her flames come from her mouth in a small stream and wrapping them around her claws. She was greatly amused by the ability to both slash and burn things. That was why she had rushed the small silver haired raccoons on sight.

They weren't too valuable when it came to hunted monsters. The silver haired raccoon was not something that people could eat due to the fact that they were scavengers and ate just about anything. But where their value was, was their fur. The silver shine of it made many people impressed when seeing it. Therefore, when Midnight saw it and heard Walker originally said, she went after it for Lisa. It would be another gift for her to give after her travels.

The distraction was perfect though. Walker had seen Midnight use her shadow wrapping skill too many times to count. She would use it to walk around everywhere some nights in the mansion so that she would not get in trouble for sneaking more food. Or she would use it to scout when the party was out on an adventure. What was even more, was the fact that Walker could feel the mana changing shape and wrapping around her. Even though he had not fully focused on it and put a lot of effort in to darkness elemental mana, he had a sizable experience base for what he could do with it from watching Midnight.

When the darkness mana in his shadow reacted to him Su was the only one to notice. Midnight was so used to feeling the flow of shadows around her that she had become a little blind to it. She also was extremely distracted when she spotted another silver haired raccoon. Walker didn't even yell at her when she charged at it without thinking, which should have been a major warning to her that something was wrong and that she should try and see what he was doing.

"So Midnight just runs off while I copy her skill." He laughed softly while he pulled at the darkness elemental mana to manipulate his shadow. He felt it was the best chance to do this since the cloudy day

was adding more shadows here and there. The three had managed to climb down the mountain much faster than they had climbed up because of the other dragons clearing the path. Apparently, their pride had been dealt a blow when they had Walker bring a rogue dragon in to the court.

Just wrapping the shadows around one arm was easy enough. It was just a matter of remembering and copying clearly. The shadows almost seemed to bend to his will as if they had been waiting for him to reach out to the darkness elemental mana.

'The skill shadow wrapping has been taken from the shadow assassin system. The user has learned the skill shadow wrapping through extensive experience witnessing the use of the shadow wrapping skill.'

Walker didn't need to read any further. He knew the mana costs and the skills ability. Now he just needed to utilize it in the way he wanted. He had a prime target ahead of him. One that didn't seem to care that he was even pulling at her shadow a little. The only thing he needed to get over was the judging look of Su who knew exactly what was going to happen. However, she knew it was a good lesson since Midnight was totally distracted while out in the wilds.

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## Chapter 1217 – 1217. Sneaky Sneaky

Su watched as Walker became harder to see as he crouched down in to the grasses around them. The shadows seemed to meld with him slightly as he pulled his cloak out of his storage to wear. It made him much harder to see and follow up until the point that she just looked over at Midnight waiting.

Midnight had just finished taking down another of the silver hair raccoons and was waiting for Walker to come and clean up. He was the one that would store everything so she knew that he would be there any moment. But she just stood there waiting until she realized that he wasn't over at all. By the time she looked back and saw only Su, she was a little worried. Walker was gone!

Her surprised huff was cut short but the fact that she could see Su shaking her head in slight disappointment. Was she in trouble? Did Walker and Su decide that they would actually reprimand her? Midnight was completely lost on what was going on until she felt a heavy weight land on her back. The next thing she knew she was pushed down to the ground and a soft ball of flame burst on her. She knew

it wasn't a monster because she had not smelled or felt any real danger. The ball of flame that hit her was also obviously held back to easily break on her scales without harming her. Yet, that didn't mean she was not upset. She had been ambushed! Of all the beings in the world, the one that did the ambushing had just been ambushed herself!

When she jumped up she was going to get Walker back for it with a small breath of frost toward him. However, he wasn't there. He wasn't right where he should be after tackling her and using on her like that. Her eyes darted from side to side to find him but came up with nothing. She could still only find Su who was a little impressed at the sight before her.

The next attack that hit her was a small needle of frost which sent a chill down her spine but still did not cause any damage. She felt it come from her left side so she turned and released a large breath of frost toward the grasses. Her only success came in the form of her freezing some of the damp grasses. Unfortunately, she had not succeeded in even touching Walker. This made her even more frustrated.

Things just became worse as she felt the mud beneath her feet shift and she was blocked off by a wall of soupy mud that fell forward dirtying her scales. She instinctively wrapped her claws in flames but was immediately met with a small bubble of water that came out of the mud and put out her flames. "Having some trouble?" She felt a tap on the top of her head. Walker had managed to walk right up to her opposite side and tap her. Midnight could only look at him with a stunned expression. Had Walker always been this sneaky? How had he managed to do this? How could she not have seen it happening?

"You were so distracted that you didn't even notice me learning your skill. I have seen you use the shadow wrapping skill like a million times. Do you think that I wouldn't learn it one day? It isn't my specialty and I don't plan on taking your spot. But I will use it to show you a lesson. You were so focused on your flame wrapped claws that I was able to mess around all I wanted. What if this was serious? If Su wasn't here protecting us through this I wouldn't even dare to do something like this." The words weren't harsh but they were matter of fact. Walker could easily have done real damage.

The shadows wrapped around Walker again as he stepped back in to the grass showing off the skill that Midnight was so adept in. she had used it so many times that she could do it in an instant. It was one of her most used and best skills. Now she realized that she was able to use it but had lost when it came to detecting it. She could not nail down where Walker had gone, putting her at a continuous loss. She had strayed from her training so much that she was unable to match Walker when it came to her best skill.

"Now if you two are done playing, you splashed me with some mud." Su pointed out the shield that had some mud on it and waited for Walker to clean up. She knew he had the skills to clean easily and was

expecting him to do something about the mud covered Midnight and her precious shields. They didn't need to be the collateral damage to the lessons Midnight should learn.

"Yes. I wouldn't let anyone walk through all dirty like that." Walker followed the order immediately. He could sense that if he didn't then Su would be teaching some lessons of her own. Walker was very careful to pay attention to the training that everyone had been doing lately. Between him and Su, Su had been training with mana more. She had been focusing her mental energies on understanding the flow of mana around her. She felt far behind the other guardians, not to mention Walker and Midnight. So, while they walked she had constantly been observant of the small changes that even a fly made while moving by them.

"Midnight, do you know why Walker did this?" Midnight nodded softly while looking at Walker with curiosity. "Good, then let's make sure you can sense the shadow wrapping skill. Walker will sneak around and you need to play hide and seek with him. It's a child's game but one that will help. He is also the scout for the rest of the trip." Su smirked while she watched as Walker had to play the role of helping with her and Midnight's training.

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## Chapter 1218 – 1218. Sluggish

"Alice, are you sure you want to go to some unexplored cave system at the bottom of a ravine? It won't have much light elemental mana and you might be away from the egg for a while." Remey wasn't sure if Alice would actually want to go or if she wanted to just to help Onyx. The pair had become very close friends in the past weeks.

"A challenge. I will be stronger." Both Gil and Remey understood as soon as they heard her response. She had been training hard and with Su gone, she had picked up the pace even more. Not only would she heal people during the day, but she would train in the darkest times of night. Even when the moon was not out. It was the best time to train her control of minimal light elemental mana. She also had the desire to help her friends. She knew how much Onyx cared about his goals and would not let him go explore them without everyone by his side.

"I think you have been getting plenty strong lately. Last I heard you managed to do almost all of the healing in the cathedral last week." Gil wasn't joking. He had heard this from one of the nuns passing by

while he walked to his archery academy. The entirety of Genesis had started to talk about those who were standing out. And Alice was one of them.

"It's not enough." Alice was determined. She had helped Su improve and found ways to make her skills and songs work better. Her words would no longer give away the effects of her songs. She had shortened some in to verses that would take effect quicker. She had found multiple minstrels or other singers that traveled through the city to listen and learn. There was no effort spared in her training and gathering of knowledge. Now she needed real battle experience to refine the skills she had learned.

"I will get stronger too. I can not allow myself to fall behind. Brother and sister will be stronger when they get back. Even if they did not fight a single monster, they will be enlightened. We all know Su will be able to block any attack from us too." The truth was plain as day. Onyx was partially driven to keep up with those he always felt were miles ahead. Even Remey and Gil saw the looks he was giving them.

"Then we can all train together tomorrow. I know that it will be better for us to mix things up and put ourselves in uncomfortable positions. I will train early with the merfolk and try to connect the dots with the new dagger techniques and maybe learn the skills if they are compatible with my system. Then we can meet and see what we can learn together." The opportunities would not get away from Gil. He also knew that he needed to get everything settled at the archery academy if he was planning to leave and help with Onyx's quests.

"Fine by me. I could use a little chaos. I will see how well I can move around with my training armor on. I don't think I will last long without some potions to help me recover a bit faster..." Remey had already planned on using some healing potions and salves to help. But in the early morning, she would be rushing to find better ones to heal her muscles while she trained. They were hard to make but worth it with the kind of training she was doing.

The four affirmed their training plans and finished their meal. They would be meeting the following day after the morning. Meanwhile, Walker, Midnight, and Su had found themselves looking at something rather odd.

'Rattle tail snake (sluggish)

The rattle tail snake is commonly found in the dry grasses of fields or the mountains. They love to prey on small rodents and are often ignored by farmers due to the benefits they bring to the farms by hunting vermin. They were not considered native to this continent until a snake tamer brought them



and lost a clutch of eggs. However, they perfectly fit in to the natural ecosystem with their mild poison. Many are found sluggish and tired when they first awaken as the season warms.'

Midnight had found ten of them sprawled on the ground trying to slowly slither toward the grasses. It appeared that they had come out of small tunnels that had finally been unblocked as snow and ice melted. She had first thought to check the area because they might be victims of other monsters. But then Walker managed to notice them moving slightly.

"So they are just tired and need to get back in to sync with the environment? How interesting. Should we help?" Su didn't want to see the snakes get hurt since they were a beneficial monster to farms. Genesis would be growing plenty of crops and need such monsters.

"I can warm up the air around here. They are cold, right? That makes anyone sluggish." The idea seemed right and after Midnight unleashed a breath of flames, Walker manipulated them to move in the air causing the entire spot to become warmer. The result was instantaneous. The rattle tail snakes started to speed up and even looked over at the odd trio before them. They had long grown accustomed to humans due to their relationship on farms.

"Look, they are even heading the same way as us." Su felt this was a good sign for their travels ahead.

Midnight even took the lead and pretended to be leading them to Genesis. Walker and Su did not have the heart to tell her it was the flames that burst from her mouth every so often that caused them to follow her. They needed the warmth and she had it.

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## Chapter 1219 – 1219. Light Rain

The event with the rattle tailed snakes went on until the Su had finally broken through the clouds and begun to warm up the general area. Midnight seemed as if she was fairly proud to have led them for an hour or two but Su and Walker found it very amusing. It was like a full time job for her by the time the sun broke through. Walker had a good time taking a break from their hide and seek game but also practicing controlling the fire elemental mana from Midnight's flames.

"We should be back home soon. It looked like the last few days have been worth the extra effort." Su was feeling very good about their progress. The three had been stopping for small breaks without a long period of rest. They liked the feeling of pushing themselves because they could only think of their goals. They wanted to get home and prepare for the dragons to come. They wanted to see their family again. It was just more excitement than anything else.

"We have made great time. I just wonder what everyone has been up to. I feel like every time I look away everything changes like crazy." Even Midnight huffed in agreement to that. Walker could tell that she was also excited for her role in helping the rejected dragons to grow.

"Do you think that the tournaments and competitions will bring in massive crowds? Because I have a feeling we will have our streets packed. We might even want to let a few more meetings happen before." There had been a lot on their minds but now that they were closing in on home the issues that might arise also crossed their minds. Su had a good point that the alchemy competition would bring a lot of people since they wanted to find mentors. But the colosseum would bring a substantial number of demi-humans to the city.

The idea that it could get a little rowdy was an understatement. They would also have the royal dragons or at least a few of the dragonkin around. There was no set timeline for them visiting so preparations were very up in the air. "We will figure it all out as we go but we aren't alone. Let's just push on and get there by the time the sun sets. Then we can sleep in and prepare for what life has to offer." Walker decided to just take the laid back approach since it would be too complicated to micro manage anything.

While they pushed through the last of their travels. Gil, Remey, and Onyx had found themselves face to face with the newest song in Alice's portfolio.

"Keep moving Remey! There are too many." Gil had been using his speed to dodge and had not even attempted to use the dagger arts that he had trained earlier in the day. Onyx had no issue dodging what was coming towards him. He had already seen the song and was able to absorb the light elemental mana fast enough if one of the attacks got near him.

"This is your fault Gil. Alice even said you inspired this song!" Remey was red faced and out of breath while she moved with the training armor on. She could barely escaped the light arrows that were falling from above them.

Gil had told Alice about the arrow rain skill at dinner the previous night. There had also been an inspiration from Walker when he told Alice about the throwing needles he had weeks ago. Combining these two in to an attack finally occurred to Alice after a lot of thinking and effort. The result was brilliant. There was very little control, but that gave Alice even more free reign to create more light arrows with rougher shapes. Then she would drop them from higher up and release them when she did not need them. It was a constant formation of condensed elemental mana but that was the only real challenge.

"Fine, Alice! I'm coming for you!" Remey gave up on dodging and started to directly deflect the light arrows that fell. It was even more dramatic when she took the added weight of some earth elemental mana and small stones. She directly wore the earth elemental knuckles and let the stones gather on her fists to better defend against the attacks. She was still quick enough not to get hit but now was cutting it even closer. The real problem was that she was getting too close to Alice.

The biggest drawback from using a skill that constantly created so many condensed light elemental arrows was a pretty big one. It was the fact that Alice could not easily concentrate on the speedy formation with her words while moving. If she hesitated for a moment then she would have her light elemental mana dissipate leaving her undefended. Although, this did not mean she couldn't change the song slightly and make it a single shield in front of her.

At the moment that this happened and Remey came fist to light shield, Gil had managed to find a chance to dodge some of the last dissipating light arrows to get near Onyx. He was ready to test what he had learned against Onyx who had very good mobility with his serpentine body. Dodging seemed a lot easier for Onyx than it would be for others. This meant that it was a true challenge for Gil.

"I'm just using a wooden training dagger, but it will still hurt. Be ready." The morning's training was already ingrained within Gil's muscle memory. The instructor had shown him how to strike while moving with the flow of water. The number of attacks that he had down after being taught was not love in the least. He felt he would wake up doing attacks in his sleep if he was not careful.

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Onyx slammed his tail down toward Gil. he was trying to see if he could shake the ground enough to put him off, But to his surprise, Gil was unshaken. Gil was moving while constantly adjusting the level at which he moved. His knees would bend with the rumble and slight cracking of the ground. Even more, when Onyx tried to sweep his tail to trip Gil, Gil was able to jump and twist over it putting himself in an optimal position to attack.

The training with the merfolks was coming together more and more. Onyx and Alice had thrown a lot of pressure on to him and now with Remey getting put in a position near him, he knew he would have more. The second Remey's fist flew toward him, Gil dodged and felt his eyes had truly opened. He could aim at the spot under her arm with the dagger. He wasn't sure how he knew how or where but he did. It was just right.

His slash surprised Remey and for the first time in a while, Gil landed a decisive hit. He was a little shocked himself but his body was still moving. Gil's mind was slower than his body which seemed to be like a puppet on a string. Even the soft breeze was enough to make him slightly change his footing. "Looks like you figured it out." Zephyr left the bow to look at him. She had purposefully been letting Gil figure things out alone. She wanted to see him grow while she accumulated more wind elemental mana.

"This can't be legit..." Gil was surprised. He was looking at the new skill in his system. One that he couldn't imagine seeing before this and while he was reading it.

"What? Did you hurt yourself when you hit me? I know I'm a little tough but still." Remey was sure that Gil had not hit her that hard. It would leave a soft bruise at most.

"No, I got a skill. High elf dagger arts. Let me read it. The high elf dagger arts are a lost skill of the high elves. It had been handed down and changed in to multiple elemental variations. The elves have long strived to return to perfection but have failed to meld multiple dagger arts together. The user can learn every elemental dagger arts of the elves to reclaim the high level skill perfect for any elf regardless of main weapon. Learning of dagger arts is significantly increased and teaching ability via example is significantly increased." Gil took a deep breath. "There's a lot more on the forest elf dagger style and the water elf dagger style but I think the merfolk must have learned their dagger style from the water elves. It didn't even look like the water elves used daggers anymore."

"What!? That's amazing. I want an all fist art thing or like a giant elemental fist attack. Or like a super kick. Come on, how did you get the good stuff?" Remey was mostly joking since she knew that she would be able to crush Gil after she trained more. However, she knew that Gil would need to take a lot of work to find the other elven dagger styles and get the full skill. The desert elves might not even have remaining records about their dagger styles.

"This...this might be hard." Gil was hit with a wave of understanding. Believe it or not, his mind went to the rock elves in the mountains who hid their village so well that finding them was considered impossible. They were not like the dwarves who tunneled around everywhere and sold goods to many races. They were very reclusive and were almost never spotted.

"You can do it." Alice was looking at him with stars in her eyes. She thought it was the most amazing thing to see someone have a break through of understanding. It was even more exciting since Gil had a defined goal to pursue that would constantly make him stronger. She wanted to be the same. These were the people she admired and wanted to walk side by side with.

"Don't waste any time. Go and find Alma and then go to the mage tower. You need to find what you can about the desert elves. Then you should find the water elves that came here and ask about their water based dagger arts!" Onyx screamed at Gil mentally. His mental shout caused Gil to nearly topple over but it did the trick.

"I'll be back late, see you later!" He sprinted from the back of the mansion where they were training. His dust was the only thing left of where he had stood in the clean and dry training area.

"I kind of want him to succeed so I can have a better challenge." Remey had taken some of the ointment she made for scapes and rubbed it on her elbow where she had lost some skin sliding to dodge Alice's light arrows.

"It's another reason for me to train as well. I have the skills to make myself stronger but I can still be beaten easily. I think I am not used to things of my own kind because I have not been with my own kind. I did not grow normally. But that is also why I am stronger." It was a very good thing for Onyx to see that being different both made him weak and strong in certain ways.

"Just don't forget. You are our family and we will always be together. Even if the worst is to happen, we will be right there. You think I would let anything stop me?" Remey slammed her fists together to prepare for the next set of training. Her joints had been creaking but with the constant potions and ointments, she had been able to keep up healing and building muscle. She had a little more motivation to keep on going now.