

## Master 1311

### Chapter 1311 1311. To The Edge

The distance from the ravine that the party was heading toward was larger than expected. The golems with defensive prowess had been set up in pairs with those that could attack long ranged. The ballista golems were the ones that would be attacking first, however, they needed the defensive golems because of the giant earth ants speed. Anyone that had seen the speed at which an ant could run would know that just because these ants were giant, that they couldn't charge at the same speeds.

The mages that had been brought with from the elven forces were small but would be adding elemental attacks to the mix of ballista arrows to keep the giant earth ants at bay. The true test of the ranged attacks would come when they were all focused on the ants that would eventually swarm in the ravine. They would need to hold the ants off completely so that the main force golems could lower themselves in to the ravine and push the ants back in to the tunnels. Once there the golems would be limited to smaller groups but so would the ants. But the golems and the ants would be on home field advantage due to their comfortability within the underground.

"Gil and Alice look pretty intimidating at the top of those large bear golems." Two bear golems had been set aside to be used at the mounts for Gil and Alice. They were set up that way because when they moved to a standing position it gave Gil and Alice a higher place to stand and direct their attacks. Walker had spoken with the pair and they were both planning to rain down attacks as accurately as possible. This meant that Gil was using one arrow at a time while Alice was not using her song to make multiple light elemental arrows at once.

"Su, you smash with your shield and I will crush them." The combo that Remey and Su were planning to use revolved around Su breaking the defenses and movement of a giant earth ant then Remey jumping in to land the finishing blow with a defense breaking strike. It was great in terms of beating the ants in an efficient and controlled manner. On top of that Su would be able to better control the situation around them since they would be inside the tunnels with limited mobility for the ants. That was where the small two person team would shine.

p "Midnight, I want to use your strong suit here. We will both use the shadow wrapping skill to move inside. I want us to be able to set up ambushes and break the flow of the ants' attacks for everyone." Walker knew that he and Midnight would be the best for this. The king of the deep caves also wanted the pair nearby so this would ensure that it remained this way.

The king of the deep caves was taking the front line as any king should in his opinion. He was standing ready to be one of the first to descend in to the ravine with the main front line golems. Instead of the normal pickaxe that he used to mine, he had a one made with many unique metals. The large size made

it appear that he was wielding a hammer instead of a pickaxe. Whereas the spikes on either end were perfect for breaking and piercing.

"Move out and crush those bugs!" The shout shook the air and a few scouting ants perked their antenna up before moving normally again. The call was enough for the ballistas to fire their first round of large arrows toward the scouting ants. Those that struck took down their targets easily. Those that missed carved in to the ground and some even went as far to fall in to the ravines.

Walker noticed that small patches of ice were blooming ahead of them which were from Gil firing away with water elemental arrows and sniping skills. He was careful to aim for the ants that were rushing back toward the ravine. He knew that if more of those ants reached it then there would be a swarm sooner than the army wanted.

"Alright, be ready." Walker felt that this situation didn't feel real. He was watching such a perfect organization that wasn't just happening in just one place but three. He could understand that he was still young, but the distance he had to learn and reach a point where he could organize such an event seemed all too far. He had always left most of the big planning of large groups to the kings or queens of the kingdoms. One day he would need to be able to do this and more.

A wave of the eternal orb staff form caused the light elemental mana to condense around them. This was perfect for Alice who was preparing a few large spikes of light. Her song was just as brutal as Walker had heard when they saw the boars. It was proof that Alice had worked hard and was more prepared to join them on adventures than even he knew.

The spikes of light arced through the air at a slow pace but appeared to attract the attention of the ants. They were used to the darkness of the underground and didn't use their sight much. The bright light was enough to differentiate and distract them before the spikes would come down on top of them. This stunning effect surprised Walker but led him to use the theory to create a very bright orb of light that he sent forward on to the edge of the ravine. It didn't last long but caused the perfect build up of giant earth ants to become targets for the ballistas. The strategy sped them up enough to push past the scouting ants.

#### Chapter 1312 1312. Down The Ravine

It was very clear that the army reached the edge faster than expected. It also was clear that everyone had used very small amounts of mana or stored mana. This was a good thing since they would need to be able to fight faster in the tunnels. The king of the deep caves gave orders for the ballista golems to move to the edge and change their angles. One or two were immediately grabbed by pincers of the ants that had been waiting on the edge to attack. It was a tactful way for the ants to gain food when they were in ravines or large holes. Even small normal ants would do such things in nature.

The immediate response was for the ballistas to fire at the ants of the edges, taking them down and lowering the steel ropes as well. "We move as one!" The shout caused every rope to be locked in place with golems following down. The fallen ballistas and golems became surrounded by their fellow soldiers while the ants were mercilessly beaten back. The dwarves did not dare allow a single ant to claim an injured dwarf or golem as their victims.

Gil had become much more serious. He glanced at Walker before he pulled four arrows out of his quiver at the same time. Walker knew that this was the moment that Gil was waiting for. He had clear paths to multiple targets. The ants had begun to react to the attack and were flooding in to the ravine. Most were basic workers with a few soldier ants responding. This wasn't an issue since the bear golems that Gil and Alice had once been atop were now descending to act as shields and enter the large tunnel.

The arrows that Gil had chosen were the earth elemental arrows he had made. It would normally be expected that the earth affinity monsters would be able to defend against the earth type attacks. However, this would prove to be false since the ants just excelled in moving earth to create their homes and did not boast any earth related defensive skills. Therefore, when the arrows landed and caused spikes of stone and dirt to form piercing the giant ants, they were massively injured and easily taken out by golems.

This increased the efficiency of the battle as Walker and Midnight descended the ravine using their skills. Midnight flapped down on to the already cleared end of the ravine while Walker used the elemental wings skill. His goal was a unique combo he had been thinking of and now with his better elemental sculpting and comprehension, he could pursue it.

The wind and earth were drawn to him. With Midnight slapping nearby, she breathed dragon flames on to his back causing a combination of earth, wind, and flames to become his wings. The sight lit up the dim ravine while Walker held the eternal orb staff high. The elemental wings had many shaped feathers that Walker modeled after a harpy's feathers. His idea was simple, use them to attack the ants coming out of the giant tunnel that the golems were trying to reach.

With a single wave of the eternal orb staff, the feathers left the wings Walker had used a decent chunk of his mana to create. They did not immediately hit everything in front of them, but that wasn't what they were meant to do. The earth cracked when they hit and released the air within them. The flames that were around the feathers were fueled by this and caused small explosions cracking the defenses of the ants nearby. This allowed the golems to easily plow through. It carved a path for them to enter the large ancient tunnel with ease and leave the remaining ants for the sweepers to clean up.

Midnight caught Walker in her claws before lowering them both down to the bottom of the ravine. She looked at Walker happy to have performed a combination with him. They had easily worked together with their bond directing them without words. While Walker was slightly weakened from the use of the skill he was guarded by multiple golems as they progressed. He needed to calm his heart and use the shadow wrapping skill along with Midnight. They would stay near the king of the deep caves while Remey and Su followed behind with other golems. Gil and Alice remained at the top of the crevice cleaning up what ants were left there.

"Remey, switch!"

Su smashed forward knocking one of the giant ants off balance. She was aiming for the sides and legs to force the ant in to a weakened position.

"Down you go!" Remey's fist smashed the ant right on the head. There was a sickening crack as the earth affinity knuckles slammed through the tougher shell. There was an odd fishy smell but it didn't seem to affect Remey at all. She was already rolling to the ground with her eyes on the next ant. All she needed for confirmation was the hit to know that she had done irreparable damage and that the giant earth ant was done.

"We have an incoming soldier ant, form up and prepare to intercept!" The golems followed the order from the elite soldier. They slammed together metal shield walls that they carried along with their axes.

"Commander, split off. Remey and I will handle it!" Su slammed together the twin shield and dashed forward. The light built up around the shield in front of her before the collision with the even larger soldier ant. The pincers aimed at the shields were like twigs, they snapped in to pieces.

"Ha! Weak!" Remey followed up with a downward kick. "How's that for unveiling my axe kick. No one expected that hmmm?" Su and Remey nodded at each other. They were a pure force of defense and offense when partnered up. Nothing would stop them.

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Chapter 1313 1313. Ranged Teamwork

"Alice, seven coming up the side trying to get on top of the bear golem. You take them." Gil had moved to a position near Alice. The pair was working very well dividing up the targets they saw. With Gil's keen eyes the ants that moved to attack anyone in a blind spot were noticed. One of the dwarven

commanders even moved closer so that he could better communicate what Gil saw in reference to what he saw with his binoculars.

Light spikes pierced the pleading soldier ant trying to flank the bear golem. The secondary call from the commander caused the dwarf controlling the golem to turn and smash at the giant ants. They didn't stand a chance compared to the large and very sharp claws affixed to the ends of the bear golems paws.

"Good shot. Keep an eye out below us. I have a few arrows to fire that need focus." Gil knew that he was about to take down several targets that he knew he wouldn't be able to hit while keeping attention on the surroundings. There were multiple soldier ants that had burst out of secondary tunnels that were seemingly closed off until now. The giant earth ants were not stupid, they lacked rationality but they were a colony of advanced hunters.

Ants in general were used to creating any tactic to gather food for colonies. Some made trap pits while others developed poisons. The giant earth ants used their ability to move earth easily with their large pincers to create small tunnels used to ambush prey. The ravine was the ideal place for them to sue as both a pit trap and an ambush.

Since Gil had been paying attention he had seen these secondary tunnels open up and knew that the ants would be trying to escape to attack the golems and dwarves from these points, therefore, he was aiming to collapse them. Before Walker had left he had managed to make a small pile of the elemental arrows. Walker had thought that while they walked Gil would experiment with them to develop better techniques, but that was when they realized they were nearly at their destination.

The arrows flew accurately at odd angles making it seem that they would not hit anything. Yet that was where someone would be wrong, Gil wasn't aiming for the ants leaving those secondary tunnels. He was aiming for the tops of those tunnels. The goal was simply to collapse them and buy time. once the ants had dug the collapse out then the golems and dwarves would have recovered their order to be able to easily intercept them.

Small explosions echoed within the ravine causing a slight shake. Gil was sure he had minorly disturbed the lower tunnels but accepted that as unavoidable. He watched the side of the ravine collapse covering the secondary tunnels while Alice acted to take down several ants that had felt the slow in ranged fire. The ants that attempted to climb the sides weren't met with complete defeat. Alice knocked them down and in to the mess of golems that dealt the finishing blows.

"Ballista, at the ready! Be precise and take down soldiers first!" The commanding dwarf stepped forward and made the call. He was going to get them ahead in this battle while he sent in the secondary wave to pull the defeated giant earth ant bodies away for dismantling and preservation. It was a key point in the battle going on in the ravine.

Meanwhile, Walker and Midnight found themselves in unsettling silence. Between the two of them, they had managed to scout ahead of the tunnel battle to find that the majority of the tunnels were empty. The ants that they had worried about in their last visit were nowhere to be seen, making them believe that all of them had rushed to the battle in the ravine through other ant made tunnels.

"Midnight, let's rush ahead and check that egg chamber I saw before. I want to try and start some trouble there and escape." The damage to the giant ant eggs would cause chaos and could easily make the entire battle faster. It would also remove a lot of risks since the ants would be distracted by multiple battle fronts.

Since the tunnels were dark there was naturally a lot of darkness elemental mana paired with earth elemental mana. Walker knew that he and Midnight could remain hidden in the shadows while getting close to the ants. The only worry would be the scent they gave off. Luckily Walker had a skill to clean their bodies and remove the potential scents that could warn the ants of them. Midnight didn't seem too happy with this but accepted it so that she could win over the ants and take their meat as payment for her work faster.

"I will use the darkness mana around to create spikes. then use the earth elemental mana to make the entire chamber hard to move around in. I need you to act as a personal guard while I make these shapes using my high earth sculpting skill." The shadows would be easy to manipulate with the high darkness elemental mana underground. The earth sculpting would require more thought.

Walker would need to envision the spikes and obstacles he wanted to create within the chamber. That alone took time and strain. But sculpting them under the ground so that they would burst up spontaneously took more time and even heavier strain. Both of which needed to be done carefully or Walker would not only harm himself but potentially collapse the entire chamber. "I trust you to protect me here." The words were enough to light a fire within Midnight. Her family needed her and only her to protect them. That was what she would do, no doubt needed.

#### Chapter 1314 1314. Sneaky Attacks

The king of the deep caves had been stopped in the tunnel dealing with a build up of soldier ants. He had told Walker and Midnight to proceed and scout since he lacked the ability along with the free golems to do so. With Walker and Midnight away he trusted that he would hear good news soon and put his all in to smashing the heads of giant earth ant soldiers.

"Alright, this is the way to the egg chamber...they're gone. All gone." Walker found that everything was gone. The thousands of eggs he had seen were nowhere to be seen. Instead, he could tell that the earth had just been dug up.

Since Midnight saw that Walker was looking for the reasons why there was nothing here now, she started to move along the side of the tunnel. Her nose was sharp but to her, the entire place smelled like fresh dirt and giant ants. There was nothing new that she could find until she scoured the walls. Her claws suddenly dug deeper in to the ground and then the wall when she investigated. Her soft growl was enough to get Walker moving quickly over to her.

"Good find. It looks like the ants went this way and closed up the tunnel to protect the eggs. These monsters are smart, if only they had the proper intelligence to speak and develop emotions." Walker knew that if the giant earth ants had any sort of proper intelligence that they could be an amazing addition to Genesis. However, this was a fool's dream. The ants would never be capable of the same things that other races were.

Walker slowly used his elemental manipulation skills to move the soft earth. He had to be slow and controlled to prevent alerting any ants on the other side. As he did so he noticed small holes made to keep air flowing through the new tunnels which were made very carefully. The ants had done this out of instinct which was even more amazing to a degree.

What was revealed was an exact replica chamber that Midnight and Walker had been in. The giant ants had excavated a secondary egg chamber to hide in this one however, had a small dribble of water flowing down the center. The ants hadn't just done this to hide but also to bring the eggs near the naturally flowing underground water source. "Scratch using the earth and the darkness. I am going to use water to make ice, a lot of ice."

Midnight was all for this. She knew that Walker would be able to better form the ice in to things that would break the eggs or cause them to freeze, that also came with the added bonus that Midnight could breathe her frost breath around to do more ice damage to them. It was the perfect combination that would slow all the ants that moved through the area and defeat potential future colonies.

In a burst of movement, Midnight covered Walker. They both had the shadow wrapping skill but Midnight noticed one of the nurturers coming by. They were very sensitive and Midnight knew well that she had a better handle on the control of the shadow wrapping skill. Therefore, she covered Walker until the nurturer ant passed them by. These were the ants that would try and escape with a potential

queen egg. Freezing all the eggs in place would ensure that they could not easily run away with such eggs.

"Good job. Watch my back. I need a few moments." Walker focused on the water flowing through the chamber while Midnight kept him covered. She had eyes around the chamber looking for any ant that came too close or would dare try and touch them. The small eggs were in different stages of development. That made the nurturer ants react to them differently depending on what they were going to hatch in to. Therefore, there was a lot of natural movement within this chamber.

That alone made Midnight more on edge while she felt the mana around them become denser. The ants did not appear to notice this since they were more reactive to the earth elemental mana due to the affinity for it. The water was slowly gaining strength making the entire chamber almost misty. This was also ignored by the ants since they were mostly blind in the dark and relied on scent and vibrations.

"Here we go. Be ready to run." Walker released a large amount of mana to control the water elemental mana he had gathered. The water from the small stream burst up in to a sharp maze of ice crystals. Many eggs were pierced or broken while the entire chamber became frosty and crystalized. Midnight had taken a deep breath and let loose a powerful burst of frost. She had trained her frost breath easily since the weather had been cold for months due to the season. This allowed her to reach better proficiency in frost breath than some of the other elemental breath attacks. Paired with the heavy water elemental mana led to the enhanced effects. The very air seemed to be freezing.

Nurturers found the warmth in their bodies gone causing them to collapse in a dormant state or even perish on the spot. Many of the eggs would be unable to survive this for a few moments. Unfortunately, this massive change in the tunnel was felt deeper. The queen's chamber was nearby the egg chamber so that the eggs could easily be brought over from her.

The insect screech that echoed from the deeper chambers was the signal for Walker to ignore the pressure he felt after using so much mana. Midnight helped him back up and the two rushed away as fast as possible. They were not the only ones that heard this though. the king of the deep caves knew good news was on the way.

Chapter 1315 1315. Guardian Ant

The rumbling coming from the deeper tunnels meant only one thing. The guardian ants had gotten wind of what Walker and Midnight had done before retreating. They had found the destruction and began to rampage at the orders of their queen. The guardian ants were raised specifically to protect the colony



and the queen. The soldiers were nothing in comparison to them. Forget any ability to gather food or to dig. These guardian ants had none of that.

Instead of these characteristics, the queen had raised them with battle and defense completely in mind. That meant much tougher carapaces and higher strength. Where the bear golems were meant to be shields and hammers, so were the guardian ants.

"We have big ones incoming. Where are my shields!" The king of the deep caves was not fooling around. He knew that the battle had been a cakewalk up to this point. They had had an easy time defeating soldiers and crushing them for the support golems to remove. Barely any dwarves had been injured but some golems had been broken to the point that they needed immediate repairs. This left the front line weaker. Luckily, the king of the deep caves had his elite soldier near him and he saw Midnight and Walker return.

"What did you two do down there to cause the guardians to leave the queen's chamber so fast?" He was impressed but serious. He needed to know what would be happening in the further tunnels and what orders to hand down.

"We froze the eggs. As many as possible. The eggs were moved to a second tunnel and we almost missed the soft dirt that they used to hide it. Ants are sneaky but we are sneakier." Walker and Midnight both stood tall. The vicious grin they both held reminded the king of the deep caves that the two he looked at were not some soft children. The two had been in multiple adventures that consisted of multiple battles. As young as they were, they had faced death and used their determination to push past that for strength. It was easy to look at Walker and Midnight and forget that they were heroes that stood at the pinnacle of the future for an entire city created by multiple races.

"The enemy is in chaos. Take them down and charge toward the queen's chamber!" This was just the advantage that the king of the deep caves wanted. He needed to push in to the tunnels faster to keep the pressure on the ants. If he let up then they could escape or potentially group up against them. That could not be allowed under any circumstances. "You two, fall behind me and save your mana to cause more trouble when we get to the queen's chamber. The bear golems will tear a path through the egg chambers for us."

While the king of the deep caves spoke, the bear golems moved through the tunnel. They had made their way through the front line and down the tunnel behind them. They were slowly but one swipe of their paws caused the soldier ants in front of them to fall. They easily pushed toward the previous egg chamber and widened the space to the secondary egg chamber.

Nurturer ants had flooded the area desperately trying to save the eggs while some of the larger soldier ants broke away ice crystals. But one ant showed a ferocious nature that Walker knew well as a guardian ant.

'Giant earth ant guardian

Specifically raised by the queen of this colony, the guardian ant is born for battle and battle only. They lack the necessary means to survive alone due to the lack of ability to properly break down their food. Without the colony they are weak. But they make up for this in the battles needed to take over territories and protect the entire colony. They have incredible defenses along with brutal attacks. They are incredibly sensitive to the vibrations around them. They have small weak points in the gaps between their armored bodies.'

"Midnight, aim for the spots between the shell of the ant!" Midnight was still using the shadow wrapping skill. She was the first to be able to move and get near the guardian ant. This let the king of the deep caves prepare to deal the finishing blow with his pickaxe.

The flame covered claws of Midnight caused the shadows to peel away. All eyes were on her as she slashed at the joints of the guardian ant's legs. It screeched in pain when it felt the burn of flames. The distraction allowed the king of the deep caves to heft the large pickax over his head and leap forward. With a force that could shatter any stone or ore, the king of the deep cave pierced the armor on the guardian ant's head. The massive ant was crushed in seconds with minimal distraction. The years of mining and strengthening himself were not a waste, the king of the deep caves showed off exactly why he was considered a king of the deep caves.

There was more rumbling as the bear style golem pushed through the tunnels. They were going to be the first to carve the path from the frozen egg chamber to the queen's chamber. The force that it let out caused more soldier ants to come rushing but for some reason another guardian ant did not show itself. "Those bugs know we are coming and will stay protecting their queen. Be ready for the real fight. I want you to slow them down using the same skill you did here. If you have more I want you to use them too." The king of the deep caves didn't even stop to breathe after his attack. He passed another order to Walker and continued forward.

Chapter 1316 1316. Colony Queen

"The ravine is suppressed, next wave, march in to the tunnels!" The commander called for the next wave of golems and dwarven soldiers to head inside the large tunnel. He wanted to continue to suppress the ants that were pushing inside the tunnels and potentially surrounding the first wave that entered. Believing that there was only one way inside and outside would be a massive mistake.

"We need to catch up with Walker and Midnight. It shouldn't be long with all these golems without." Remey and Su had like minds when it came to this. Alice and Gil were staying outside so that they could maintain the safety of the outer ravine. The dwarves were already setting up a camp and catching the ants returning to the ravine from scouting or hunting for food.

"I will trust you two with the notice to the king that we have secured the space for a camp. We will dig in here and await his return." The commander knew that he could trust Remey and Su. They were two of the heroic party that continuously made waves to cause growth within Genesis and the world.

"We can do that. Make sure you have the healers ready in case we send the injured out. Also, check the potion stored and send in golems with a few supplies." Remey surprised Su by taking the chance to order the dwarven commander around about healing and potions. But this appeared to be the plan already.

"I will have it done. We were able to secure high quality potions from the alchemy guild. They will be sent where they are needed." This appeased Remey and the pair delved in to the cave with fifteen golems side by side. One bear type golem had remained behind and followed them. It was the next tank to block any potential guardian ants that might attempt to surround the first wave of golems.

Their speed was much faster than the first wave that had entered the ravine. The golems took out the lingering soldier ants but there were none that had been able to return to the tunnels. A few straggling golems from the first wave had stopped to maintain the tunnel's clear escape route which was a very wise decision. It also explained why there were more golems in the first wave. It was something that the entire party would take note and value whenever they went in to a dangerous underground area filled with a potential swarm type monster species.

"I can hear the fighting up ahead. This should be where Walker said those ant eggs were, right?" Su remembered what Walker had said. When she spoke she spoke loud enough so that every dwarf could hear. She wanted them to be on alert. This proved to be the right move. As soon as they entered they found that the soldier ants had spilled from one side of the wall in to a large chamber. Frost was leaving the broken open passageway that had clearly been carved out by the golems.

"We will get in there behind them, for now, Clear this chamber!" Rmeey roared with energy before dashing toward the ant trying to get inside the frozen chamber. She knew that only Midnight and Walker could cause such a thing to happen.

p Su was right behind Remey. The two bashed their way knocking ants aside and breaking their legs so that the golems could easily defeat them/. It was not a battle to defeat the ants but one to work with the golems around to end them and clear the chamber. Defeating every ant one by one would take too much time. They worked together to make it all happen.

"That's the sound of Remey and Su, it has to be." Walker saw the ant trying to climb in behind them. The following sound was the vibration of a shield and the harsh crack of a fist slamming in to something hard. Before Midnight could turn, Remey and Su burst through the passageway in to the frozen egg chamber that the king of the deep caves was moving out of toward the queen's chamber.

"We have reinforcements behind us. We are ready!" Walker was glad to see that Remey and Su had managed to arrive. He was not expecting that Gil and Alice would since they were better off outside and better help there.

"My soldiers, forward!" The order was more powerful this time causing some ice to crackle around them. The king of the deep caves was fired up and smashed the larger ice crystals to make way. The passageway to the queen's chamber was large and the golems easily fit through. With the bear golem ahead, no one worried about not making it there. The few soldier ants that had jot pulled back to the queen were smashed in to bits.

Without fail, they marched right in to the largest camber that they had seen. The ants had made pillars of earth to hold it steady while making it perfect for storing food and crowding together. There were broken pieces of mud around that had clearly been what the ants covered themselves in while dormant. In the center was a very large open space made for the queen.

To say that the queen was large was an understatement. It towered over the guardian ants at triple the size. It had been interrupted in its precious duty to lay eggs and was looking at the intruders in fury. There was a slight pressure around everyone that told them this was not the easy fight that the dwarves had made it appear to be. There were four more guardians around the queen, just as large as the one that Walker had already seen. "Ha! Lucky day, this is the original queen. Those other two took some guardians and soldiers when they split off. We have an easy fight!" No one argued against the king of the deep caves. The guardian ants were already moving.

Chapter 1317 1317. Very Very Cold

There was no more time to stand around. The soldier ants were throwing themselves at the golems as if possessed. The queen had taken full control of their minds with a strange scented pheromone. The ants were forced in to a battle ready state whether they were nurturers or not. Some attempted to carry away the eggs to another chamber based on their instincts. But Midnight had used her shadows wrapping skill to easily move around and defeat those ants.

"Midnight, keep up the good work. I will freeze this place!" Walker knew that there was still a small water flow through this room making it easier to freeze it the same way as the previous egg chamber. On top of that, he remembered the frost ring skill he had used. "Su, Remey. Keep me protected while I prepare this. I am going to increase the frost ring spell to a pretty high mana usage."

As soon as he said it, Su and Remey knew that Walker needed as much focus as possible to do this. Using larger amounts of mana to create a skill beyond what it should be would be taxing. They trusted him not to harm himself due to his training, but knew that if he was attacked by an ant while this happened then it would spell serious trouble.

"Keep your eyes open!" The king of the deep cave jumped forward and smashed away three soldier ants. He had been hearing and knew exactly what Walker was doing. "I want those guardians dealt with! Use your shield and bait one here for me to crush." Su felt that it was not wise but with the strength that the king of the deep caves had she would not be arguing.

"Get over here you weak little larvae! You are just bird food!" Su's shouting was enough to vibrate the air. The strange part was that it seemed to lock on to only one target; the nearest giant ant guardian. It was a slight change to the way she normally used her taunting skills. If Walker wasn't so distracted he would have noticed the tone that seemed to match the growl of a dragon.

Being singled out was a very strange thing for an ant. Normally they worked together to better the colony and grow. The feeling that the ant had was foreign but the hate for something that was invading and destroying its home was even greater. The ensuing charge or rage that came would have easily knocked Su to the wall.

"Come right to me!" The king of the deep cave wound up an underhanded swing of his large pickaxe. The resounding blow that shattered and pierced the guardian ant caused the entire chamber to hesitate. Every single ant, every single golem, and every single dwarf glanced over at the same moment before the battle resumed. It was not a moment that came from any call to stop but a moment of pure respect and awe. The attack was brutal and efficient. Every single ant felt its instincts explode with danger.

A massive screech came from the queen as a red aura pulsed off of her. Every single ant around became aggravated and started to attack with more vigor. Their defenses seemed to toughen while their attacks were hitting harder. Even the nurturer ants became faster in their soft attacks.

"We have a real fight now! How's that freezing skill going?" The king of the deep caves knew this moment would happen. It was the point of no return for the ants. They knew they were in danger of being exterminated so the queen would burn all her mana in the deadliest buffs she could. This was a once in a lifetime skill of a queen giant earth ant. The queen's protection buff would add to every stat of every ant from that colony. On top of that, it would push the ants in to a frenzy where they might even attack each other if they had no enemy in front of them. This was their last ditch effort as a monster species.

"I'm ready! Everyone brace!" Midnight dashed over to Walker and took a large breath. She had been slowly gathering mana within her to release a frost breath attack toward the queen when Walker used his frost ring skill with additional mana.

Every golem retreated back causing many ants to fall and lose balance in their attacks. Su moved to cover Walker as well while Remey fell back behind them. The burst of water elemental mana that spread from around Walker was spectacular. He had not been able to fight but this was the fair payoff of remaining still. His extreme focus had properly forced the frost ring skill higher than it had been used by him before along with the way he used his ability to manipulate the mana earlier in the egg chamber. Midnight's addition created an additional effect that seemed to freeze the very air.

Ice crystals fell from the air and a white steam gathered around Walker drifting toward the queen ant. Midnight had directed Walker's frost ring without even realizing it causing the additional effects everyone saw in front of them. The chilling feeling around them was colder than the mountains the party had climbed before. The very air burned their lungs with ice. The dwarves with beards found ice on them.

Nurturer ants froze in a blink of an eye and crumbled. The soldier ants tried to force themselves to move but failed, causing their legs to shatter in extreme cold. Those that were unfortunate enough to fall in to the white icy mist were frozen through and through. The queen screeched louder trying to avoid the intense cold but was partially hit by the mist while the entire chamber froze more and more.

Chapter 1318 1318. Dragon Ice

'The skill ice dragon's domain has been taken from the true ice dragon system. The user has combined and exceeded the mana capacity of an area effect ice skill along with combining a dragon's water

elemental breath. The user has gained this skill due to the extreme bond they hold with the dragon, Midnight.'

'Ice dragon's domain- 50 mana cost, requires draconic blood/ combination

The user causes an area to become frozen to the highest ability. A true ice dragon is the mixture of water and wind affinity to an incredible level. This causes the area around them to naturally become frozen even when in hot climates. This skill does not hold the same effects as the natural skill ice dragon's domain but the user can temporarily create the effects. The user would be unable to use this skill or learn it unless they have dragon bloodlines or bonds. The area will rapidly return to normal temperatures after ten minutes unless more mana is provided. This environment is very hard for normal creatures to live in and very easy for an ice dragon to maneuver.'

Walker felt sick. He could feel that Midnight was reacting in a similar way. The two had combined their effort and used a great amount of their mana. On top of all this, Walker had changed the environment in the queen's chamber to be very hard to survive in. The only reason that he was able to resist this was his higher stats and the second skill he noticed pop up.

'The user had gained high ice/ cold resistance due to the current environment's toxicity.'

'High ice/ cold resistance- passive

The user has high bonds with a bloodline that allows flexibility. The user also possesses the ability to constantly manipulate the water elemental mana. The user is able to resist both the solid ice along with the cold surrounding it. The user's body will slowly adjust to fully accept this skill due to the bonds within them. The user will rarely feel affected by ice attack and cold unless to a high degree of strength.'

Walker had gotten a lot closer to the elemental mana recently and he had enhanced his bonds with Midnight. That alone was enough to make an effect occur on his body. But the last push was to meld his mana with Midnight's in an attack creating a skill unique to certain dragons. Midnight was reacting in much the same way. She was adapting quickly as parts of her true dragon champion bloodline awakened and grew in to what it was meant to be.

"This is our chance! Push the golems to the maximum and activate the fire elemental crystals. Break these ice statues and finish off the queen!" The king of the deep caves left Su behind to guard while he

pushed the golems forward. The dwarven soldiers had jumped on to the golems for warmth and to add their mana to the golems' attack to push them further. It didn't matter if the golems broke, the dwarves could fix them after this. Some damage to a quicker victory was easy.

"Su, I am going all out. This cold will help." Rmeey warned Su before donning the fire affinity knuckles over her gloves. The alchemy fire spirit helped Remey spark up flames that wrapped her arms like gauntlets. "Partner, we can show them how strong we really are." The alchemy fire spirit melded in to the alchemy fire causing it to flare up around Remey.

Trails of alchemy flames drifted around her while she ran forward. The flames were like ribbons burning the walls and ants around her before punches. It was a scene that many would be unable to comprehend. The unique dark red flames of alchemy mixed with this domain of ice around her. A sight of brutal beauty that even the golems felt within their hearts was untouchable.

When Remey struck out at a guardian ant, the defense breaking fist skill she had been working on caused alchemy fire to break and refine the shells of the ant. The reaction was the same as an ingredient being added to a cauldron at a ridiculous heat. The cold was working perfectly with Remey to prevent her from burning her hands like the last time this had happened. What this also did was push Remey to a state of alchemical enlightenment. She could feel that the flames that covered her hands could do more than burn. They could be controlled at a much higher level and potentially break down herbs in her very hands. She could remove impurities. She could create better potions by doing so before adding ingredients.

The knowledge was stored away and the feelings were imprinted on her. Remey would not forget a second of this feeling while she applied the control to every punch. Walker was still struggling to look around while Midnight curled up around him with the same struggling pain. They both felt their stomachs doing flips while their bodies reacted through their bond. But they could still see and felt that they were watching Remey become even stronger by the second.

Meanwhile, a bear golem slammed its metallic paw down on the head of another guardian ant to destroy it completely. The king of the deep caves jumped from its back and slammed downward with his pickaxe. His scream of battle fury was more than any dwarf seemed to be able to contain. The attack dealt massive damage to the queen ant causing it to fall to the side. Not a single golem nearby missed the opportunity as they rushed and attacked together. The queen ant did not stand a single chance. It was broken down and sent to death without it being able to stand again. The remaining ants froze again before seemingly losing their minds. They were queenless and they could not survive.

Chapter 1319 1319. The Queen Falls



The echoes of battle became less and less as the golems found their targets and defeated them. The giant earth ants from this colony had been the main colony before the split. That meant that the queen ants that left took a substantial number from their ranks. This had not only made this battle easier for them but also meant that they were able to harvest monster materials from more mature ants.

The ice that had been created from Walker's skill lived up to what the system said and was melting quickly. The temperature was also radically returning. This made Remey stop using her skills before she had to take a knee to breathe. The strain on her body in her moment of enlightenment had been heavy because she had been fueled by adrenaline. She forgot her limits and battles next to the strong and powerful king of the deep caves.

"If anyone doesn't say this to you after witnessing your battle then I do not know what this world is coming to. You've got fires hotter than any forge in your soul. You are a dwarven warrior if I ever saw one." This was very high praise coming from the king of the deep caves. Many of the dwarven soldiers around also went to say these things to Remey. Fire and dwarves was a perfect combination and seeing Remey use them in a fist to fist fight was right up their alley.

"Remey, do you have any potions left? Walker and Midnight need something to help ease their pain." Su could feel that this wasn't anything bad happening but it was clear that Walker and Midnight were uncomfortable.

"We will be fine, save the potion for those who really need them. I just...had a breakthrough. Midnight too." Walker could read the system through his sickness and was overjoyed to see that boosting his bond with Midnight was making them both stronger. However, he worried that he had been in the improper situation for this to happen. He had no idea this was a possibility and therefore didn't know that he could end up completely incapacitated like this during the battle.

"I know, I can feel that much. But I want to make sure you both are fine before I go and help others." Su was more than stubborn but she eventually walked away to help a dwarf that had met the headbutt of a soldier ant. Many of the dwarves and golems were broken or cut. The pincers of the soldier ants had been sharp and their hard shells were tough enough to break bones. But the wounds were nothing that stopped them from moving. It was all due to the high level of experience when dealing with these monsters. Not many people would have been able to do the same without the knowledge.

The mechanical marching was the third wave moving in to clear away the tunnels attached to the main tunnels. The dwarves still needed to check every potential space for leftover eggs. They were very

thorough with their search and Walker knew it would last a week in the least. Then the archeologists and others interested in the ancient ruins where the ants had made their home would come looking. "Now, my fellow kings should be halfway by now. We were the lucky ones. I will personally go and harvest the queen ant's shell and meat. They will be very nutritious and perfect for certain armors."

Running footsteps soon came in to hearing range before Gil and Alice arrived with a few more soldiers to begin breaking down the remaining ants. "Walker!" Alice ran to him as soon as she saw that he was in pain. Just before she was going to start singing he put his hand on her lips.

"I'm fine. So is Midnight. We just awakened a little more of our bind and our bodies are a little unsteady. Just give us some resting time and I will walk you back outside." Midnight grumbled softly like she was saying that she would never stand again. It was very unusual for her to feel sick since dragons were not a species to get sick. Even in their old age they boasted an amazing resistance to any illness.

"So, Walker looks like he had a very bad meal. The caves are frozen, and Remey is quiet. What happened?" Gil was a little put off by the results. Su started to tell him what transpired as they had gotten in the chambers. Once they were done catching up, Gil hefted Walker on to his shoulder. "Don't say I never did anything for my family. Let's get you to the crevice camp sight. Midnight can come with Su. I'm sure a golem will help carry her out." One of the nearby dwarves started up their golem as soon as Gil spoke. He had been waiting for a chance to help the party since the golem was partially damaged and needed to return anyway.

The end of the battle felt both underwhelming since the queen was so weak but also cleared their minds. They had beaten a threat before it grew and bothered every nearby kingdom. It was due to the knowledge the dwarves had and none of the party would plan to steal away the rewards that the dwarves harvested. They were already promised some ant meat which, unfortunately, Walker and Midnight were not at all interested in.

But there were benefits that came with the different strategies they had used. Walker began to think about sneak attacks he could do in the future. The ability to change terrain, and even more potential skills that he and Midnight could unlock together with their bond. Their potential was still unknown. It would take a lot of time and bonding to find their next path. For now, they would all rest easy.

Chapter 1320 1320. Peaceful Night

Since Walker and Midnight had been thrown for a loop due to their sudden bodily changes, it was not a surprise that they were asleep as soon as they made it to the ravine camp. It was spacious and already

being set up for long term occupation. The ants were being brought to the top to be dealt with and from what the others had heard there were already carriages leaving to send the giant earth ant bodies to Genesis.

Many of the fully functional golems were split to go as reinforcements to the other two ravines but they still had to focus on clearing the tunnels. But that was a job for the unique style golems. They had been made for that exact purpose.

By the time Walker felt himself wake up, he was looking at the stars. He had slept through an entire day but could already feel the difference. The ill feeling he had before was completely gone while he found that he was slightly more energetic. As he examined his body he found that his skin seemed a little thicker. Nothing that was truly unusual but his brown hair had slight streaks of blond in it now. He felt it was really weird because it looked like he had been rolling through a hayfield and forgotten to comb his hair. "Gah, whatever. If this is the change because I am getting stronger then I will deal with it."

His mumbling caused Midnight to stir beside him. She seemed the same as before but Walker had the feeling that she was going to hit another growth spurt. He watched as she came back to the normal energetic and awake Midnight he knew. It wasn't an understatement to say that the two were hungry, however, Midnight saw that Walker had some physical changes and decided to change in to her dragonkin form to see for herself.

There were indeed some changes that she noticed as Walker threw her clothing to put on properly. He was ashamed that she didn't warn him and made sure that she would learn this lesson for when he was not around to give her clothing. It wasn't that she had any ulterior motives in life, Midnight was too young and naive for those things just yet. As a big brother, Walker felt this was a blessing. Midnight's scaly dragonkin form seemed to have smoothed out slightly causing the scales to have a whiter sheen. It was a slight difference, but a difference nonetheless.

"Let's go make some food. I'm sure there are plenty of things to snack on without me having to pull out our stored food." Walker was nearly pushed out of the large tent by Midnight. The outside was not very busy since most of the dwarven army were spread out making repairs or still in the tunnels. They didn't need as much rest since they were used to pushing through their work.

The pair could see that Gil, Su, and Remey were already asleep and decided not to bother them. They had earned their rest. However, they found that Alice was walking back from another large tent with rolled up sleeves and a few splotches of blood on her clothing. "Been hard at work changing bandages and healing?" It was a wonder that Su wasn't there as well but Su had blocked and taunted many of the

ants while fighting so she needed to recover her mana. It wouldn't do well if a tired Su messed up helping someone's injuries. Alice was much more experienced in this aspect.

"You are alright now?" Her hands grabbed his shoulders while looking at his face. She proceeded to walk around making sure Walker wasn't hurt anywhere. Alice did the exact same to Midnight prompting a soft growl to come from Midnight while she raised her head to prove she had nothing wrong with her. Alice then helped Midnight fix a few creases in her clothing since she knew that Walker was not that good at noticing those things. She gave a sideways glance that told Walker everything he needed to know to improve on for later.

"So, we are about to make food. Do you want anything?" A bright smile blossomed on her face. She ran to her own tent to change quickly before reappearing in a basic healer's robe. She was starving after being active for so long.

The three easily found a table with multiple food items waiting to be cooked. A nearby dwarf motioned for them to take what they wanted. "I wonder what the giant ant steaks will taste like?" Walker looked at the very well marbled meat knowing that they came from the inside of the tough ant shells. It was strange to think that it was eaten and actually liked by many.

The grate over the nearest fire was quickly filled with vegetables and the three giant ant steaks. They were a little larger than Walker was used to cooking but he knew that they would all need the food. Midnight was getting a lesson in silverware and how to best use it. Alice seemed happy to teach her since they were very comfortable around one another. Midnight was showing small smiles when she would grasp them without accidentally bending them or scraping them on the wooden plates they used.

Spices appeared and disappeared within Walker's hands while he moved to quickly season the meat and vegetables. He pulled the meat off as soon as it reached a perfect temperature. His next move was slicing and chopping until he had a perfectly mixed meat and vegetable stir fry. He was missing noodles but it was a hearty meal for the three to enjoy. It made the remainder of the night peaceful. They needed it after the battle and minor worries afterward. Midnight fell asleep by the fire and Alice was quick to follow her and fall asleep on Walker's shoulder.