

## Master 1861

### Chapter 1861 1861. Weak Undead

Walker, Mordant, and Midnight began pulling the shadows closer. They knew that if they ran in to undead mud mantis that they would be facing a harsher challenge. However, they still wanted to do the most that they could to avoid detection.

At the same time, Walker and Gil stayed closer together, this wasn't to hide better but to put their heads together with the wind. The air was all around them. Therefore, the wind elemental mana they could sense was also all around them.

Gil was not adept in sensing it in the same way that Walker was. He had the higher affinity because he was strongly bonded to Zephyr. However, she was not coming out at all. Instead, she had been helping Ventus earlier and still needed to recover. That was the price that came with helping a dragon use massive amounts of wind elemental mana.

"Just stick with me and tell me if you feel any small changes in the air around us or ahead. It might be some distance away, but you will still feel it. It's specifically the wind elemental mana reacting to something moving. You should feel it when we move." Walker talked softly to Gil. it was how he felt the wind elemental mana around him.

Walker could easily sense the manas around him. He could help manipulate the darkness mana while also manipulating the wind elemental mana. That was just the perks of being able to manipulate all manas. Not to mention his training thus far in controlling manas overall using natural mana as the key to do so.

As he explained the best way to catch the small changes around them, Gil was clearly starting to understand himself better as well. Every single step, the air around the group had to move. It didn't stay the same as they pushed through it. Just like water, there were changes in some small way or another.

These small changes were what some monsters with natural wind affinities would use to hunt. They could wait in ambush and react instantly. Some monsters had very fine hairs on their bodies that helped them do so. This was what Gil thought as he felt Walker's sensing of wind and how it also enveloped him. It was a learning opportunity that was more than anything else most people would ever have.

When Walker used the abilities to manipulate elemental manas, he was already doing it differently than mages would normally. This was because he had sensed the natural flows of manas due to the natural mana affinity he had. Therefore, he used his senses and his body's mana to manipulate elemental manas at a more natural level.

This was why he was able to show Gil the way that the manas moved around them even though they were not necessarily controlling the wind elemental mana. Just by sensing it, Gil saw that there was more around him.

The natural flow of air through this dried riverbed and the many sandstone tunnels was extremely complicated. It was something that most people only picked up when they were trained to do so. "What's that?" Gil felt that they were having some sort of push back. As if the wind around them had just become slightly stronger.

"That's something ahead of us. It moved and the air can flow better now. We have a monster ahead." Walker and the others crouched down more. Mordant and Current watched carefully to see what the party would do. They were technically recovering their manas too but they also didn't see a reason for a powerful dragon to be involved in this.

Not that they wouldn't act if needed. It was just impractical to use their strength and risk collapsing the entire sandstone cave which was finally able to begin recovering. Even without water here yet, it was a sure thing that water mana would be coming more and more. Current was having an easier time drawing some small amounts from deep in the earth below the dried river bed already.

"There it is." Gil whispered as the shape which everyone would have assumed to be part of another cave pillar shifted. The shadow looked odd but it was enough for Walker to get an all around appraisal.

'Undead mud mantis

Starved to death by the rapid decrease in food and habitat, this is one of many undead mud mantis forced to wander with food as its focus. Due to their sharp instincts, the undead mud mantis was able to dig out and attack many of its own kind from the silt. This caused it to become bloated as it rotted since it is unable to properly absorb nutrition.

The twisted form that it has is dried out by years of being unable to find moisture. This leaves an odd weak shell around it and whatever it dried out within its stomach. The earth that normal forms around its sharp bone blades fell off leaving a weaker bone blade with high sharpness.

They are very quick and will attack anything nearby them that moves. Their eyes are more or less blind leaving them to focus on their instincts more now. This causes them to attack walls, falling dust, and anything else that makes a sound. The best...'

Walker stopped what he was doing and called for the eternal orb to take form. He felt it becoming a spear in his hands. But this wasn't just the average spear. Walker had once seen a spear with a small round shield on it. This attachment made it possible to attack while somewhat hiding from counterattacks.

It had just been a random weapon he had seen. Nothing that he imagined he would use. But when he saw that the undead mud mantis had a weak body and was fast, he knew that he had to be able to deflect an attack while dealing one. Instead of sending Su with a shield charge, it was better to end it with this one attack. Therefore no one would be hurt and they could keep pushing forward.

As Walker left the group while waving everyone back, they watched him take a stance. The scuffle of his feet made the undead mud mantis jerk around. Walker could see where some parts of its body were oddly stretched when it had long ago eaten its own kind. But he could also see the holes from dry rot in its exoskeleton. Not to mention the remnants of packed earth on its body.

With a target found, the undead mud mantis moved as if it was screeching. But no sound was able to be made after being dead for so many years. It charged at Walker with a bladed arm slicing out rapidly. The speed was definitely above what Walker would have been able to react to. If he had not used the all around appraisal and just attacked, he would be gravely hurt.

Now Walker had been prepared. He took a hard stance and thrust the spear forward. The scythe like arms of the undead mud mantis struck the shield part of the spear causing the blades to chip and deflect upwards and downwards respectively. The spear tip of the eternal orb spear shield form kept pushing forward.

The sound of dry cracking as the spear penetrated the center of the undead mud mantis's body was loud enough to echo along the sand stone caves. Enough to notify anything else ahead of the party that they were coming. Fortunately, Walker only had to face one enemy right now.

Feeling the weakness after attacking, Walker jerked the spear to the side and completely severed the undead mud mantis in half. This was impressive by the standards of battle since everyone knew Walker had not used this form for the eternal orb before. Yet, it was also a testament of how weak these monsters would be. They were nothing like the intense undead that had been above. These were a more natural undead formed more naturally in a way.

"Hear that?" Remey grimaced while she and Su started to push to meet Walker. Remey knew she could end an undead mud mantis with a single attack. Su knew she could easily defend that attack since she had seen the speed these undead monsters had. Both would be able to efficiently take them down as they came.

The scuttling legs and the slight slamming as things his tone proved to be evidence that many more of these undead mud mantis had been left behind by time. But there were also sounds of fighting. "I would say they aren't friendly with one another." Gil smiled as he knew this made things easier. The undead mud mantis did not differentiate between ally or foe. They just attacked blindly to try and get food of any kind.

"That should make it easier to attack as well." Onyx used the shadows to completely cover him. He wanted to take a shot at these monsters too.

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Chapter 1862 1862. Body Changes

While the party watched, everyone managed to grasp one thing. The new title that Onyx had gotten was clearly more influential than they had believed. More so than what onyx had yet to realize too.

The dual hero of light and darkness was an interesting title that focused on those pacific qualities that onyx represented. But it had come at the willingness to sacrifice himself using both of these elemental manas in every aspect. Therefore, when Onyx had been healed and survived, he had felt a deeper connection to both elemental manas but just chalked it up to a title and how he was growing.

The fact that he had been healed so quickly should have been the thing to stand out. But no one had realized that the changes in Onyx had been more than just a title and ability to bond with both elemental manas.

What the party saw was Onyx efficiently and quickly slithering in and out of the dark edges on the riverbed and sandstone shadows. The fluidity was something that Mordant even praised because he had spent a longer time mastering that in his younger years.

While the scales that had been damaged showed back up after healing, no one had noticed that Onyx had not shown a single scar after the healing. That his scales had seemed to gain a slightly darker luster. But his eyes even showed a brighter glint of light mana.

These things were small and hard to grasp but had been making a larger effect on Onyx's body overall. He had gained better control over the mana he fed on and the mana he processed within himself. The control over these manas had pushed him beyond what he had been before.

The trainings that he had done all brought results, but now that he had been able to step on to another level, the results that had been compiled seemed even more evident. Especially the ability to hide himself in the shadows. Especially his true body size.

When the sounds of multiple undead mud mantis fighting got louder, the entire party was ready to jump in and defend Onyx. to fight alongside him. But when Onyx had reached the enemies before him, his tail shot out of a shadow below an undead mud mantis's body. In a single slam, the mud mantis folded like an empty paper bag.

The next thing everyone saw was Onyx lower himself back in to the shadows and leap out. His full size head appearing before his mouth opened and he bit down on another undead mud mantis. For anyone watching this without knowing that Onyx had a truly kind heart, they would believe him to be a vicious and brutal monster.

The attacks were quick and exploited the weaknesses of the mud mantises. Their weakened bodies from being undead for years. From being altered due to eating their own kind many years ago when hunger was all they cared about. These weaknesses made them only able to perish for real when Onyx made a move.

The speed that Onyx had was also better than before. While the manties could still be faster than him, their attacks seemed to be deflected. When Walker focused on his darkness manipulation, he found that each individual scale was wrapped in shadows. It acted as an armor. This was radically more advanced than the dark and light elemental mana armor that Onyx had used before. This was more refined and would be hard for any enemy to grasp.

"Not sharing!" Midnight leaped forward. She was annoyed because Onyx was hogging all the enemies. It went from the entire party looking at the potentially dangerous opponents to wondering just how fast Onyx would handle them all.

The bone scythes on the mantis's arms were weakened by years of sitting unused. They had easily chipped and cracked against Walker's defenses and attacks. Since Midnight knew that was the case, she did not fear that she would be hurt. She had dragon scales. She was a dragon! She was tougher.

That was why no one batted an eye when she leaped in to battle and used her claws to slash apart one of the undead mud mantises. Onyx did hesitate for a moment though. He had apparently been very in the moment attacking and realizing that he had altered his body. That he had started to get stronger without even realizing it.

Not to mention that he now had the same leveling system as the others now. He would be able to get stronger the more that he worked towards heroic goals. One such goal was to get through this dry river bed. They would get closer to completing a quest but also in finding something amazing.

This one minded focus was enough for Onyx to keep battling and moving ahead. This caused Midnight to start running ahead too since she didn't want to be left behind. Naturally, the party had to follow. No one yelled at the pair to stop or slow down. Instead, Walker began to forget the darkness mana and hide the party. He focused on using the wind mana to sense everything ahead. It was like doing scouting but a little less telling since it was just with a feeling of wind. It was the same as seeing.

"There are no more." Midnight slightly growled out. She seemed better at speaking human words every day. But for whatever reason, she still barely spoke. Unless it was to announce her frustration at times.

It left Onyx laughing a little since he had started to have fun racing ahead of Midnight using the shadows. However, he could feel the drain on him. He had used a lot of mana moving from shadow to shadow. Altering his body rarely cost mana but doing so in particular ways was draining away the mana in his body much more. Not to mention using the shadows as a shield from any attacks.

"You look like you are going to adapt well." Walker had a little praise for Onyx who was clearly feeling the tiredness now. "But you might need to do a little more training since you don't know your own strength anymore." Walker chuckled as Onyx took his favorite spot on Walker's shoulders.

"It is easier but harder." Onyx only replied like this. That Was his overall opinion while his mind dwelled on his understandings of light and darkness elemental manas.

"You can train with me." Alice spoke up for the first time a little bit. She had seen how Onyx used darkness but she wanted to see him in a palace where he could show off his usage of light elemental mana more. She wanted Arora to learn from him a little when they were all back outside in the light safely. Especially once they were home safely. That way Alice and Arora could both learn more about light elemental mana in a new way.

"I will." Onyx had already hoped to do so. The idea of training with heavenly serpents and abyssal serpents alike was enough to make him happy at the moment. The future would only show what amazing things they would be able to do.

"Should we keep moving then? The river seems to widen this way." Current began moving ahead again. He didn't want to stop, especially since he saw the changes in the river bed. "Normally when this happens, there is either an underground pond or pool. The water slows down a lot before it enters the ocean. We have been walking for awesome time but might not be close at all. It is deceiving."

From experience, Current clearly understood how an underground river would flow. This was just the facts that came with learning about water. especially since he understood how water flowed naturally. The flow here was easy to see.

Changes in the sandstone walls of this cavern. Some changes in the pillars that the water had been eroding before the river dried. It all told stories of how this river flowed and how much they had moved. Even going on foot was deceiving. This was a natural flowing path to where more water would be.

Nature had done this without anything or anyone telling it to. It had become an amazing road right to the ocean and it was better than any pathway carved or created by anything above ground. That was just a fact. Underground there were no hills or mountains to climb. Just the fastest possible path of travel.

"I might need you to start looking for herbs. I can smell something." Remey seemed to have been in a bit of a daze before her eyes brightened and she realized she was smelling plants now. The desert and the mummified city had lacked this smell. Now it stood out greatly.

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Chapter 1863 1863. A Hunch

"There is more water here. In the air and a little in the dried river bed." Current supported what Remey was smelling and feeling.

"That's because we are getting closer to the end of this river, isn't it. The desert being dry and cursed wouldn't affect way out here." Gil caught on easily. He could sense that this was a better place too.

They had all caught on that their group had traveled fairly far. It wasn't just the fact that they had been walking for a while in the dim light of a dried river bed and sandstone cave. It was what they could feel in their bodies. The wear and tear if walking faster to find their end.

"There it is." Remey was very glad to see a tiny little sprout. It was on the side of the sandstone cave which surprised Walker. Naturally, he used the all around appraisal skill to see what it was that Remey had just found.

'Prickled sand weed

The prickled sand weed is somewhat like a cactus. They grow in very harsh environments with very little water. They prefer dim areas and will grow faster when they are exposed to damp conditions while still as seeds.

They can grow through sandstone easily causing them to be the foundations for some large sandstone oases in the desert. Their leaves may be incredibly prickly, but they hold a very potent earth mana that can be used to treat the poison from other plants on the skin.'



"I read about this prickled sand weed in a book. It is hard to find since most beaches are not good enough for them to grow. But it's here and I see even more seeds and sprouts around here. I would assume there was a small rain storm recently near here. That would make it grow." Remey rambled off details. Walker had expected he needed to share details from the all around appraisal. But he had been wrong.

"So you will use that for medicine? Or will you use it for potions?" Gil had an inkling that Remey was thinking about potions. She only got like this when she was thinking about potions and how she could use the herbs better. But since she was looking at the unsprouted seeds too, everyone knew that she would bring them to the herbalists in Genesis to grow them.

"If you want better herbs there will be some at the mouth of this river. Where the water has barely touched during floods in the area. That is where many herbs had perfect growing conditions." it was clear that Current had regained enough water mana and was greatly comfortable. He hated the desert because it was his enemy.

In a way, the royal dragons perfectly kept one another in check. Ignus could be doused by Current's water attacks. But if Current entered Ignus's territory, then Current would be the one to evaporate. This was just perfect since they would be able to be equals as long as they remained in their own territories. Specifically when it came to the royal court, they would be able to keep each other from acting out.

Not that acting out was an issue to a dragon. Ignus was hot headed just like the flames he used. Current was flowing and a little manipulative just like the flow of water around the world. Neither let the other get away but both had respect for one another. This was the interesting dynamic of dragons that Walker and many others missed before they had actually met the dragons and begun to learn about them.

"Let's push ahead and see where this end is. The river mouth might also have monsters surrounding it. Nothing has come here in a long time." Su made sure to remind everyone of danger. But Current and Mordant did not concern themselves with it at all. They clearly wanted to see where things led now. It almost felt like the party was just on the backs of the two dragons who were doing whatever they wanted.

There was a slight light as the group began to near what they believed was the end of the dried river bed. From what Walker could see, small tracks had been made in this area of the silt covered floor. There were even signs that water had lapped up and hit the floor and walls at times. Exactly the same as the ocean might or a large lake.

"Cat tails are growing around here too. They are way taller than us." Alice was very impressed with the very tall plants seemingly walling off the sandstone cave and the river bed from the outside. This was why so little light was coming in.

However, it felt safer even though Gil and Walker were both seeing many monster tracks checking out this area. It meant that there were many monsters coming here for shelter or water nearby.

"I would say that this is most likely a lake right? If it was the ocean right away then there would be the smell of saltwater." Current agreed with what Walker was saying. I think you should take a look at

"It's more than that. This is the spot right before the ocean. The water flowing from multiple rivers and streams flows in to this lake then filters through a marshland to the ocean. Slowly becoming saltwater." Current had sensed all of this the moment that they started to feel the light and stepped out. But what was astounding was what the group saw as they followed him through the cat tails and in to a more open space.

Flowing reeds and other taller plants seemed to stretch around a massive body of fresh water. Even beyond that, the group could see the water moving through the land in snaking streams before it connected to the vastness of the ocean. A slight breeze carried the smallest of hints that the ocean was beyond this. If the group was not standing where they were, then they would not have been able to tell where they were at all.

"I will be back." Current did not hesitate to take his full dragon form and dive in to the waters before him. The desert had taken its own toll on him. But right now, he was faced with the comfort of water. Naturally, he would be surrounded by it.

"We should do a little scouting too. There were a few monsters to handle but they were not as big an issue as I thought they would be. We just have to get a good place to set up camp then guess where the ancient race went." Walker calmly made the plan while pointing to a few directions. He was going to take to the air with Midnight to get a better above ground look at what might be here or there.

The others looked ready to make a camp as well. Some of the lingering effects of their recent battle still sat with them. They could feel the tiredness that still hung out in the back of their minds. It would be a little while longer before they were all back to perfect states. Not that it was an issue to feel a little tired. That kept them honest and from overworking themselves.

Remey on the other hand, was already searching for herbs. Walker gave Gil a little nod to let him know to keep an eye on her. She might wander off in her focus and end up gathering every herb here. Not that it was an issue, this way just unknown territory. Splitting up would be a poor decision.

As Walker stepped in to the air and took the scene in better, he understood the majesty of the marsh. The different environments mixing differently than the swamps he had seen before. It was very peaceful and perfect for life to grow. Not to mention the multiple different elemental manas constantly shifting. It was a great place for natural mana to exist.

But what he saw in the distance was what caused his smile to grow. Walker could see all the way to the distant ocean. All the way across the water and toward the large islands off the coasts. The islands that he would rush to if he was trying to escape something on the main land that he believed would plague the entire mainland.

The ocean was dangerous. Therefore, it was the perfect barrier that nature created. So what if a few people perished crossing it. If they were trying to save their species, then they would make that sacrifice.

Since Walker put his mind in their shoes, he knew that he would be able to check this palace for signs that a race had been there. The islands were his hunch. A near perfect hunch. All he had to do was get everyone on board with searching it after they rested.

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Chapter 1864 1864. Marsh Nights

"What about this one?" Remey had dragged Walker to look at a small mushroom she had found. The odd green and purple color of it had screamed for her not to touch it.

'Marsh mushroom

The marsh mushroom is incredibly common. It normally grows in the colder months, but can be found all year long. It has very vibrant colors but is perfectly edible. They are a very nutritious source of food

for many monsters and other races. They can be dried out for three years without any worry that they will rot or mold.'

"It's not for alchemy but it will be a great snack." Walker picked up the odd green and purple colored mushroom wondering how it had such a color but was perfectly fine to eat. The odd way that plants and monsters evolved over time would never cease to amaze him.

"That's lame. I thought it would be some poisonous mushroom that I could experiment with." The annoyed grumbling from Remey was enough to make Walker laugh again. He knew that she would be unhappy after she had rushed to get him for his all around appraisal skill.

"Are you two still looking at random plants?" Gil found the two looking at another cluster of marsh mushrooms. Walker was about to pick them when he had interjected.

"We just found some things we can eat for dinner later. I know that Su and Midnight have gotten more or less set up. I also saw that Alice got a fire going. I would have done that when I got back." Walker was feeling a little bad since he had ended up not helping much with camp set up.

"It's all set up. But you said we were going to head to some island nearby?" This was what Walker had mentioned to Gil and the others before he had started to help Remey before. It was easy enough to just say that but without many details, that was all it was.

Current had already returned after searching the depths of the massive lake and finding the currents that caused the march and lake to mix. He seemed very jovial now that he had done so. Returning to the water and being immersed within it was the same as being home. Especially after the desert and underground.

When the three returned to the small camp that they had found, Alice had already started a small pot of water boiling on the fire. "This is still the best spot that I saw. It's up high enough to see over the grasses but not too high that we stand out." Walker was very happy with where they were camping.

"Staying the night here is definitely better. We can watch the tide too. Current said that the tide would make this area flood slightly every night so being higher is better. I did want to go above the cave we came out of though." Gil had tried to convince everyone to climb the rocks where the dry riverbed cave

had come from. But after some debate, fear that the sandstone rocks would crumble proved to be too much.

From what they had all gathered, the sandstone had been formed by the flow of water over many years. Eventually the river had altered and become smaller creating the dry river bed they now knew. It also left behind an odd sand stone rock formation for miles that went under some larger hills that naturally would trap a desert from expanding. An interesting flow of nature.

"Now that you have made it back, tell us why you want to go to the islands even though Current did not find a trace that an ancient race had been around this lake." Mordant had been exploring on his own. He had nearly taken to the sky to go and search the island himself but had held back. He preferred to stay with the party. He was one of the closest to them and felt that it was better to have them with him.

The past had proved that the things the party did brought about amazing results. They had managed to show off hidden events that most would never know of. Besides the fact that they also seemed to have some hidden skills to do the impossible. It was just better overall to go with this flow.

"Where else would they have gone if they thought the entire continent was lost to some evil undead race that wanted to worship a god the opposite of theirs?" The casual response that Walker gave was the same as any hunch. Yet, it was an understandable theory.

"If this was also closer to the ocean, then the island would be right there to show them a place to go. I don't know what was here years and years ago. I could never tell you either. But I do know that regardless, this river had flowed enough water here to make it to the ocean. So, it would make sense that even if this was the same, there would be more water here."

"Current already said that the tides made this place flood. If that happened when this river flowed, then it makes sense that a sightline to the ocean would be much clearer. Therefore, the island was right there as if it was a beacon of hope." I think you should take a look at

"It all makes sense. I can't refute that logic. I will go to the island with you." Since Su was the logical type, she supported the idea. She wanted to get back with everyone, but the quest they had to find a lost race made it a priority to search here sooner.

Midnight and Onyx didn't seem to mind and just kept doing what they were doing. Alice gave a slight nod as she watched the pot above the fire and started to add a few things that they would be eating as a stew later.

"Then we will search it in the morning. I can use the night to replenish even more mana," Mordant was better off replenishing his darkness mana. He wanted to have more than he had currently at his disposal. This was simply because he knew that there were other threats to handle. The search for the demons was still ongoing.

"That's that then. I think we can take the air though instead of the water. We shouldn't need a ship or anything to travel the distance." There was a slight happiness that came with flying through the air instead of going back on the ship. It would take forever to get a ship around the coast and potentially through more danger.

Especially since the group was very limited on where they had come out on the continent. It was just a fact that they were on a far shore of the Fel empire territory. The maps that they had been shown were not very specific. It was understandable since Genesis was an entirely new empire in the eyes of both the Rize and Fel empires, they had to take some precautions while understanding them.

"On another note, what do all of you expect from the night here? I saw plenty of animals and monsters moving around here already. Nothing too crazy. A few birds and other flying type monsters. I even saw a scaled mouse earlier." Walker's all around appraisals had mostly been smaller monsters that would not be too much of an issues. A surprise since this place should have some larger predators somewhere.

"That's what I was scouting out. I think there are some lizard like monsters in the water. Current might have seen them." Gil and found tracks and followed them to the water. He was sure that they would be coming out around the night time to make more tracks here and there.

"I discovered burrows in the mud. I do not need to explore them. They are small and whatever made them could sense me. They did not bother me at all and I doubt they will be unwise." A dragon's aura was strong. Current could easily stave off the monsters in the water. But that was the issue, they all might be fearful and attract larger monsters that were too foolish to run away from Current.

"There are plenty of monsters with dragon ancestors around the Sigil continent. I believe you may attract more monsters than deter." Su's blunt worry was enough to make Current frown. But he did not argue this. He knew this to be true. He recalled the scales on the bears that had been peacefully

following their group on the way to the wyvern's territory. They were peaceful, but other monsters would not be.

"We will just have to keep watch and see what comes then. I think having a larger fire might help. It can deter anything afraid of it too." Since Walker wanted to be more prepared to attack, having a larger fire meant he could use fire attacks faster. It was just smarter.

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Chapter 1865 1865. Wild Marsh

As the sun set, the sounds of the march only grew. It was odd hearing the differences between the desert and mummified city compared to the marsh lands. This entire place seemed to come alive ten times more than any forest the group had been in.

When the sounds of splashing water were heard, Walker could use his keen eyes to find that there was some monster capturing another as prey. The lapping of water only grew as well as the tide rose in its cycle.

This growth of tide brought many fish monsters in to the lake and the march. It also brought a stronger smell of saltwater that had traveled back up through the marsh lands and toward the fresh water lake that was around where the group had camped out.

Tackling the first watch had been Walker's way to see what might be around him. He had seen Mordant wander off to look for the darkness place. He also knew that Current had settled at the bottom of the lake. Both would be doing what they needed to prepare to encounter a potentially isolated race that had fled the destruction of their home many generations ago.

While the others had clearly been more exhausted than they let each other seem, Walker was amazed to see that Midnight had stayed up with him and refused to sleep. "It's kind of nice to be awake and see something new, right?" Midnight just huffed a little at Walker. She had given up on her dragonkin form to return to her more comfortable dragon form.

Walker had taken the chance to help her clean her scales as he had promised earlier. Small bits of sand were stuck in the crevices of her scales which were definitely irritating. This was just the cost of having scales in a desert. Midnight was a dragon and had not grown to adapt to the desert sands. She had to deal with this until she had left the place that caused it.

What Walker noticed even more though, was that Midnight's scales had grown tougher than before. It appeared that as she grew, the scales were gaining a unique toughness shaped by the elemental manas that Midnight brought in and out of her body. Each scale seemed to hold a small amount of these manas that her body was using to shape them. It was an amazing realization and show of a dragon's strengths.

Every single dragon had their affinity. The water dragons had water elemental mana which helped them shape their bodies and grow. But for Midnight, she had affinities with all elemental manas due to her true dragon champion bloodline taking over. This made her able to bring natural mana inside her body just like Walker.

The result was clear. Tougher defenses along with increased growth. Walker had already sensed these things through his bonds with Midnight, but he had not looked closely enough to fully grasp what it all meant.

It was more than just her scales that grew tougher. It was her muscles, her skills, and her mind. That was why she was more adept in battling. Why she had jumped right in to the flow of fighting when Onyx had been showing off. She didn't want to be left out since she knew that he had been working harder than anyone to prove that he had caught up to them.

Just seeing her little brother taking the lead ahead of her had made Midnight realize that she was growing too slow. Not that she was the only one that felt that way. Walker was slightly astounded and jealous as well. He felt that he was progressing too slow as well.

When it came to using natural mana, Walker felt that he had let himself down. He had not developed attacking skills with natural mana. He had only been able to use it slightly better. Had only been able to find better ways to buff others or just generally send mana to others. It was too little and had been too risky in fighting.

The next splash came from a little closer than Walker expected causing him to use the all around appraisal skill to see what was causing it before settling back down in to the scale cleaning routine he had going.



'Blue maw skink

This is an odd beast that will often hide in the dry mud of a march during low tide. However, when the tide shifts, they will come out to hunt small fish so that they can store it away within their burrows on small marsh land hills.

They are very quick but will never fight anything larger than themselves. Their blue mouths are this color because of the unique water affinity poison that they produce. It has the ability to thicken water and force fish to get stuck temporarily before dissipating too much.

They are able to swim but would prefer not to since they are easily slowed by water and eaten by larger predators. This is why they are...'

The blue maw skink caught on that something was watching it as it had just snapped up a fish. It jolted away from the area without even hesitating. This let Walker settle back in to his thoughts and routine with Midnight. I think you should take a look at

Sensing that Walker was stressed and deeper in thought, Midnight nudged him softly. She was sure that he was going to be trying harder to get stronger before approaching the demons again. Especially since the Fel empire had opened his eyes to life, death, spatial, and time manas. Not to mention what other mysteries were outside the normal study of the world.

These manas were something that she also wanted to learn about. especially since she had seen that they held a lot of power. The undead they had faced, all the mummies, had been influenced by the smallest of death manas. All because someone had gone mad and thought themselves abv to manipulate something they had barely even scratched the surface of.

Yet, it was true that the false death runes and false death god had been created right there. Had become some insane undead beyond what the party had been able to understand yet. That was too much for all of them to just let go. The entire party felt that they had not been able to grasp any part of the world just yet.

While this was all true, both Walker and Midnight were left in a position that meant that they had to learn. That they had to expand themselves and somehow condense what they learned in to one thing. The very same that they had done with elemental manas in to natural mana.

"I know, we have a long way to go for now." Walker spoke softly as he looked over Midnight's shiny and clean scales. She had a slight white hue to her scales like a little bit of light had been trapped in all of them. It was touching seeing that she had grown up a bit more even through the recent chaos.

"What do you smell?" Walker noticed Midnight arch her head up and sniff a few times. It was clearly a sign that another monster had managed to get closer to them without him noticing yet.

Through the reeds and grasses, Walker noticed the glint of the fire reflected back at them. His eyes sharpened while he used the all around appraisal skill yet again. This time he was able to jump up and prepare for battle since he didn't like what he saw.

'Saltwater crocodile

This is considered one of the largest crocodilian monsters in the world that can exist today. They do not fear going out in to the ocean outskirts when they grow to adulthood. This is a young saltwater crocodile that will hunt within the marsh lands looking for larger fish and anything that dares enter its territory. In the next twenty years it will be able to hunt along the beaches.

Some have a small amount of dragon blood within them, but that is rare due to their slow aging and naturally slow reproduction. However, this allows them to develop very tough leathery skin along with powerful muscles. Do not underestimate their speed and strength.

While they will often hunt prey from the water, they will often ambush from the reeds or charge on to land if they sense prey nearby. The best way to scare them is using al attacks since they are less resistant to than physical attacks. They will also...'

Walker ignored the small hints that they will make a lot of hissing and grumbling noises to warn other predators that prey is here. It is a strategy to get at least a bite of food from prey. Instead, Walker pulled a ball of flames from the campfire and prepared to scare away the predator before him. Even if it was considered a young one.

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## Chapter 1866 1866. Ominous Feelings

"The journey there was proving fruitless until we discovered the last parts of false death runes remaining within small altars. They were fairly valuable since our enemies managed to gain access to the ruins and purify them." slimes shifted from side to side as the slime breeder's voice echoes around the stone walls of a large room.

Many patterns and runes had been carved in to the stones. None of them appeared to make much sense since the area itself was too dark to truly discern much. "And any more remains?"

"The purifications ruined the remaining monsters, undead, and anything that had been influenced by the small amounts of death mana. I was able to find remnants that the earth slimes sealed before they were ruined as well."

As pieces of stone with false death runes fell to the ground in a showcase, there were also some small black mana crystals. They appeared to be on the verge of shattering just by being there. "That is enough. You may prepare to send your creations across this continent. Begin gathering the soldiers we need."

A slight rumbling came from everywhere around the stone room. A darker figure stretched an arm out and grasped the death mana crystal. While a small amount of death mana had been condensed due to the twisted chaos of the mummified pharaoh, it was enough to create these items.

The small amount of death mana faded and was taken in through many runes and patterns on the armor of the hand and arm that had grasped it. When the crystal shattered, it disintegrated completely. The only thing left behind was the ominous aura of death and looming destruction.

"You can wake up and begin your work. I expect you to use every bit of mana and effort you have to bring forth the vessel that will carry my armies. Then you may slumber again." The order went to a huddled figure that was breathing softly in their own dreamland. But when that breathing stopped for a moment, the entire room shook more violently.

A massive amount of mana had surged all around causing unknown changes. The changes seemed to be shaking the very flow of mana all around. High densities of mana coursed through the runes and patterns. Some of these runes even appeared within the air as changes were made more and more to the room.

"As you wish my lord." a single nearly silent voice responded. Only a hint of tiredness behind it before the huddled figure began to stand.

Meanwhile, Walker had just thrown a large fireball at the saltwater crocodile. It had immediately seen the flames and tried to move aside. However, it had not dodged the attack. The sparks that came off and around it while the flames hit it were enough to light up the marsh a little more. But the al attack had its effect clear as day.

The young salt water crocodile rushed away in fear since it understood that a al attack like that would make it prey if it was hit over and over. The small burn mark on the tough leathery skin was proof enough that this was not prey in front of it. "That Was easier than I thought it would be."

Midnight had watched Walker attack and knew that she could have easily scared off the random enemy that had come to bother them. However, she had let Walker do his thing since he was the one on watch and technically she should be resting. Not that she had any intention of doing so.

"I know, it's just one monster. I will handle it when anything else comes by too." Walker knew that Midnight was looking at him because he had made a big show of getting rid of just one monster that was clearly not able to understand that it would not be able to harm them at all. But he had still done it just to do it.

"Why don't you go wake up Gil, we can switch watch and sleep." Walker sent Midnight on her way. Before the group knew it, the night had passed with everyone getting some rest. However, Walker had found himself awake all night without getting any rest. Midnight had been the same.

He had it in his head that something felt off. Nothing that he could put his finger on, but it was like a gut feeling. Just enough not to have a full understanding of what might be going on. He chalked it up to just being over tired or too in his own head about skills that he wanted to learn.

On the other hand, Mordant and Current had met up at some point early in the morning to discuss what they had found. "I still believe that there is more on that large island than you think. I did not see any signs of light, but there is a distinct lack of movement in the waters and at night around it. Not a single flying monster went near it."

"I know you did not see anything because you were focusing on just the shadows and changes in the light and darkness at night. But you should also consider the movements of the water. There is a perfect flow of warm water around that island bringing a lot of food for any monster there. If we were to look for something hunting then it would be in the water. The avian species might not care for them." I think you should take a look at [pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com)

The two were trying to discern what might be on the island when it came to life. However, it appeared that the entire island from their point of view was too overgrown. Especially when it came to the beaches. Walker and the rest of the party could clearly see plants growing right in to the sand which was odd since not many could survive the sands and saltwater.

[pandasnovel.com](http://pandasnovel.com) "I can see those plants from here. They are called salt saps." Walker had used the all around appraisal to see what he could. He also saw some of the same plant in the marsh near them. But they only seemed to live right on the edge of the water where saltwater met the fresh water flowing through.

'Salt saps

These plants are small tube like vines and roots that will grow randomly through sands. They prefer to absorb the nutrients from the waves and the tops of sand. They do not need much light and prefer the warmer weather. However, they need high amounts of salt to be able to create their protective skin. This causes them to live only where salt water grows and will stop them from growing anywhere with fresh water.

They have a strong earth and water affinity that allows them to be used to treatments in dehydration and lack of nutrients. However, depending on the water they soak up, they can be filled with toxins that will make those that eat them very ill.'

"So I can use them but I will have to make sure that they don't make anyone sick. It sounds like getting a priest for a nun to purify them is a first step." Remey made a mental note to gather some and see if having Alice purify them would make them safer to eat. But she mostly wanted them for making specific

medicines and potentially cleaning water of salt. That would be useful in the herb fields that needed unique flows of water.

"I think we should make a move to get out of the marsh. You said we would fly over but I think it will be more valuable to walk through the marshlands here and learn first." Su had thought of this during her time on watch. It made more sense to learn from this area than to skip it. They could learn more about herbs and the area they were in in general.

"I think that's a good idea. I have less tracking skills in this kind of place than anywhere else. It's not the same as the open fields or the forest at all. There is a lot of mud and it shifts with the tide. I need to learn how to pick out fresh tracks and old tracks in mud that doesn't dry. And, Current can help us learn." Giul made a very solid point that even Current thought was a wise decision. Waiting a little to learn was wise. Especially learning from a dragon.

"Alright then. We walk through the marsh. Onyx, do you want to make a move alone or stick with us?" Walker had noticed that Onyx appeared to want to explore. He could take his full size and travel through the reeds fairly easily. It was like this area was ideal for a serpent or snake monster like him.

"I will explore and let you all know what I learn." With this, Onyx was off and the party had their small walk to look forward to. They needed to get through the marsh and to the beach which was a fairly straight forward shot.

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Chapter 1867 1867. A Peaceful Nature

Having onyx go off again was nothing bad in Walker's eyes. He wanted to take the time to explore this area since it might have signs that there were other races here at some point. But it also looked like there were no angel steps here either.

The Fel angels had been here on this side of the Sigil continent for a long time. However, they did not have the time to explore and research the environments. It was clear that the Fel empire was lower in population already. But they did not build grand villages or large structures. They researched at a more individual level so that they could move through their lives.

This reclusiveness also led them to more or less work and live separately without expanding. Let alone the fact that they also had a floating city that would allow them to have a place to go when they needed to go anywhere. This stopped them from building a city on the ground. Their villages and larger towns were all they needed.

This made a lot of sense going through Walker's mind. He could fathom why this marsh land looked very untouched. However, it made him feel that the Fel empire was more in touch with nature and the flow of nature in a way.

Leaving these areas untouched for the most part allowed the monsters and plants to develop as they should. They held a natural balance that walkers could sense. The manas flowed smoothly and he even caught a few elemental spirits here and there that would have been pushed away if the angels had come here before.

"I just realized, we have to begin working with the elemental spirits between the two empires. That will have to be a focus after we figure things out here." Walker's realization as this topic came to the forefront of his mind was enough to make the entire party think.

"You want them to return to the lands or do you want the angels to develop relationships with them?" As far as Mordant saw, Walker just wanted the elemental spirits to take a more forward stance in the world since they had always been one with mana and literally were made of mana. But when it came to the elemental planes, it was easy to understand they might be a greater force.

If the elemental spirits took a forward position, then they would need the grand elemental spirits to take the lead and leave those that bonded with them. It was a whole possibility that made things hard to imagine. This could be thought of in many ways, but for the moment, would need consideration.

"For this land, the elemental spirits should be allowed to return. They are dormant and we already know they are intentionally made that way. The angels fear that they would lose access to the mana that they bring within themselves from the world. That is the separation of angels and other races so far." Su's evaluation was logical but she also understood the problems this would cause between the other races.

"I am a dragon. I take the mana from myself and the world. I use both. The angels should learn to adapt." Current saw that this was all avoidable if the angels focused on developing other ways of gaining mana rather than just letting their wings take the full brunt of this. They let their biology rule over their values in this way. They could be more innovative.

"They should just use runes. The runes can be the bond between the two. Angels can use manas with the help of runes so that they won't lose it all and then the elemental spirits can help make the runes and bind with angels. The spirits wouldn't lose to the runes either since they can hold on to their own mana. It would be a good stopgap." Since Gil used the runes to a degree on his arrows when he had met other elves, he thought this was an easy solution.

"That would mean I need them to come to the mage tower. They should learn the origin runes that everyone else is learning." Walker thought that this would be an additional challenge. Not a bad one though.

While this thought caught everyone for a moment, there was one thing that demanded their attention. "Walker, want to appraise that thing? I'm pretty sure it's what's left of an adult monster." Remey had spotted a pool of mud ahead of them. There weren't any reeds or cattails growing there which struck them all as odd.

What Walker saw was this large spot of darker brown mud with a few pieces of wood rotting on top. The white rib bones were definitely left behind by a monster that had long ago died. They had bleached white in the sun on top of the mud which made it seem safe to walk over the mud.

'Mud fish rib bones

The mud fish is similar to what some would call a river catfish. However, the mud fish lives in thin mud that allows them to swim through the mud like water. They can very easily burrow in to mud and await something foolish to sink in to the mud and perish. From there it will eat whatever is strapped. It is a master of letting nature work for it.

When they get too large, they will be forced to move to the surface where they find a partner and perish after laying ten thousand eggs in their nearby den. These eggs hatch and...'I think you should take a look at



This was a lot more information that Walker didn't really need. However, it was a clear example of what nature and monsters did if left alone. These monsters were amazing in using the thin and dangerous mud to hunt. But it also proved to Walker that the marsh held dangers like fake solid ground.

#### 'Sinking mud

Due to underground water currents, thin mud pools form that plants can not survive in properly. Some pieces of light wood or animal bones will float to the top. This is a foolish example of solidity that some monsters fall for. Mostly birds when they land on the wood or bodies to eat, will fall in to the mud and become food for those monsters living below. The best way to escape is to float and slowly swim and crawl out.'

Walker's explanation of this made everyone understand where these dangers came from. But Current was the most amazed. He could feel the flow of water deeper in the mud and marsh lands overall. He had accepted that underground water here was just how nature went. Yet, the layers of plants that lived over the top of it made up what they believed to be solid ground.

This amazing understanding was even further pushed forward by the fact that an entirely different underground ecosystem existed. The thin mud that moved through the marsh lands made a beautiful contract between above and below ground. Water currents being the medium for this natural creation.

"So what you're saying is that we shouldn't go anywhere that pants aren't" Remey looked at the ground and stuck closer to the cloisters of reeds growing away from the sinking mud hole. She did not want to drag herself out of it and be covered in mud for the next few hours.

However, everyone felt that they were learning a lot about this new environment. They might not be facing monsters and battling things out due to the dragon auras around them. Yet, they were learning about a natural flow better than before. It would be very valuable to educate others and share this with them.

Alice in particular was making mental notes. She could see the sun and the light reacting in the water and the plants all around. It was like seeing the light illuminate the right path of peaceful nature. Things might not always be peaceful, but they were balanced and that was peace in a way. The perfect inspiration for a calming song to stop a fight or to sooth harmed emotions. Many musical system users found inspiration in nature.

"I think we should come here again. The elves would enjoy a place like this." Gil thought back to the elves around. He also looked at Midnight who was curiously sniffing around monster tracks and other spots of interest. "Midnight can bring the hatchlings to explore too. They might have a good time."

Both Mordant and Current nodded. It seemed that untouched places like this would fit well with the hatchlings growing up under the influence of Genesis. They would gain more understandings of elemental manas working to create entire environments. That was how dragons learned and grew too. They went to the places that their affinities could grow better. But that would be for another time. The marsh lands were just a side stop before they went to the island in their sights.

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#### Chapter 1868 1868. Marsh Discoveries

Taking a full day to move through the marsh lands was something that the group had not expected. However, it had proven very worthwhile. Many monsters and different things had been seen. Especially things related to the underground flow of water.

This flow of water was something that Current had been more and more specific about and they moved. He had started to move with his eyes closed prompting Mordant to keep himself focused on guarding him.

The odd change was nothing that they expected as a party. Mordant had explained that this was a similar situation to the selection of territory that a dragon would do. They would roam around areas high in their natural elemental affinity. In doing so, they were connecting themselves and learning.

The new flowing water and changes in how salt and fresh water interacted here was something that Current could learn from while also deciding if it would somehow link him to any sign of a water dominator dragon ruin. It was the same thing that Mordant did at night when it came to the darkness mana. However, this was more focused on water mana and there was a higher chance that this place would have some form of connection for Current to learn from.

Walker's mind had picked up on the potential. If there was a unique place like this marshland where the water and earth directly connected so closely that it brought unique monsters and natural flow no

matter what, then it would make sense that a dragon would come here. However, many years had passed by as the dragons had long been away from this continent.

The Sigil continent also was plagued by the changes because of the curse that was just lifted. The flow of water might have changed and this place might not be what it should be until the water flow of an underground river returned. Therefore, Current might still have a lot of time before he was able to find the ruins that he desired to find. To discover the history of his personal ancestors.

These things aside, Walker had also been moving and sensing the flow of elemental manas. He noticed that when Midnight was exploring things, that she was taking the chance to absorb elemental manas the same ways that she had noticed the royal dragons doing.

This act was her way of discovering more about herself and also how to gather natural mana for herself rather than get it from Walker as she had been mostly doing. This was why Walker had focused on fusing elemental manas while they traversed this place. To gain strength but also to awaken Fleur sooner since she was slumbering within the spirit mark after using so much natural mana to help destroy the mummified pharaoh.

'Serrated grass

This grass grows taller in damp mud. It is called serrated because of the sharpness and saw toothed edges it has. It will cut anything that brushes passed it along with also leaving a very annoying itchy poison.

The oils that it produces cause itching for at least three hours. This will deter anything from touching it again. The oils can be boiled in larger quantities and used to make an ideal medication for skin dryness along with some specific illnesses.'

One of the things that Walker's all around appraisal had found was the very resilient serrated grass that Remey had insisted he stored some roots of. She would gladly take any herb that could have medicinal uses. Let alone potion uses.

'Tunneling turnip

This is a unique root vegetable that only grows in very soft mud. It requires the watery nutrients from shifting waters for it to grow rapidly. It will grow very thick water filled roots in erratic ways to lock itself in the mud.

These roots are ideal foods for those that are dehydrated, require condensed nutrients, and also need a way to carry water outside of their body. This is an exceptionally hard plant to grow, but those that can will certainly be able to grow them in to a flowing state.

The flower of a tunneling turnip will only bloom once a month. It has a very condensed nectar that is considered the perfect food for any tamed insect type monster. Specifically for the marsh queen bee that will make honey capable of being used in a unique mana potion that helps increase mana storage and growth in any child under the age of three.'

This had been the appraisal that had made Remey freeze in place. She knew of legendary potions that could help increase mana that someone had. These things were considered incredibly hard for even a master alchemist to make. Let alone materials for such things. Even the formulas for such potions were all considered to be wrong since the items, herbs, and techniques were all lost or particular to one alchemist.

The fact that they found an herb here that could give them a single item needed for such a potion, regardless of limited users, didn't matter. She had to have it and was closer to Walker guarding him even more since he now possessed every single tunneling turnip that they found. I think you should take a look at

With the many possibilities that this left them with, Walker had been sure to remain focused on the surroundings. He had been sure that an undertaking like this would be the same if not greater in challenge than the affinity potions that had taken an entire lifetime for a master alchemist to create. Remey would surely give the old master alchemist a heart attack when she returned to the alchemy guild.

Other than the herbs, Walker had seen many other little things. Specifically, little monsters getting away from them as they moved toward the beach. He had managed to learn about them and found that some of them could definitely exist on their home continent, just out of sight from where he had ever been. But some he had never heard of and never knew existed.

'Green walking stick

These are camouflaging insect monsters that will wait on reeds for smaller flying prey. They may look like a patch of reeds from a distance, but they are actually holding their bodies in a way that just replicates them.

Their sharp pointed legs are used to trap and kill flying prey. They will never move and show themselves even when faced with a predator they can not beat. They trust that they can hide under any circumstances. They will never go after prey that is not flying, they are unable to digest other things since this is the unique way that they grew up.

Their bodies are surprisingly tough since their outer shell is developed from the tougher clay that they will absorb and dye green through also eating reeds around them. This method of hiding is unique to them in the marsh lands since they are considered the most specifically evolved monster for this environment.

Capturing one and removing it from the marsh lands is considered impossible without the very best of care. Therefore, there is not a tamer in history that has yet to tame a green walking stick.'

This would be valuable information for every single tamer that had come to Genesis. It alone the tamers that had come to the Sigil continent for knowledge. They would surely look for the tamer that could take this monster for the first time in history. This alone would become an epic goal that would surely gain a title and shake the taming world. The information is as valuable as gold to some.

There were many monsters that Walker saw as well. Small blue flying birds called the marsh finch. Their pure blue deaths matched the sky so that they could avoid such predators as the green walking stick. However, when the sky would become overcast, they would never be seen flying if they wanted to live.

They would eat the small black marsh berries from tiny little flowering plants known as the mud berry bush. They were only edible by birds due to the unique seeds and digestive systems working together. It was a very informational all around appraisal that Walker would gladly write down for anyone exploring this place in the future.

That was just part of the many things the group discovered while traveling. However, they managed to make an amazing time with their furious pace through the marsh lands. They made it to the saltier areas and narrowed in on the sandy beaches filled with unique plants of their own.

Fewer monsters were also seen since the group knew that the dangers of the beach were all around. It was a good time to camp before exploring the island across the water afterwards. All that was left was to properly prepare for whatever they might find ahead.

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Chapter 1869 1869. Above The Jungle Island

"We are taking to the air. I will carry you in my claws. There is a slight wind, but nothing to worry about." Mordant was fine with letting Current take to the water. He saw that Current wanted to take down some prey in the waters as they neared the island. Not to mention exploring some of the underground water flows that he had already mentioned.

There was also the fact that the rest of the party would be staying with Mordant when they landed on the island anyways. Walker would be the only one, along with Midnight, that would be able to fly through the air and reach the island without any help.

"That's fine with me, Let's just get a better view of whatever is going on there." Gil's thoughts were simple, get in to the air, and then see what he can see.

He knew that with his sharper eyes as an archer, that he would be able to spot anything that might be going on. From what they could see at this beach shore, there were many plants that grew on the island. So many that it appeared to be an island jungle which was very unusual to understand.

There was also the size of the island. It appeared to be somewhat manageable to explore in a day, but Mordant and Current had already mentioned it stretched larger than what the others expected. Since this was the case, then it would be harder to get a handle on if the party were to search it from the ground. Which seemed to be the necessity due to the growth of plants everywhere.

The plants added yet another challenge though. They would not all be known to the group. It was the same with the elven forest. The party had once explored there and seen many things that could pose a danger to them without the proper knowledge. Specifically, what was and was not safe to eat let alone touch.

Due to this, Walker would be on high alert with the all around appraisal skill since he was the only one with it. None of the party had yet to get it when using the all around appraisal scrolls. It was such a slim chance for them to get it that they had not expected it to happen. It would just take a longer and longer time since they just had to keep trying.

"Walker, what's on your mind?" Remey noticed that Walker had just stepped in to the air as Mordant flapped his wings to carry the others. Remey had grown used to this slightly since she had been carried by dragons before, but Mordant was being incredibly careful as not to harm the party. Therefore, she easily spoke with Walker now compared to the first time they had been in the air.

"I was just thinking about skills and how it would be easier if everyone had the all around appraisal skill. I know we have the educationist title and it could help everyone learn the skill. But if we use that then it would put us at a disadvantage. It's the same with spatial mana and the fact that I want everyone to be able to get the affinity or learn a skill related to it. If we all had the spatial storage skill of any strength or level it would be great, right?"

As his thoughts were a little broken up since there were so many potential possibilities, Remey had to think for a moment before replying. They were still getting higher in the air after all. There was time to speak and think.

"Forget about us learning the all around appraisal skill. We can work on that in our own ways. I can already somewhat get information about herbs just by looking at them and tracing the characteristics. It's pretty simple since I'm a one of a kind alchemist." Remey was a little arrogant but had a good point.

Since Remey was an alchemical brawler, she could record the information about an herb or potion materials easily. But because she had learned so much, she was able to deem certain qualities valuable or safe to interact with. This was just something that came with knowledge. By this example, she would eventually gain a skill that related to appraisal specific to herbs and potions. She already could ascertain the quality of a potion as it was.

But this was also why she had stuck around Walker. It was a form of training. Walker had noticed it and nodded with Remey even though she was a little arrogant at the moment. He realized that Remey had been around a lot of appraisals and a lot of him storing herbs away. Whenever they were out she was right there. She had been closer than the others in some way. Onyx and Midnight would be the next closest since Onyx normally rested on his shoulders and Midnight at his side. Even now, Onyx had taken a place on his shoulders.

"You are right. You should be able to figure things out. I will just keep doing what I can." As much as Walker wanted to think on this more, they had finally reached a height to get a full view of the massive island that stretched out below them.

The jungle filled island was longer than he had imagined. Walker looked around and noticed the many rocky outcroppings proving that this island was more than just sands. It had a solid base that had risen over time from the water creating this large place for life to grow. I think you should take a look at

This alone was enough to understand that the island would not just be some hollow sandy place that could be washed away by a few storms. It had roots and stones that held it there. It would be able to get larger over time too as more sands and other things washed up and became part of it. This meant that there would be a guarantee that this place would potentially connect with the mainland.

As if to prove this, Walker noticed the dark lines of sand under the water. These were shifting sand bars that would only be accessible when the tide was far out. However, it was enough to show that what he was thinking was already happening. The currents of water around the island were eventually going to connect it to the mainland.

"Oh, that might be a little hard to handle." Su's exclamation was matched with Alice and Gil who both had been surprised by what they saw. Midnight's slight roar also drew Walker's focus. It wasn't the size of the island that had drawn these reactions. It wasn't the plants that they had seen. Nor was it the fact that Current had already dove deep in the water and resurfaced showing that he had easily hunted a large fish type monster that was living in some rocky underwater cave.

All of this was important and a way to learn from what they didn't know about the area. However, what was ticking out were the ways that some trees had clearly been cut to allow something to climb them.

This reminded the entire party of how the elves would shape the trees over many years to become natural treehouses. These natural tree houses were perfect homes. But the trees here were cut so that something could climb them and see larger spaces across the jungle. It also looked as if they were perfect places to use as a traveling road above the jungle. A path that let something explore or move from place to place.

The entire island was covered in lush jungle and had clear pathways that went through the treetops. Nothing truly built out of metal or stone but just out of the wood from the tree branches cut to make



this happen. Even the jungle vines had been grown and used to create everything necessary to hold it all together.

With this to focus on, Walker tried his best to spot anything moving. Anything alive. Yet, he failed. There was nothing to be spotted. "We scared anything from showing itself, but now we have proof that something is here or was here." Walker spoke loudly enough to make sure everyone heard it. This meant that they would have to be better prepared when they landed.

There were only a few places for any of them to land. For Mordant, he would have to drop the part at one of these natural forest clearings. From that point, he would need to lose his dragon form for the dragonkin form. Current appeared to have spotted more things underwater. A cave of sorts below the island that he was beginning to explore. It was a divide and conquer exploration.

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Chapter 1870 1870. A Glimpse

As Mordant let the other down, Walker had been the first to land on the most open space that he saw. This place was an odd spot in the midst of this jungle island. While there were no signs that anyone had ever been in this spot, Walker found out what had happened to make the bare spots here and there.

Small burned pieces of rotting wood were strewn about here and there. "Lightning stuck this area and it went out before it spread. a jungle is a pretty wet place." Walker studied everything he could and still didn't spot anything that posed a danger. But it was clear that everything avoided this area. Even the monsters didn't walk through here.

As the others landed and Mordant took his dragonkin form, they noticed this oddity as well. Naturally, the investigation started instantly. Gil was the one that was the most vocal.

"It doesn't make a single bit of sense that there aren't any monsters coming through here. Look, there are small berries growing that they could eat. It's because they finally have the sun to grow. But nothing touched them." he was stumped too.

"I used all around appraisal and all I see is wood. Burnt wood and some ash." Walker supported Gil a little. But this area had been destroyed fairly recently by lightning. Enough that the small plants had started to regrow, but others had not.

"Did a monster do it?" Alice knew of the monsters that the party had faced. She also understood that some others could use lightning in some form or fashion. This was more believable in her mind. Especially when it came to the odd way that this space was not the only one showing signs of lightning strokes. They had all seen more spots like this through the jungle.

"No, I think Walker will like what Su and I found more than if it was a monster." Alice turned her head in curiosity while Su and Remey showed off what they had just dug up from their awkward landing spot in this jungle island.

'Lightning crystal ore

The lightning crystal is a forced fusion of elemental energies. Normally, lightning crystals can not form unless forced to fuse for a temporary amount of time. Specifically, a temporary amount of time before the manas are forcefully dispersed through the shattering of the crystal.

When lightning naturally strikes certain ores, the crystals can form and become trapped in a balance with the natural earth mana within that ore. It creates a lightning crystal ore that would only ever be found in areas often struck by lightning. Even tops of mountains will only ever have a small amount. Forcefully creating this ore is also extremely hard due to the strict balance needed to create it.

Due to these ores existing, there is a very high chance that lightning will strike again in the same place. This causes monsters and anything with sharp senses to avoid the area.'

Walker read all of this out loud while looking at the yellow and white crystals within the rough rocky ore that Remey and Su had dug out of the ashes. It was clear that lightning had struck here many times and this was the result. It also meant that there were multiple chunks of this ore all over the jungle island.

"That's amazing! I never heard of such an ore!" Mordant was the most amazed by this since he believed that they would not find something so astounding right away. They had barely set foot on this unexplored island. A new continent, a new island, and even more new things just seemed to be

attracted to the party. It was as if he was part of a grand story that brought amazing things right to his view without any effort.

"At least it all makes sense, but can this really be used to make things? Wouldn't breaking it or forging it ruin the balance?" the question that Gil had made sense and was directed at Walker who should have an idea since he had the sharpest mana senses.

"I would say yes, but if we gather some more of this and hand it to our trusty wandering blacksmith..." Everyone knew that doing this would be the same as gaining another amazing weapon or armor. It would be a great gift and challenge to their friend who wanted nothing more than this.

"Brother, sister and I smell something." Onyx looked around carefully. He and Midnight both smelled something different from them. A monster or something else. Mordant had caught it too but was impressed with how Onyx and Midnight had also easily caught the smell. He hadn't expected their senses to have grown to this level yet.

"Less like we have something around but more that we are being watched." Su caught a glimpse of a shadow moving through the jungle just further away. It appeared that there was something curious about their group.

"No, we just found it. But I doubt they are ready to just speak with us." Walker followed Su's sightline and picked up on what she had seen. However, he was using the all around appraisal as the figure darted from tree to tree and around vines.

'Echidna I think you should take a look at

This is an echidna. Due to the dragon blood that once ran through their veins, over the years the ancient echidna bloodline related to medusa, gorgon, and other great serpent type monsters has awakened. The birth of an echidna is what most would call half human and half serpent.

The most powerful of echidna can appear within three forms, serpent, humanlike, and also half serpent half human like. This is similar to what many would see as a demi-human in the world. However, they are vastly different because of their unique speed, abilities, and incredible flexibility.

Jungles are their natural habitat but they are extremely adaptable to deserts and even mountains.

After being forced from their homes, the ancient echidna founded the jungle island. Enhancing their ability to become one within nature, they gained the minute ability to manipulate natural mana and grow the jungle even more.

The echidna can vary in elemental affinity while also mix their elemental affinities. They have isolated themselves on a single island for generations creating an extremely unique culture and race. They have not encountered another sentient species in generations...'

There was even more information that Walker couldn't keep up with. The form of the darting echidna was moving quickly away from them after it realized that the group had narrowed in on it. Yet, Walker was sure that this was what was left of the race they had been chasing.

"That dragon blood inside them when they were in the mummified city was making them more similar to dragonkin or something halfway between a lizard and a dragonkin. But after generations it awakened an ancient bloodline related to ancient monsters like gorgon, medusa, or great serpents. Now they are called the echidna race. Half serpent, half human is the best way to describe them."

As much as Walker wanted to complete the quest and learn more, the quest had not completed. It made him realize that just finding the ancient race was too small of an action. The group needed to do more than that.

"We are going to meet them, right?" Gil's smirk told everyone what they were thinking and what he was thinking. They had just gotten a glimpse of what they were here to do and what might expand the world's knowledge as well. All they had to do was find this echidna race and meet them.

"Onyx, you might be doing the talking." Walker forewarned Onyx since telepathy might be the best way to speak to them. They might have their own language that the world might not help them with right away. But then again, Walker considered that the world might have already translated everything but wanted to be sure no matter what. It was always a surprise regardless.

"Let's go." out of everyone to begin to take the lead, it was Alice. She appeared to be more driven after seeing that onyx had really been taking the lead. She had spent a lot of time with him as he helped the hatchlings in the cathedral. She believed that it was her turn to show off a little and take the lead since

he had shouldered a lot of burden lately. This just made everyone else a little more motivated to see too.

Alice was a pure person, always caring for others. The fact that she wanted to meet this new race even more than them made it all the more evident how she had become one of their party. She was an adventurer too now, different continents, a different path than others, and even more so, a different discovery every day.