

## Master 1651

### Chapter 1651 1651. Out To The Ocean

"You did grow so much!" The shout of Elise from across the ship when she saw Midnight was enough for anyone to hear and help them wake up. But it was to be expected. Everyone seemed to have woken up from their rest with a lot more energy.

The fact that everyone had been instructed to rest after they had received their assignments was just good thinking. There were many people that had been preparing to set for the open ocean for days. Some had not slept because they feared that they would be needed while others had been working on the final details tirelessly.

"Brother, I will enjoy having Elise along. It has been some time since we could spend time with her and Stella." Onyx was also very happy to see Elise. He had a positive opinion of her since she spared no amount of effort when he would go to the tamer's guild branch for assistance with the hatchlings. Especially when he was looking for additional affinity potion herbs.

"I think so too. She has a lot of energy so it should help everyone stay awake and ready to go." Walker chuckled but was a little unhappy to see that Elise would be on the fourth ship instead of his ship. However, that was to be expected.

Each royal dragon had taken up residence on a different ship. Not that they seemed to want to stay on it but for Terron. Terron was the only exception because he would be remaining below deck since it was better for him to conserve his strength. There was also a plan set up for when they found any land.

Since Terron had the best control of earth elemental mana, he would be the first one to come to the land if they stopped on an island of the continent. This would be so that he could better establish a defensive position where the ships could have people anchor. With the rest of the dragons patrolling the skies, it was an ideal plan.

Leon would be on the golem ship since it was the most in tune with water. Scylla was also planning to move between skips since she could step between the air. That left Walker and his party as the only ones staying together. It would be better for them since they would be able to react and move with ease to another ship or against whatever issue they had.

The main worry was that the party who had the hero titles would be injured. From what Scylla had warned them about, they needed to stay prepared for any danger. They were first and foremost chasing the king of the demons and the last two sin title holders. They were the ones that had caused a great deal of trouble already. If they were forgotten in the travel to another continent, then they would rise again, potentially worse than before.

This made Walker want to split up the party a little, however, when he looked at everyone as Scylla had said this, he had felt torn apart. He could not take them apart because they were stronger together. It was a plan and simple explanation. The royal dragons were all strong separately. They never worked together because they had grown and always stood alone for strength. The party was different. They trained on their own but worked best together.

"Bridges are off! Ships apart! Move in to formation!" The calls were echoed by those in the watch towers on each ship. The arrows that Gil had made with the other archers were all shared evenly while the dragonkin that could have, had been given the improved bows. The supply of harpoon arrows for the draconic bows were lower than expected because of materials and time but they were ready for deadly attacks.

The golem ship took the central position. Many of the dolphins and the narwhal golems were already in the water moving around the ships' formation to ensure safety. The dolphins were scouting out the deeper waters that they were moving in to while some of the merfolk took up positions on the sides of the ship ready to jump in to the water at the slightest of worries. They would be the first to battle any monsters that got in their way.

"This is pretty great!" Gil was standing right at the front of the ship with the rest of the party, but he was enjoying it the most. Ever since they had worked on the runes, the wind seemed to have picked up around the shore. This wasn't necessarily a bad thing because they could use the wind to push them faster. But Zephyr was enjoying it since she was the grand wind elemental spirit. She and Gil were able to absorb more wind elemental mana this way.

"All this open water seems endless. It's very peaceful." Su was more calm and relaxed at this sight. She was sure that the ocean held danger. It was practically a guarantee. Yet, when she glanced at the endless blue, she was relaxed. This sort of natural scene put her in awe of the world and everything it had to see. She felt that she would never have enough years in life to see everything. She could only hope to see half of it before she left for the afterlife.

This atmosphere was contagious. All of them were soon looking out at the blue ocean while the ships maintained their pace. The runes glowed on every ship as they were utilized to maintain speed and

efficiency. The rune carvers had split up in to smaller teams so that they could monitor the usage of mana through every rune. As far as Walker knew, the additional wind runes had been a massive success.

Ventus was high in the sky. Walker took the chance to leave the ship behind. He was confident that with his elemental manipulation skills he could keep up in the air. He was proven correct when he stepped in to the air and used the wind to push him upwards in a large gust.

"You have courage to be this far from the ship." Ventus's voice was booming since she was in dragon form. It was best to be in such a form in case a large ocean monster tried to attack the ships. She would have more power to defend.

"I thought you had the best view of the world so I came to see it too. It's even better up here." the blue extended for as far as the eye could see. Small white peaks were here and there where the ocean waves broke. It was an amazing sight.

"Yes, it is what I live for. This is something everyone should see whether they are a mouse or an ancient dragon. Many would never believe this if you told them. They find the world to be small but they are mistaken." The life of a wind dragon was unique. They were always well above the world in the air. But they seemed to be the most free flowing and caring dragons if Walker assumed they were all like Ventus.

"I think I understand why you like to be up here so much." Walker felt free but also could sense the wind that Ventus was manipulating. She had a much finer control of the wind than he did. It came from years of experience. It was also very enlightening since he had started to create the wind elemental wings on his back. They were the best choice for speed at the moment.

"Why did he have to go up there? Were we really so boring? Pfft, I'm going back to the lab." Remey walked right away seeing that Walker had ditched them. But Su and Alice remained staring at the ocean. Midnight just decided to curl up right there for a nap and Onyx couldn't do much but join her since the clear blue sky gave him the perfect amount of sunlight.

Gil could only smile a little and went to the side of the shop that faced where Alma was on another ship. He wanted to jump over and swim to that ship but knew that he was getting closer to his party. He had ensured that the elves around Alma had the best arrows and were ready for any danger. It was part of his duty to protect those he cared for.

It was a new day and a new adventure. they just needed to face the mysteries of the ocean and hope for the best. But they were prepared and that would go further than anything else. Even for the smallest things, it was best to be prepared.

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Chapter 1652 1652. Free Food

"Jumping fish school ahead! Prepare nets!" The call that went out was from an experienced sailor. He had worked with merchants that traveled the coast line for many years. When he saw the jumping fish he knew it was the same as seeing gold leaping on the ships.

The jumping fish were a monster that was considered dangerous only to those unaware. The leaping fish didn't leap to attack anyone, they did so because they enjoyed the sun. they would swim as fast as possible to reach the surface then leap out of the water extending their fish as much as possible. From there they would enjoy the sun before falling again. This was the ideal chance to catch them.

Since Walker could see the approaching school of jumping fish, he used his all around appraisal skill and caught up with what was going on easily. He explained this to Midnight who thought that the heavens had opened up and that a heavenly lord of creation had gifted her food that jumped in to her mouth.

The other dragons seemed just as energetic even though they maintained their composure for the most part. However, none of them could hide the slight glimmer in their eyes. They had never eaten these fish before other than Current since he was used to being in the water. Now they would be able to eat as much as they desired without repercussions.

Some of the water mages directly used the water to reach out and take the jumping fish from the waters. They trapped them in small bubbles that they brought on to the ship. It was a surprisingly efficient way compared to the merfolk who managed to spear multiple on a single spear before climbing right back on to the ship.

The sheer amounts of these jumping fish surprised anyone that had never seen them. No one had assumed that the ocean was such a bountiful place. No one had even thought to assume that they would face such an amazing boon after just being away from shore for the last few hours of calm sailing. But this was what the bright open sunshine on the ocean brought. A feeling of warmth and jumping fish.

"Get back from the edge!" The sailor that had made the original call pulled back one of the water mages as a larger monster broke the surface, it was all within his expectations. The moment he had seen the shadow of the monster he had been quick to keep everyone out of the path.

The hard blue and green shell with many spikes made everyone wonder what had just appeared. It was even more confusing to see the green webbed skin with algae growing all over it. Yet, the shape was somewhat familiar to what some of them had seen before.

'Spiked water bear

The spiked water bear is a unique monster that enjoys jumping fish more than life itself. They only eat jumping fish and will fight one another to even follow behind a school of them. When there is a larger school of jumping fish it is not unexpected to see over twenty spiked water bears attempting to feed.

Their shells can be made into impromptu shields and are often done so by sailors. Their fur is actually an algae that allows them to better process the high amounts of sun they get from living on the surface of the open ocean. Many will never touch land in their lives.

Due to their tough shell, most monsters leave them alone because they are too hard to eat. The only things that actively hunt them are the adult leviathans because they can swallow them whole without much issue. However, they are still not the leviathan's favorite food so that is normally a rare occurrence.'

"Spiked water bears that might never see the land. That's pretty different." Walker was sure that the bears he had seen were very different. But in front of him was a monster very similar to them. They had just lived and grown in a massively different environment that caused them to leave behind their diversity in diet for one single thing.

The temperament that only cared about their favorite food also amazed him to a small degree. The spiked water bears would only fight amongst themselves which made them a less dangerous predator for the ships. A few of the spiked water bears even went out of their way to avoid the merfolk swimming in the waters to hunt the jumping fish.

Yet, there were a few of the merfolk and demi-humans that seemed angry upon coming aboard with their broken spears and other weapons. They were victims of having their prey stolen by the water bears since the fish stabbed on their spear were much easier to eat than the ones trying to swim away from them.

"Pull back! The school is moving away!" The sailors called to those on the ocean to return to ships. Some had already done so since it was safer than being in competition with the spiked water bears.

The royal dragons remained with the school for some time. This left everyone in awe of how a dragon hunted. The size of dragons was already awe inspiring. But when it came to the fact that they could easily scoop up sixty or more of the jumping fish stunned people. Even when Ignus managed to get ahold of a spiked water bear by accident, he just crushed it with his teeth as if it was nothing to him.

The only one that had not joined in on the feast was Terron, but that was not an issue. There were plenty of his earth affinity dragonkin that had taken the spoils of their catch to him below deck. It was a sure thing that they were remaining loyal to their lord through their actions.

"I guess we will have a lot of fish to eat tonight." Walker's laughter as he saw the fish being set up already for preparation was one of sheer amazement for the ocean. He was sure that this was just one of the many amazing things he would see.

"Boy, you haven't seen anything yet. This is a sign from the goddess of luck. We were blessed to get fortune as soon as we set sail. Now we just need to respect the waves and tides to make sure we sail smoothly." The sailor sitting by Walker was just resting. He had left the catching of fish to the younger deck hands. But he had been right there to shout out orders and advice as any wise sailor would.

"I definitely did not see those spiked water bears coming. I would have been scared to death if I had jumped in to the water and found myself next to one of those." Walker's laugh made the sailor straighten up.

"There are worse things to find yourself in. just wait until night time and I will point them out to you. The night will show you exactly where you should not sail under any circumstance." The resolute tone made Walker understand that this was something he would have to memorize and abide by. Any danger worth this amount of seriousness had a fair reason behind it.

The energy on the ship slowly died down returning to the normal patrols and watch while some of the best chefs on board worked on preserving their surprise food reserves. Walker could only think about what dangers might come at night while sailing.

He had been sure to look for a few books here and there along with asking around about sailing in general. He knew that there were monsters tough enough to chew through the hardest steel or large enough to swallow people whole and then some. But he wasn't sure exactly what would be more dangerous during the day or night other than the fact that they would be unable to see the monsters coming at night.

"Wait, you actually managed to catch a spiked water bear!?" Su was the one that was shouting. She had found that Gil had managed to shoot an arrow right through the neck of one while it tried to grab a fish. He had asked the merfolk to bring it up and they were all impressed with the precise shot and the toughness of the shell.

"Don't tell me you want it as a new shield? A spiked water bear shield? That would be perfect for the ship but do you really need it?" Gil was teasing. He was clearly going to be giving it to Su since he had heard what the older sailors had said. But Su was just stunned that he had managed to hit it while it was moving through the water and the school of jumping fish.

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Chapter 1653 1653. Spikes And Affinity

"Now that was worth coming back up here for. Did you see those water spike bear turtle things!? They were vicious. I bet my punches couldn't even scratch them. But Ignus crushed one like nothing!" The fact that Remey was excited by the spiked water bear stunned Walker a little. He would have imagined that it was Su that was interested in the defenses that came with the shell.

"Are you saying that you want to have a spiked water bear shell as a shield now? What happened to having just your fists to defend yourself?" Walker was sure that Remey would have a snide response or try to punch him. But he had to play off the energy she had. It was just too much fun. It was also an amazing first ocean experience.

"What? Why would I want a shield? I want armor. Armor! That shell could be the coolest spiked armor ever. I would be able to run in to the center of an army and not get hit in the back!" This was not at all what Walker had thought Remey would say. She was actually thinking about fighting an entire army.

"Shouldn't you be thinking of these things? You have seen the vice guild master of the adventurer's guild, a general of the demi-humans, and even a general of the merfolk rush in to battles by themselves. They can do it so I want to be able to do it." Remey was seemingly stuck in her own head over this.

Yet, the more that Walker thought about this, the more he agreed. They knew many people that could fight alone against many powerful foes. The most that the party had done was team up with other warriors in some capacity and fight the smaller battles within a larger battle. To say that the party could fight an army would be a blunt lie.

Normally, those that could fight an army were far and in between. Through the guidance of the world and just a ton of luck, the party had been able to bring so many powerhouses together. This would never normally happen. Even in the dragon race, there would be the separate dragon villages with their separate royal and elder dragons. None of them would be together in one battle.

This alone could be astounding but it had been taken much further. The best young and general of demi-humans was in Genesis. There were the best crafters, the most promising alchemists, and even the best of the best when it came to researching. So many different things had come together based on what the party had done. Some of the things they did weren't even the greatest events! Others contributed more.

"I guess we are kind of like glue or cement." Walker's weird words made Remey wonder if Walker was losing his mind. But she just shrugged and thought about stealing the shell from Gil since he had managed to capture one of the spiked water bears.

"If you want this you will have to make it work my while. I want a high wind affinity potion. I need to see if I can help Zephyr regain even more wind elemental mana. If I can I might be able to use the avatar of wind title skills more often." Walker came back from his inner thoughts to hear Gil and Remey bargaining.

"That's all? I can do that. I have materials for all the affinity potions here. But If I make one you know that Ventus will need one too and I will have to make one for every single dragon here." Remey knew that this would not go unnoticed by those sensitive to the manas that the potions would influence.

There was also the fact that she might not be able to make a high potion of every single affinity. The materials might not be perfect and the process for the high affinity potions was a little harder. She had the research notes from the old master alchemist and Trish but that was it. She had to fully rely on her



own strength to ensure that the potion was of the highest quality. Something she still needed more experience in.

The materials themselves were gained from connections and not farmed by the alchemy guild. If it were farmed by the guild then there would be a more refined elemental mana within them. The people that focused all their energy on nurturing the herbs were able to maintain a certain purity that some of the wild herbs lacked. It was the natural developments that were kept in pristine conditions while in a farming environment watched with a careful eye.

This led to an easier process for alchemists since the herbs were grown with the intention of giving up certain qualities and manas. Therefore, it gave the alchemists a better chance of success and quality in their potions. But what made Remey worried were the herbs she had. They were wild and some of them had been dried by others.

"That's fine. I will settle for whatever you can make. If I can take a day to isolate myself on the top of the tower to try and sense the wind...well, just let me know. I might even ask Ventus for guidance. Maybe Ignus could teach Midnight more about fire too." Gil thought that this would be a good chance to let those around them take the lead.

There was also the fact that the party could follow Remey's train of thought and learn more to be able to take on armies. It was the difference between relying on others to be strong and being able to stand by themselves. Gil wanted to be able to do that as well. But his thoughts leaned toward protecting Alma and those he had formed bonds with. Remey just thought of being able to stand and keep building the better future she had created already.

"What's going on?" Su had managed to catch on that the three were talking about something with a lot of energy. The bargaining that Gil and Remey had going was enough to catch a glance from others already.

"Gil managed to shoot a spiked water bear and Remey wants the shell so that she can have spiked armor to protect her back in battle." Walker summed up the conversation simply. "They are debating the potions Remey will make once she makes one for Gil. But if we ask Ventus to help Gil with a potion and Ignus to Help Midnight for a potion it might be a fair trade."

"I see..." Su caught on easily. She could catch on to her friends' thought processes easily. It was just something that came with spending longer periods of time with others. "I will ask Terron to help me then if I can join this." Since Su had the earth affinity too, she knew that Terron might want to teach a

little. Especially because she knew that Walker could hand over a few earth elemental crystals with a potion to help him out. It could do well to increase their bonds.

"Perfect, that leaves Mordant and Rise to Help Onyx and Current to... well, we can see if he wants to help the merfolk since they are all related to water. I bet that he has some secrets." Gil caught Su's goal and was happy that they could make things work out.

"I will help with that. Here I thought that I would just be taking a rest aboard the ship. Now I am more interested." Current was standing behind them watching this entire conversation with amusement. No one had noticed that he had taken his dragonkin form back.

"I'm glad that you agree. Let's do it!" Remey was already in motion. She pointed at Gil before she moved to go back to the alchemy Lab. "Make sure you save that shell and have Walker store that away. I want to find a blacksmith that will carve that perfectly in to a back armor for me."

"Back armor should be good. She is a forward fighter. She will need her back covered from physical attacks. I have a few dragonkin that carry a shield on their backs for that reason." Current pointed this out to Walker and the others. No one had truly noticed this but it was very true.

"You're right. I have a secondary shield just for that and in case I need to switch shields. Actually, I should begin thinking about getting another shield. My twin shields can't be used everywhere." This spurred a whole new thought process for Su. It also caused Walker to wonder if he should consider helping Su create a shield that could gather natural mana. She would eventually match the same affinities that Midnight and he had through their bonds.

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Chapter 1654 1654. Just A Swim

As Walker considered making Su a new shield, he wondered what kinds of materials he might need. The eternal orb was already a unique piece of equipment. It literally felt like a part of his body at this point. The materials for that had been rare enough that he had yet to see them again. But Walker also felt that the shield would not need the same materials.

The eternal orb had to have mana rich materials because they were going to have to change their form. The idea to change form had been with Walker's unique system in mind. He had the master of none system so he had to have tools and weapons of all sorts.

Su needed to have a shield. If he could also find an armor that matched it would be ideal. The current focus that Su had on earth was because she was partnered with the grand earth elemental spirit. However, that did not limit Su. She was bonded with Midnight and Walker who had all affinities. She was already able to use skills that required other elemental manas than earth.

That meant that the materials needed would have to be flexible enough to hold natural mana but also have the innate strength to resist the strongest attacks. That meant that Walker needed a wide variety of tough ores. Ores that even Ignus couldn't crush the way that he crushed the spiked water bear's shield.

With this realization, Walker sighed and looked at the others. He was sure that Remey and Gil could handle things when it came to the affinity potion. He was suddenly motivated to handle some small hunting. But even more, he knew that the waters around him had others patrolling. He was just sitting there losing the chance to explore a little and gain a better understanding of water and air.

This was the distraction from his current train of thought and no one noticed him walking to the edge of the ship. "Leon is on patrol now, right?" The demi-human that Walker asked was one that had just returned from his patrol.

"Yes. The merfolk team is out. Their second team is spread on the opposite side of the fleet." The demi-human was surprised to see Walker coming up to him. He had just finished patrol and expected the heroes to remain in preparation for anything terrible or dangerous ahead in their journey.

"Good, I will go and find him." When Walker stepped over the edge of the ship and in to the water, no one that witnessed it could keep their jaw from dropping. Some even rushed to the edge to see if Walker had been left on the top of the water floating and stranded.

What they didn't imagine was that Walker had considered the ability to swim to be too low to keep up with the ships or merfolk. He had already seen it before in the underwater battles, he would be too slow so he had to use his skills. But the question was, which skills would be best?

For that, Walker looked toward Current. He was a dragon. He was the one that was closest to water when it came to all the dragons. He was still able to move through water the same as the air with his wings. That meant Walker just had to use some of his elemental manipulation and create a slightly altered pair of elemental wings.

The formation of the wings was simple, Walker was surrounded by water. It was there to take shape. Adding in his control, the water was able to solidify slightly in to ice in some parts. The bones of the wings he emulated became ice and the open webbed portions remained a semi frozen and semi liquid state. It was a slushy mix that allowed Walker to use the grand elemental manipulation skills that he had to boost the speed that the wings carried him.

Naturally, some energy burst around Walker as he did this. He had altered a significant amount of water at once so why would the water remain calm? The saves alerted everyone looking down before they saw Walker jump in to the air with the newly formed water and ice elemental wings. They thought that he had jumped in to a fight with a monster but in reality, he had been creating the elemental wings they had heard of.

With a wave, Walker was off back in to the water. He was able to bring the air that hid in the water to him. It was something he had realized he could sense better after helping with the wind runes. The main reason was because some of the water around them had been separated from the wind elemental mana that it had mixed with.

The runes had been good at pulling these manas apart to be used elsewhere, it was why they made the ships speed up so much when there was little breeze or currents at the top of the ship. But knowing that they were mixed together was a basic part of mage knowledge, the act of separating them perfectly was harder. Yet, when Walker added a little natural mana, the elemental manas separated easily.

Therefore, Walker had no reason to worry about breathing. He could constantly make his own air while under the water. This didn't stop the merfolk that he found from wondering how he was doing this. The look of a human moving through the water with dragon like wings and creating breaths of air was a sight to see. It was something none of them had seen and now they could only wonder what new amazing things they would see next.

Since the other merfolk on patrol saw Walker, it made sense that they would report to Leon. That made it easy to follow the few swimming around the ship and meet Leon. He had been leading the ships underwater with a sharp eye toward the darker deeper waters below them.

As much as Walker wanted to look up at the ships and enjoy the strange sight of the hull floating in water, he had a sense of eeriness from the deeper waters. This was the sense that there was something larger hiding in the darkness waiting to swim up at any moment.

It was a sure thing that the dark waters held danger. But they also held mysteries. Deep mysteries that many would struggle to comprehend. No one had explored the oceans. They were too dangerous. Ships couldn't even pass through the top layer let alone someone diving deeper in to unknown territory.

With a few hand motions, Leon got Walker to move to the surface while they kept swimming slightly slower. "Did you get bored of the ship and come to see what life was like here?" Leon knew that Walker would get curious easily. How could he not? There were many things to explore here.

"I just wanted to help out a little. Learn a few new things. Challenge myself to make some skills bend to the form of water. I can keep this up for a little while so I can join you. Just show me the ropes." Walker didn't let Leon keep talking. He dove back under the water and joined the other merfolk near the front of the ships.

Their ability to swim was natural. The Merfolk's speed came from that. They were born in the water and lived in it. They even breathed it along with the air if they so desired. These facts were not lost on Walker while swimming near them. He could only emulate their fluidity and adjust himself accordingly.

When he saw a shape out of the corner of his eye, Walker prepared the eternal orb to attack. Its sword form flashed and made the Merfolk react instantly. They rushed toward Walker and stood in his way. Leon showed himself after catching up with Walker and shook his head.

'Sun bather

This fish is unique to the surface of the ocean. It bathes in the sun constantly to accumulate warmth. It will then dive deep at night to blind prey with bright flashes of light. It is known as a deceptive fish because it can actually expand its mouth four times larger than its body. It can consume prey much larger than itself.

But it is not overly dangerous. The true danger comes from the blood in their bodies. It holds a unique scent that attracts all manner of carnivorous fish. They are literally called the flash of death when something kills them and releases the gathered light elemental mana from inside of them.'

Walker was stunned. He nearly brought ruin down on the ships if he had not checked the all around appraisal after being stopped. Now he would have to be much more focused. He had too much to learn.

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#### Chapter 1655 1655. Age And Food Chain

Walker was stunned. The number of sun bathing fish that he saw were only increasing as the sun rose in to the sky. The surface of the water was also warmer which made the merfolk patrol closer to the ships. It was just a habit to avoid the warmer streams of water that would flow around. Many of the merfolk preferred the slightly cooler waters instead of the hot sun heated waters.

There were many things that Walker was catching on to while they were underwater. He was seeing that the merfolk had to carry their weapons in certain ways. He had seen some of this before but was now able to see it in better detail.

The way a weapon, or anything, was held underwater would cause friction. It was why Leon used a spear for battle instead of an ax. It was actually very uncommon for any merfolk to use an ax at all. It was hard to keep in water because the broad side would catch the most water resistance causing them to swim slower and slower.

Swords were a different thing all together though. They had the sharp edges to cut through the waters without any issue. Therefore, the sword was able to facilitate the faster swimming speeds that the merfolk were used to. It was also why they were made in one single piece.

Normally, swords were made as one blade with a handle. The difference between merfolk swords and other swords was that the merfolk made swords out of a single ore, stone, or monster part. That way when they swam, the sword maintained a constant singular cut through the water instead of having any divots or holes that could catch the water.

Leon also went out of his way to show Walker the formations that the merfolk used while patrolling through and around the ships. They would split in to groups of three or five to go to the edges. Not many issues appeared during these underwater rotations. Sometimes if they got too close to a ship, the merfolk would just use the slightly sharper than usual nails on the ends of their webbed fingers to hold on to a ship. This was also the perfect way for them to take a break. Luckily, the craftsman thought of this and also added railings for the merfolk.

The way that the ship was made greatly helped those underwater. The ship could be turned easily to avoid things that the merfolk warned about. But the small divots and railings were made in a way that only those that knew they were there and had a certain level of intelligence could use them. A basic monster would never be able to latch on to the side of the ship easily and resist the currents around it while the ship moved.

Every now and then, one of the sun bathing fish would dive down. Walker was sure that the system all around appraisal had told him that they did this at night. Therefore, he was curious as to why this would be happening. When he saw that Leon was surfacing, Walker took the chance to ask the question.

"Why are some of the sun bathing fish we see diving now? Isn't that bad for them since they still need to absorb the light elemental mana at the surface?"

"That's kind of sad. When the sunfish get older, they start to forget how much light they need. Then they dive too early. That's how they become food. But with how many of them there are around here, we might be in an older school. It means we will probably see some red tangs." Leon could see that Walker was lost. He had definitely never heard of red tangs before.

"There are other fish named tangs but they are not actually dangerous. They are fairly docile and small. But red tangs are not nice at all. They had an almost diamond shape with two red sharp fins to cut through the things they fight. Then they eat the pieces left behind." Leon looked more aggrieved as he spoke. It was clear that the merfolk had dealt with red tangs more often than not when these monsters hunted the sun bathing fish.

"So I will freeze them in place before they ever get close." Walker's general idea was to use the water against them. He could freeze the water around the red tangs so that they would be unable to fight back at all. It would even defeat them or simply trap them before any damage occurred.

'You can try. But they will travel in small schools of ten or so. They are family groups. One school will fight another unless it's breeding season. Then they will migrate and join in to larger schools. Luckily, it is not that season... If it was, I would have warned every ship personally." This was the perfect example of how Leon thought ahead. He would have been sure to protect everyone from this danger.

Unfortunately, fate seemed to enjoy laughing at those that inhabited existence. As if on cue, a single flash of red caught Walker's eye. He had just enough time to use the all around appraisal skill out of instinct and habit.

## 'Red tang

The red tang is considered a dangerous ocean predator even though it has a smaller size compared to the truly dangerous predators. Their fins hide razor sharp bones made to cut through weaker scaled fish.

They are known for using their slim size to move faster to cut apart prey better. But where the true danger lies is that they leave behind some parts of their prey and attract larger predators. This is just part of the food chain and the red tangs always flee before a larger predator appears.'

The dangers of the ocean began to show themselves. There was no longer the feeling of awe from the open blue waves or the depth of darkness that stunned Walker. Now he could feel the adrenaline growing. He had to face whatever these monsters brought head on or else somebody would be hurt.

"Move!" The shout from Leon was enough to make Walker lower himself again below the surface. He didn't need to communicate because he saw the four red tangs swimming around attacking one of the sun bathing fish. But the merfolk had already set themselves up to take down the dangerous monster.

Three moved from different sides with swords extended. They had their arms out holding swords so that they seemed bigger than usual. This confused the red tang as it felt like a larger predator was trying to swallow it. This was a wise tactic that many would have missed.

The result was the panicked red tang swimming with speed to flee from the danger it felt. In its panic, it literally swam head on in to one of the merfolk's swords. Walker was a little surprised but thought that this was ingenious.

Finding the simple way to fool the red tang's instincts was perfect for the situation. The merfolk had learned this through their hardships. Now they had grasped a fool proof, yet dangerous, way to defeat the red tangs almost every time. But as Walker could see, it was not always as planned. One of the red tangs had managed to slice in to the hand of a nearby merfolk sending him toward the ship quickly. The wound would bleed and attract more predators if he did not work fast.

This was the added danger of being in the open sea. Regardless of the situation, it was better to consider that there was always something larger and more dangerous nearby. That meant that even the



smallest injury should be healed. Even the tiniest cut should be thought of as a bait that lured in a monster.

This thinking made Walker reach out to heal the merfolk before he even made it half way to a ship. He had the skills to heal others and instead of risking a technique to hunt the red tangs that he was not familiar with, Walker knew it was better to heal. He could reduce the injuries that the merfolk had while also ensuring that they did not lose a single fighting force.

The merfolk saw his hand heal quickly and used his better swimming skills to return to battle. A single glance portrayed the respect and gratitude he had for Walker. Being out of the battle and letting his fellow soldiers perish or become hurt was a worse punishment. But he understood he would have been a bigger risk if he stayed in the water.

Meanwhile, Leon showed why he was the best of the best when it came to the merfolk. His swimming speed was faster than a red tang. Therefore when he spread one, every merfolk felt their pride swell. Walker even felt himself getting a little more energetic too, the battle was on!

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#### Chapter 1656 1656. Face Of Ocean Danger

The look of triumph that Leon had by showing off how easy it was for them to defeat the red tangs quickly changed. He had bolstered their morale but that was not all he had done. In spearing the red tang through he had made things more dangerous.

Walker had originally seen the blood from the red tang and thought that this was the danger that was making Leon's face scrunch up. But in reality, it was something worse. However, Walker couldn't do anything. He saw that Leon made hand motions to everyone around then Walker was being pointed toward the ships. They were all being ordered to leave the water.

The sudden change of mood was enough to put Walker in a rush. He quickly pulled at the water elemental mana around him and created ice to block the lowest point of his vision in the water. He wasn't sure if there was a dangerous monster approaching or what. But whatever it was, he would be preparing to do whatever he could.

The red tangs that had already been defeated and hooked to ropes to be dragged up were suddenly cut off. The ropes were left to float on the surface of the water. Walker only noticed this as he reached one

of the ladders to climb in to the ship. He used his wind ripple skill to let the merfolk use the ladders and got to where Leon was giving orders.

"What happened? Why are we not taking the red tangs? What monster is around?" The merfolk were all busy checking their bodies while the soldiers that had been pulling up the red tangs looked like they were narrowly escaping a great danger.

"Are you serious? Did you not see the mouth of that one? I stabbed it and I saw the tongue eating parasites. They will take over every school of fish they see. No matter the strength of the monster. They are basically a one way trip to death for anything that lives in the ocean!" Leon knew that Walker didn't know the dangers but a lot of the sailors had explained how these affected fish needed to be thrown back.

"Just touching the body of something with them has a chance to leave an egg on your body. Then you are stuck with a parasite that makes its way through your body and to your mouth. It eats your tongue and takes the place of it. From there it's torture." Leon seemed pale. The merfolk didn't have the much of a different set of features when they became emotional, but Walker could tell that the adrenaline and fear instilled by these monstrous parasites was real.

"They will eat whatever you eat. Eventually, they will eat everything and you will starve to death. After that they wear your body and swim around to infect others before dying. Those red tangs were barely alive anymore. They were just infected things!" Leon called over the nearest healer and had her begin an examination of his body. Every single merfolk was doing the same with the healers that rushed to see if anyone was harmed.

Feeling that he should check himself now, Walker began to look carefully at his own body. He didn't feel or sense anything different but knew that he had the ability to ensure that even if there was something it would not make it to a hatching state.

The sudden burst of flames around him shocked a few people. However, the sailors all gave a shout of approval. They knew that fire was the best way to cleanse anything that had been in touch with such tongue eating parasites. They were never able to survive the heat and that was why some of the sailors would dry their washed clothes in the sun. yes, it left dried salt on their clothing, but it protected them.

There were only two or three of the merfolk that had reacted negatively when a healer told them to sit down. Leon's quick thinking had prevented most of them from exposure to a dangerous parasite that would easily kill them over time.

The healers that found evidence of this tongue eating parasite quickly used their purification skills. It was a slightly different variant than purification for poison or other negative effects on the body. This was one that was specifically aimed toward parasitic monsters.

The world was a dangerous place and many adventurers would have to go to a whaler to handle anything they got while out in the wilderness. Some of the younger soldiers also had this issue when they would drink water without properly sanitizing it. Some healers would also use the same skills to purify water to make it safe to drink. It was an alternative to boiling it.

When Walker saw that the healers had finished, he glanced at Leon who was still on high alert. Now they would not be able to go down under water and protect the ships until they were a good distance away from this area.

'I think the golems will need to handle this for a while. We can be ready to jump down at the slightest issue. Whatever is attracted to those dead red tangs will be infected too. The faster we leave here the better. No monsters to bother us and no parasites wither.'" This was a wise choice since it was the safest. If they stayed the dangers would only multiply.

The other ships received the full message and threats in the area causing them to keep themselves under a tighter watch. The golem ship was sending out all the golems at once to perfect their patrol. The king of the surface's orders were perfectly in line with what he had gleaned from the way Merfolk and aquatic demi-humans patrolled.

There were some exemptions when it came to demi-humans though. "Those demi-humans have traits from the pistol shrimp, long tailed anemone, and even the spiked hunter fish. They all eat the parasites and are natural predators of tongue eating parasites. Especially when they are larger. Scylla has a very well gathered variety of soldiers." Leon praising Scylla was a little blunt but it was true to what he saw and what he appreciated.

"I didn't realize that there were such things. A tongue eating parasite could even infect everyone here. It will be important to share this with the port village that is going to be built. We need to have patrols there so that monsters with them are not brought in to port." Walker was thinking of this risk even more than the others. His mind had wandered to the future of the port village.

"Agreed. I will ensure that we handle that when the time is right. We can worry about the fish brought in. but they won't live near the mouth of the river. They do not survive in fresh water." Leon seemed to have much more information than everyone else. It was a basic foundation for him being from the merfolk city. He had to know every single danger that his people face.

The look out towers were suddenly shouting for everyone to look behind the ships. Walker didn't feel that it was a good sign at all. But the sight didn't need to be seen from the towers. Those on look out had seen it first because they were there. However, the greater dangers of the deep ocean had just shown its face to them.

The large plume of water that had attracted everyone's gaze was coming from where they had just rushed away from. Every single red tang, sun bathing fish, and whatever else had been attracted to the area had just been swallowed by a large blue skinned monster.

'Island swallower

The island swallower is a whale monster species that has lived for hundreds of years. They may lack intelligence but they make up for that in toughness. They can survive in the deepest parts of the ocean only rising to feed once every year. They can block many manners of attacks naturally and are often peaceful unless angered or hungry.

When aggravated, they have been known to swallow small islands. They also do this to create nests for their young. It is a rare sight to see one but if seen, it is better to avoid them unless one is sleeping on the bottom of the ocean when seen.'

Walker nearly whispered this. He was stunned. The massive size of this monster was enough to swallow a dragon if it wanted to. It was even enough to make everyone wonder if they could possibly fight against this ever. "Full sail ahead. Get some distance!" There was a rush to get far from the danger. As far away as possible for the moment.

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Chapter 1657 1657. What Will Come In The Night

"How was your little swim there? Manage to find yourself a few good things to eat?" Scylla found it hysterical that Walker had just encountered a dangerous ocean parasite. She could see that he was still trying to put what he had seen together from the parasites to the giant island swallowing monster.

"I think I don't like to swim at all anymore. I am more surprised that you had soldiers with traits that resist them." Walker looked at Scylla was definitely amusing herself with his worry and sense of awe.

"I have many soldiers. You already see how well some of them battled. Now you are seeing more specific situations where they exceed. If you want to be surprised, look at your friend the tamer. She is directing aquatic monsters as if they are her own."

Scylla was pointing out Elise. the tamers that had come with her were more or less aquatic or flight based when it came to their skills and monsters. This was because it worked out better for the situation. The water based monsters would be able to protect the ships and the flight based monsters would leave the ships with her to help explore the lands.

"With the rate that Elise is going, she might be the next tamer's guild master. She keeps advancing and I don't think she has realized it." This was Walker's honest opinion. Every single time he met Elise, she had been given more responsibility. She was also showing her growing maturity in her actions on a daily basis. It was truly a perfect example of someone growing in to where they truly belong.

"So you are saying I should be friendly with her because she will be able to mobilize the entire guild to help me in the future. I would not mind having more troops to rely on." Scylla's grin told Walker that he had just given her dangerous ideas. It was not what he had intended but what was done, was done.

"It seems pretty quiet up here. I thought more people would be worried about that island swallower we just saw. It was easily able to fight a dragon if it wanted. Maybe multiple." The worry that Walker still had would be lingering for some time. Luckily, he remembered the all around appraisal and that the monster would not be surfacing that often.

"Not a big problem. We are nowhere near the bottom of the ocean and the sailors with experience have already said if they attacked us we would be dead and gone. No point in worrying over that. But I heard something more interesting. You had a small plan that made all the dragons return to seclusion?" It was easy for Walker to understand that this seemed to be a bigger achievement.

"Well, they all want affinity potions or mana gems that perfectly relate to their elemental affinity. I just gave them something to do in return. The rest of my party and a lot of the troops here need help learning things. Why would we avoid the chance to learn them? I was the one in the water doing a

patrol so it had more free time where I was learning naturally." Walker shrugged his shoulders. He believed he was doing the best with what time he had.

"The best with the time you have? I see, so what will you do now?" The look that Scylla had on her face told Walker that if he didn't have a good enough answer then he would be caught up in something.

"If you need help, I can only do what I can..." Walker trailed off seeing that Scylla's smile grew.

"The sun is going to set in a few hours. We need to be prepared for the night on the ocean. I have already gathered information on what the most important things are. We can make two decisions. No light at all and remain silent and dark, but our ripples from movement will attract predators. Or, we can have lights and be prepared to fight off the small feeding frenzy of nighttime monsters in the water, but absolutely no one can be in the water because we can easily lose them to an ocean of darkness."

This was no small decision. It sounded like Leon had already said his part along with a few of the sailors. They all recognized the dangers of either side. However, Walker was certain that this choice was up for debate because of what dangers there were in these things.

The first choice was to stop moving altogether. They would have to remain on high alert all night. It would be stressful and dark, very dark. It would have a lasting effect on the entire crew for every single ship. Regardless of their fear of the darkness, Walker was sure that this would be many times worse due to the foreign environment.

The second option meant that they could keep traveling. They had some map makers that could read the stars. This was ideal for them because the stars could be recorded better when the ship was moving. It also saved them time on the journey. There could not be a hold up even though they would have to fight some monsters as they went.

The monsters were the main issue of the second option. The nighttime monsters could be dangerous to everyone. So much so that no one would be in the water. Even the golems might not do their best and may have to be cut down to a minimum patrol. There were also the predatory monsters that would come to feed on the weaker ones attracted. They were the ones that could cause issues to the ship as they attacked prey, or them.

"As much as I think we need to keep our food storage high, we have a lot. And the monsters that we just ran in to had parasites that would be harder to figure out at night. I don't think we should try fighting things in the dark when people could fall in to the water." The loss of people to the ocean was what Walker wanted to avoid the most.

"We could lose our soldiers in the night no matter what. Just because we sit idle does not mean we will avoid the dangers of predators that can travel on the ship, or on land." It seemed like Scylla knew even more than she was letting on.

"What are you worried about?" Scylla didn't even flinch when Walker asked. She was prepared to be open about what could attack them.

"The merfolk are a decent race. I like them and their battle spirit. But they are not a complete race. They used to live in the depths of the ocean with larger cities. Apparently, there were records of them doing so before they lost them to some unfortunate circumstances. You have also seen lizardmen, correct?" Scylla saw Walker nod.

He had not seen lizardmen much. They were instinctual monsters that formed tribes and did not learn much. But they were strong and lived in the swamp lands. "There are similar lizardmen and merfolk monsters around here. They live in the ocean like a nomadic tribe of demi-humans. And they will attack at night no matter the situation. They also travel on to small islands at times."

"What are they called?"

"Adaro. They are the same if not too similar to merfolk but they are what was left after their deep ocean cities collapsed many years ago. Instead of following the merfolk and refining their knowledge, they became more monstrous. They are tougher and have larger physiques to battle in the water and the land. But they are weaker mentally. Not that it will be an easy opponent for the merfolk." Scylla was speaking about this for a reason. She knew it would be hard for the merfolk to fight another monster that resembled their ancestors.

"I understand. It's just like some of the demi-humans and elves. Your ancestors are all over the world and might not be the same as you are now. Even the goblins were nearly a race before they fell back toward being monsters. It's a tough thing. But I think that Leon will lead his soldiers well." Walker's faith in Leon and those around him was unshakable. He just had to support them when the hardships came.

"I agree, I am not going to stress myself about it until the battle is in front of me." Scylla seemed to have finished what she wanted to say. She had her own plans to prepare for the night and it was clear that Walker needed to get himself ready now as well. It would be a long first night on the open ocean but hopefully a simple one.

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#### Chapter 1658 1658. Moonlit Night

The potential threat of a monster species that had the same ancestor as the merfolk had made Walker think a lot. He knew that he had to rest while there was a chance. Such a threat could appear anywhere at any time or not at all. It wasn't a predictable thing unless he had some sort of future sight skills and even if he did, anyone with those skills would be the first to tell everyone of the massive downsides that came with them.

The idea that a species could branch off over time was simple. It was clear in the horned rabbits and the rabbit jacks. They had once been from the same species. Even some monsters changed over time, their ancestors being regular animals without the mana that made them monsters. But that was unique.

The merfolk being from an older species made sense. They had a word of mouth history of being in the deeper oceans. But they could not survive there as they were now. That meant that their bodies had to have been different. They had to have more strength to resist the pressure, coldness of the water, and even more dangerous things that were in the deeper waters.

Knowing that the Adaro were a distant cousin of the merfolk made some sense. They had given up the intelligence through the years and become monsters with tougher bodies. If the merfolk had not focused on survival with intelligence, they could have remained in the open ocean as well. There were positives and negatives of everything.

Knowing that the ancient race that had created the ancient ruins and origin runes also lived to know of the intricate ways of the world was an important puzzle piece. Walker was sure that following their footsteps and chasing the demon lord would bring them to a lot of puzzle pieces and answers.

The ancient race was surely still alive in some fashion. Some may have left the world as they knew it for another plane of existence. That was already recorded in some fashion based on what the party and researchers had found. Yet, the real trick was where they found that the ancient race had split itself.



Two cities with two different paths of belief. One that focused on the origin runes and the natural ways of the world. Another that focused on what was outside the natural world. The unique skills and unique affinities. They may have clashed at times but no war had been recorded meaning that they ended up respecting their opposing thoughts. This was just Walker's theory though.

"Helloooo." The nudge that came to Walker's back was a curious Alice. She half sang the greeting which was definitely not the first she had offered. But Walker had been so lost in his thoughts that it was easier to say that he was meditating under the sinking sun.

"Sorry, I was caught up thinking about how things change over years and years. I feel like it is making me closer to natural mana. If I could say anything...well, naturally mana might be changing the world." This was just a gut feeling for Walker but Alice readily nodded her head.

For whatever reason, she had managed to grasp a few key ideas while being around people that studied these things. The researchers that came to her with ideas about light elemental mana had not been few in numbers. They had come to her because they research origin runes and heard of her natural affinity to attract light elemental mana. That alone was something they hoped would enlighten them.

But even more, Walker had always been open to sharing his thoughts. Therefore, Alice had a general idea of what manas were and how they worked. Could she influence other elemental manas? Not really. But she could still understand them as she heard things. Anyone could gain knowledge, that was the best part of living. The world was always full of new things to learn.

"Could be. The world is changing all the time." Alice sat down next to Walker and leaned against him. He could only nod along. It was clear that Alice had been hard at work preparing some additional bandage wraps in case they were needed. There were plenty of little strings stuck on her clothes from the work.

The two managed to take the time in silence and watch the sun set beyond the waves. All that was left was a silent night and a wide open sky full of stars. Many of the soldiers and crew that had never been on the open ocean were caught by the sudden change. The stars seemed to stretch out endlessly. Some were even slightly reflected in the waves that lapped the sides of the ship.

The moon that rose made everyone wonder if the moon they had always seen was actually larger. The vibrant white light that came off of it was almost welcoming. If they didn't all know that there was danger under the waves, they would have believed this to be the safest place in the world.

As if waiting for the chance, Walker saw the slight bursts of light deep under the waves. "Those must be the sun bathing fish. They are heading deeper in the water to hunt now that they have absorbed the light all day." Walker stood and pointed out the little burst of light to Alice. The sight was another level of wonder.

The changes weren't only there. In the distance, there were more solid portions of light that glowed in blues and greens. The odd purple here and there also surfaced. From the conversations around, the experienced sailors told them that they were various seaweeds, monsters, and even some extremely distant islands that held rare plants.

Naturally, when Remey made it to the top of the ship, she was drawn in by this. But when she found that the islands could take weeks to get to it stumped her. "If they are that bright here, what can they do? Why do they do that?"

This question was what Remey wondered. Luckily, there always seemed to be a sailor with more knowledge. "Those plants are called beacon ferns. They glow all day and all night but when they are touched they flash like that to make whatever is eating them run away. They don't do much other than that but wherever little island or rock outcropping they are on has monsters around it."

This was even more of a deterrent. Remey just shook her head. Even if the beacon fern was useless for alchemy, it would be useful to cultivate as a night time guardian of sorts. "They drift on the surface of the ocean. I will have the young ones keep an eye out for them." This revitalized Remey's spirit before she gave the older sailor a tough pat on the back and a promise to share potions with him.

Walker felt lucky to watch this all happen. He didn't think Remey would be leaving the alchemy lab for a breath of fresh air at all. She would have normally been fully absorbed by the potions she was making. She had plenty of affinity potions to make but they had all been set aside to enjoy the night.

The more Walker looked about, the more he realized that everyone was doing the same. The royal dragons, dragonkin, demi-humans, merfolk, dwarves, and even the tamers had all stopped. They had to enjoy the peace while they could the small moment of calm and beauty while they were on their journey to an unknown land.

As far as any of them were concerned, the entire night could pass like this. But the ocean was a big place and had a lot of different things living in it. That was why Walker paid a lot of attention when small floating white dots began to surround the ships.

'Lunar algae

The lunar algae is a type of algae that can only grow when the moon is out. It absorbs the moonlight to grow at a rapid pace. In a few hours, it can become a mass of solid algae that traps anything that it grows around. The monsters that feed on it often crawl on top of it to eat the small bubbles of softer algae that begins to decay in the sun.'

A simple all around appraisal that held a lot more worry than he thought. The entire ocean around the shops was floating with these little white glowing lights. The small little things that would grow immensely in the next few hours and easily trap every single ship from being able to move without moving as an entire entity. And it would even attract monsters to eat it.

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Chapter 1659 1659. Breaking The Algae

"Get moving! Speed up! Use whatever mana we need!" Walker's booming voice was amplified by his manipulation of the wind. Every ship heard it. Everyone that was enjoying the moon and stars was shocked. But when they noticed the small gatherings of algae seemingly growing before their eyes they started to realize something was wrong.

Scylla and Leon were the first to begin relaying the same orders. They had enough experience between them that they knew or had heard details about the lunar algae. If they remained here, their journey would be as good as over. They would fall even further behind the enemy that had enslaved their own people.

The ships seemed to rumble as the runes on them began to flow with higher mana than before. They had not truly been mobilized to manipulate the waters around them. So far, it had been minimal mana used to manipulate water and a higher reliance on the natural winds of the ocean.

Since the night had been fairly calm, the speed had been reduced so that any dangers could be better fought off. Unfortunately, that had caused this situation. The algae had been able to latch on to the ships partially. It had also allowed the growth of the algae faster than expected. no one thought that they would be facing so much danger from a naturally growing plant than a monster. But here they were.

A fire mage released a stream of fire that burned up a small portion of the algae on the side of the ship. They would be tracking it with them all night if they didn't release it. This didn't seem to work though. The algae resisted the heat with the water that had been absorbed with it. This was why it would not fall apart in the harsh ocean sunlight. It would just slowly rot over time.

"Stay back and let a real flame destroy this annoying pest!" The roar that followed shook the ships even more. The glow of embers highlighted Ignus's maw as he had taken off from the ship and returned to his natural dragon size and shape.

The flames released around every ship were spectacular. They were guided with extreme precision above that of any fire mage that had come on this journey. They wrapped the metals of the hulls without damaging the runes or the ships themselves. Some flames licked the railings of the ship but everyone had jumped back at Ignus's order.

The smell of burning salts made everyone's noses and eyes sting but they knew this was the algae losing the moisture it had saved. One ship after another appeared to lose the small pieces of lunar algae that had built up on them. It was an incredible display of power in flames.

"Awesome." Walker could only say this. He was in awe of Ignus's displays. He had seen some of the things Ignus was capable of. Yet, he didn't see it so up close. He was clearly feeling the might in the flames that Ignus had within his body. A deep heat that was completely bonded with who Ignus was and what he could do. It was the many years of accumulation that no one else could reach. An understanding that he was a fire dragon and the fire was there to be part of him.

The landing of Ignus shook the ship Walker was on but he didn't flinch. Instead, he ran toward the edge of the ship which was still steaming. The lunar algae had been burned up but the waters still held many of the glowing white dots. There was plenty of algae growing here. It was going to keep growing as long as the moon was out and the ships were in their way.

"Faster, speed up the mana usage. We can replenish it later!" Walker's following order had already been given by the king of the surface. He had come here to join the movement and invest in the golems that were part of the fleet. He had less experience joining the others in battle but felt the energy and seriousness in the situation. Therefore, he gave his best.

As the orders increased, the liveliness of the golems became clear. The dwarves controlling the aquatic golems latched on to the ships here and there. They had tools at the ready scraping away portions of

lunar algae from the ships that attempted to reattach themselves. This was a key order from the king of the surface, the best strategic mind of the dwarven kingdom.

This went on for three hours. Everyone moving here and there to burn, scrape, and help those working. The algae went on for as far as the eye could see until the moon fully reached the zenith. It seemed to glow even more brightly causing the algae to grow at a faster pace.

'Emergency quest- lunar growth

The algae in the waters is growing at an accelerated rate due to the high amount of lunar light falling on them. Many people are in danger along with the heroes themselves.

Requirements- block out the moon and save the people on their journey

Reward- oceanic mapping skill'

The system spurred Walker even more. He had no idea how he would achieve this but he was willing to attempt it. He was willing to do whatever he needed. Such an important situation was clearly rewarded with the best skill for them.

The ships needed saving. The people on them were working themselves to the bone for it. Now, if they survived, they would have a skill that could map the ocean better. Walker had no idea how it would work but he didn't care. He could use the skill in any way he had the ability to.

The only issue was that he had to somehow block out the light of the sun. His first thought was Rise and Alice. But if they helped, the light would still reflect on the algae. It was clearly why Alice and Rise had stopped their attempts to assist. Rise knew that her light elemental mana would just bolster the algae and act against them. She didn't want to be flying back to land alone. That would be an incredible insult to her and all dragons for failing here.

Alice was just wise. She saw the light causing a faster growth of algae. How could she not hold herself back from using her songs? They would just cause pain instead of helping anyone. That would be against her beliefs in and out. An incredible let down for everything she stood for as a healer.

"Mordant!" Walker realized that one person had more power here than anyone else. It was those with darkness affinities. The dragonkin that Mordant had around him were already moving the fastest and helping the other the most even though they lacked skills to do anything about the lunar algae.

It was nighttime. The most ideal time for darkness elemental mana. There were no shadows to use but that isn't bad, there was an endless ocean of darkness around them. How could they miss this? Walker should have felt it the second that the moon rose. Yet, he had lost himself in the beauty and the dangers.

"Mordant, I need you to work with me!" Walker had neglected manipulating the darkness elemental mana. He had been too focused on light and other elemental mana as of late. But now, he could unleash skills with Mordant as strong as he needed. However long he needed to stop the algae from growing, he would do it.

"What do you need? I don't have fire to burn the algae like Ignus. If I use my darkness flames I will ruin the ships as well." Mordant understood that he could not help here. If he did he would cause irreparable damage to the ships and potentially be the reason all the efforts thus far failed.

"No, not that. We are going to use darkness elemental mana to manipulate the darkness. We are going to block out the moon entirely. You have the mana control and I can add natural mana to improve your skill. We are going to work in tandem." Walker spoke quickly. He knew that the sooner that he did this the sooner they would be able to move from this place safely.

The moment that the lunar algae lost the moonlight would be the moment that it stopped adhering to the ships. Then it would be smoother sailing. They would not have any resistance cutting through the water to the spaces they could see in the distance without any glowing dots. They just needed to push through to get to that point.

"Block out the moon? That's a new one." Mordant grinned. He had heard about blocking out the sun but the moon? An interesting idea.

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Chapter 1660 1660. Covered In Shadows

Blocking the sun? That was a common dream of some monsters or people. They would think that was a massive goal that no one had before. But blocking the moon? That was a first for Mordant. He was

perfectly set on it. The darkness mana was already stronger around them. The added bonus that the ocean held a very dark atmosphere already helped too.

"Just try to make a ball of shadows. I will try to flatten it like a disk in the air. It should be possible. I don't think it will be stationary either, it would move with us since it would be attached to us." Walker knew it would have a high mana cost to do this, but it would be worth it.

"Shadow covering?" the familiar elder voice of Shade made both Mordant and Walker smirk. "And interesting thing to be doing without the most powerful dark spirit here, don't you think?" this slightly arrogant attitude was not poor. It was clearly the show that Shade wanted to put on instead of being silent and continuing to rest.

The situation wasn't so dangerous that Shade felt he had to protect them. He was just interested and acting on a whim. He was still different since he had fused with Mordant's partner. He had accepted that he was not just Shade but more than that. He had the memories and feelings of care for Mordant. He also had an interest in the world more so than before.

The reclusive attitude he had had before was completely tossed aside. He would not just run about speaking and acting around as the other grand elemental spirits did. But he was still interested to see what would happen when Walker and Fleur added natural mana to something he helped with. Any elemental spirit would want to be part of that. A rising natural spirit was going to use natural mana, wasn't that tempting?

"We will make it happen then." the surge of darkness elemental mana around them grew instantly. Mordant mobilized his full strength to pull at the shadows. Even the ocean's dark mana rose quickly to gather around them.

It only took a quick look for even more to appear as Shade melded back in to the spirit marks on Mordant's body. Walker was shocked. He did not feel that Mordant had such a masterful control of the mana before. It had seemingly jumped to do as he commanded. Especially with Shade's minimal addition to the cause.

"I will get to work too." Walker couldn't slack off. He felt Fleur stirring in the spirit mark after she heard the conversation. She would gladly help by using some natural mana with Walker. But they had to work hard and together, just because Mordant and Shade had the skills and knowledge to easily manipulate their elemental mana did not mean it would be a simple thing for Walker. He was still younger and had split himself between many manas.

The natural mana seemed to be a little slow but the moment that it mixed with the darkness elemental mana that Mordant was pulling toward the ships, the darkness flared up. No one knew what was going on until they looked over to see that Mordant and Walker were pushing mana toward each other.

The sudden rise in shadows and twisting darkness would have shocked anyone if they were not aware that there were people that could manipulate the shadows around. But the sudden change was still awe inspiring. It was changing the way that many people were able to do since the light around them seemed to be dimmer. The lanterns burning had to be stocked by those that noticed the lesser line of sight they had.

Before everyone's eyes, a ball of darkness began to take shape. The shadows and the darkness mana were condensed in one place. The natural mana had begun to mix and show what it could do. The rate of the condensing darkness mana was faster. Other elemental manas were forced away. This was the strength of using the natural mana over other manas to help. Light elemental mana could not have been used at all.

As the ball of darkness began to flatten out with Walker and Mordant's will, the moonlight above the single ship was blocked out easily. However, this was not the goal. They wanted to spread the mana in a wide disk to cover the entire fleet of ships.

Soon, there was a collective acceptance that the sailors needed to begin working together even more. The ships that the algae touched were an issue but the moonlight was blocked out. That stopped the lunar algae from growing any more. It was like a fire that had been doused by water, it was an instant change.

Without the light from the moon, many people were able to understand the overall purpose. They hurriedly scraped away the lunar algae that was built up on the hull. The golems even began scraping themselves while there was a chance. It was like a spot of darkness on the glowing pale moonlit sea. A sight that was equally amazing compared to the light that had blossomed as the sun fell below the waves.

As more mana gathered and the darkness disk formed, it was made thinner. But the moonlight was weak and had no way to penetrate the darkness. It had been boosted greatly by natural mana and had radically taken over the sky above the ships. The pure darkness was barely able to be illuminated by the lights around.



The lunar algae started to suffer immediately. Besides being scraped away at a fast speed by everyone working together, it was also losing its vitality. It needed the light of the moon to even grow. Otherwise, the lunar algae was supposed to be small and dormant. Now it could only die off.

The full speed of the ships made their way to the unlit areas of ocean nearby. No one dared to move forward without any approval. Ceasing their movement, all eyes fell on Mordant and Walker who were now back to back. Mordant was grinning like a child that had just been handed a key to a candy store. He had not expected that being bolstered by natural mana would feel so amazing.

The boost he had was much greater than when he had experienced the affinity potions. He believed that every part of his body was awakening to a full understanding of his own abilities. This was enlightening. Even Shade was feeling the closer connection to the mana he had made his body from. The mana that he had originated from. It was a moment that neither could have imagined before now.

When they saw that there was no more need to force the darkness mana to spread above their heads, the two released it. This sudden pulse of darkness mana caused the shadows to warp again before dissolving in a black fog. It was an unexpected outcome but also another enlightening experience.

'The user has manipulated darkness mana at a higher level in tandem with an experienced being. The results have classified the user to gain two skills from the shadow wizard system.'

Shadow cover- 4 mana cost a minute

The user is able to condense their own shadow and cover themselves with it. They can block out the light of the sun and protect their body with it. This skill is very advantageous depending on the race of the user. Some vampires that acquire this skill are known as daywalkers.

Shadow fog- 10 mana cost

The user can condense a ball of shadow then force it to disperse in a wave of dark fog. This fog has a slight decaying effect that is easily resisted. However, this skill is perfect for blinding others while also warping shadows. It is partially an illusion skill that is more powerful at night than in the day.'

The system reported this to Walker but it was not what he was focused on. Instead he was focused on the tired and heavily breathing sailors and soldiers. They had given their all to peel away the lunar algae while the two had the shadows protecting them. It was hard work and had massively paid off.

"Everyone should rest!" Walker gathered his voice and shouted as loud as he could. He wanted everyone to know that they were safe for now. That they had done well. That the danger had passed.

"It was perfect. The natural mana...I will be below deck." Mordant did not hold back. He went to meditate on his new understandings. The other royal dragons saw this and looked at Walker. They too would need to experience this. They could also be enlightened by natural mana.