

Master 541

Chapter 541 - 541. Final Goodbye

"Su is right. I just learned it but it was not really intentional. I reacted on instinct and the next thing I knew I was stepping on the air and making it ripple. Thank you by the way Su, I was a little unfocused." Walker scratched his head but Su just showed a storing smile.

"It's my job to protect everyone around me." She was proud of herself for her ability to sense the situation and act.

Remey tried ti get Walker to keep showing off the skill but the night was getting towards the end. Walker managed to find Midnight and collected Onyx. Gil and Alma were still caught up in conversation and Walker decided to give her his farewell while leaving the two to say their own.

"He looks so gooey and lovey over there. Do you think he even realizes he likes the future queen of, you know, THE ELVES?" Remey was gossiping with Su and Walker as they headed to rest for their leave in the morning.

"I think it is romantic. At first, he looked afraid of her and the blue ivy she grew around her. Yet now, they can't stop talking and he looks more at home than ever." Su was much more the romantic than the other two whereas Midnight and Onyx were the ones who were farthest from such things.

"He is happy here since he has a lot of others with the same system. I think he has never been around so many people that let him explore his own system as he has here. He also may be letting the fame go to his head." Walker ended with a laugh while thinking about the elven archers that had used all their mana to create arrows with him.

"You don't think... he would stay here." Remey has slowed down considerably when this thought hit her. She saw the party as her family, sometimes even more than that. To her, there was nothing that would bring her more pain than seeing any of them hurt. The idea that Gil might try and stay here while they went on to other adventurers caused a sharp pain to pierce her.

"Never, he would lose his mind worrying over the things he missed. I also think he will want to tell the stories to a certain future queen." Walker was easily able to mitigate the worry.

"We will see them in the new city too. I have a feeling that future rulers and other influential figures will flock there." Su knew that this was a guarantee for the future of the city of Genesis. There was no other way for them all to interact and grow unless they traveled individually to other kingdoms. But heading to the one city they could learn many new things to grow.

"I'll still give him a punch to make sure he knows that he needs to stay and adventure with us," Remey said it as if it was something that would make her feel better more than it would make Gil stay. But Walker and Su knew they couldn't stop her from doing so and just went with the flow.

By the time they had finished their conversation they had arrived at the tree house and were feeling the built up tiredness. Sleep was the only thing on their minds and that was exactly what they did. The sounds of Gil entering just minutes after them weren't even noticed.

The dawn broke through the leaves of the trees and pushed the party in to the world of the waking. They had already gathered their items the day before and only had the basics to deal with.

The elf city was surprisingly silent in the morning due to the celebrations of the previous night. The sun and soft breeze caused the dew to shine on every leaf and blade of grass around. The vines shimmered in their own elegance making all of them sad to leave such a beautiful place. "I think we should go see that view again before we leave. Plus we have adopted the tradition already." Walker pointed up to the lightning struck branch and began to climb higher.

Midnight was the most excited for this since she wanted to burn off some of her open energy in the morning. The others had the feeling that Walker would be the winner as usual but they would get to compete with each other. "I thought you would all follow our traditions." Wade was at the top waiting for them when they arrived.

"I know Calen would be here to send you off herself as well if she wasn't off on her own quests. And Alma was stubborn in saying that she already said goodbye and couldn't possibly say it again." Wade shook his head knowing full well that Alma was too afraid to cry seeing her new friends leave.

"I had some hope we would say goodbye to you too. I have a feeling that you might be one of the first to be at the new capital city." Walker arm bumped Wade out of respect for another party leader.

"You should wait for me there. I will be bringing as many of the trainee enforcers as I am allowed to see it and learn from the other kingdoms." Wade smirked while making sure to say his farewells to every single member of the party. "Oh, and Gil. Don't you dare try and take my title too." With this Wade hooped down to the next branch and was heading back down.

"He didn't seem like one for goodbyes, but I am glad we saw him." Walker nodded at the leaving Wade. "Well, we should get going, Run!" Walker was the first to start the run down from the top branch. He left with the flurry of the wind and the smile of his face.

The other rulers had equally left or were preparing to leave. They had many things to do in their own kingdoms and some even watched as the heroes left the city.

Chapter 542 - 542. Escorted

The forest was full of life and wildly different compared to how things were before when the party had arrived. The purple slimes had mostly been eradicated and although some small places still showed some of the darker rot, there was more new growth everywhere the party went.

They were still in their formations but every once in a while there would be a glimpse or the sound of a nearby enforcer patrolling the area. Walker knew this was the way for the queen to send them off safely and also had the feeling that Sierra would have personally volunteered her squad.

"Hey, bury those piles of purple slime body. We can't just walk by them without doing something." Su had been on a keen look out for such places as they went. They were few and far between but every time there was even a drop of purple slime they would stop to cover it. They knew just how fast a small slime could grow in to a massive problem.

"Have you noticed there are almost no signs of any grey haired spider anywhere? I bet most have moved to the goblin and spider village by now." Gil had been worried that they would need to fight some. But luckily there had been no sign or even a single thread.

"That is a good thing. They will reach their own race sooner with more to help them build and grow. I just wonder if any more goblins have come." Walker had been worried that the spiders would take over the village due to their larger numbers.

"I expect there were other goblins hiding away like Kroll was. It is to be expected that they will find the courage to come out and join their brothers." Su said this with such confidence that not a single one of them doubted this.

With everyone at ease, there was not much else to say other than wonder what their plans were for getting to the dwarven kingdom, "Are we stopping at home between here and the dwarves?" Remey was the one who wanted to stop the most. She was just itching to tell the old master alchemist all about their discoveries and the alchemy guild.

"I don't think we should. We spent more time in the elf city than I expected and we need to get to the dwarves sooner than later. If their slime problem is growing as fast as the elves then I have a feeling that they may need some assistance." Walker really wanted to stop himself and deliver his own gift to Alice. But he needed to stay focused.

"I agree with leader, the dwarves could be in much worse shape than the elves were. They may have taken a heavy loss to their own people by now." Sui knew that the dwarves rarely left their underground city making the state of their well being very hard to guess.

"As long as we can let loose and see what we can do with our new levels I am all for it." Remey had been wanting to stretch and get in to some proper fights. Shre had some more hope that they would encounter some more monsters in the forest on their way out but with the enforcers not so secret escort, there was a slim chance they would see even a single monster.

"Since we are passing the city we will be able to see it. But we will remain to the east of it and stay north. When we are at the base of the mountains we will be able to find the smaller city at the surface which will lead the way to the underground. Remember we will need to greet all three of their kings that work to govern the dwarves." Walker wanted to be sure everyone knew the plan fully.

The fields shouldn't have many horned rabbits left by now, but if there are any I will use some of the new arrows I got." Gil was also excited to try to use the different elemental arrows that they had created. He knew that there would be an improved version in the future but right now the ones he carried were very dear to him because of the work that he and the elves had put in.

"What!? No! You aren't allowed to fire your arrows at everything before they get here. How will Midnight and I show off our strength." Remey spurred Midnight to give a huff with her. The two wanted to team up again against an opponent.

"Do not forget me. I will show my size and take down any enemy that tries to lay a finger on you." Onyx did not want to be left out and was falling for Remeys' words.

"Come on, you have Onyx starting to sound reckless too now. Don't corrupt him." Gil attempted to scold Remey but only received a hit to the arm for his trouble. "I should have put all those points in to defense!"

Gil was rubbing his sore arm while looking pitiful. But Walker knew too well that he would be fine in a few minutes. "Leader, do you think we will need to be worried about the orcs? We will pass by the river this time and they are known to live near the waters in the fields." Su made a good point.

"I might not want to fight orcs. I hear they are ugly and pig like. If they are like that they definitely smell." Remey was already backtracking on her words.

"I think there is a high chance to encounter them. The summer had gone on long enough for them to need to gather by the water in larger groups. If I remember right they travel in groups of ten or fifteen looking for food and fights." Walker recalled a book he had read in the library. This was the warning that it stated at first.

Chapter 543 - 543. Orc Counter Strategy

"Can I get a run down on the orcs and what they look like? I actually never saw them living in the farms since the patrols would deal with any that strayed too close to the city." Gil had never seen them and not even bothered to learn about them for this reason It was a gap in his knowledge he didn't want to have when he might encounter them.

Walker took the lead recalling all of the passages he had read in the monster guide. "The orcs are monsters that tend to travel in small groups. They stand double the height of a human but still not taller than an ogre. Their heads are the same as a stretched out pigs and they have the same thick skin. That makes their defenses high along with the health points. But they are slow and easy to anger so they don't strategize." Walker paused for a moment while Gil absorbed the information.

"They are strong so it is better to dodge them and will eat anything alive. Literally anything. They even eat each other when in need. They have a habit of picking up heavy branches or even large rocks to use as clubs if they can but prefer to just crush things in their hands." This made Remey and Su flinch a little. Su was glad she increased agility so that she would not easily be grabbed by such a monster.

"I am sure that I won't need to face them head on..." Remey was already making strategies to circle them and hit them in the back if they encountered them. The real test would be when they actually faced one, or a few.

"Midnight should have the advantage since they won't be able to catch on to her using her shadow wrapping skills." Walker had this realization. He was already thinking that she would also be the best one of them to cut down some of the orcs defense when they bumped in to them.

"It is sounding more unavoidable. But if it is the fastest way for us to get to the dwarven kingdom I guess there is no choice." Gil sighed while fully accepting all the information and the possibilities that came with it. "I will mainly need to use the earth elemental and the wind arrows to damage them then."

"I was going to ask if you planned to do that. I feel like the fire arrows will just anger them, which will be fine if they are in a group. The water elemental arrows might cause them to become even slower but that might not be what we need since they are already slow monsters to start with." Walker joined Gil in his planning. They both preferred the ranged combat.

"Does that mean your frost whip will be more or less useless? What about your melee combat weapons?" Su was trying to gauge whether Walker would be risking the attempt to even go near the orcs if they encountered them.

"I am not sure. I know using regular arrows is useless. Most of my weapons aren't super strong. I think the hammer would be a good option if I can manage to get close but it is too risky. The twin blitz swords might be my best chance at doing any real damage to them. However, will be the safest option."

This was bringing many ideas to him. He wanted to focus on a that could completely stop the orcs in their tracks and safely give the party the time and opportunity to strike continuously. "I could try and use earth more. I know it is a little slower to cause any sort of effect. But if I manage to make some sort of trap hole or fissure in the ground we could have an easy time of trapping them and attacking their heads."

"That actually sounds like the best strategy. Are you going to try and learn a skill like that while we walk?" Remey was curious if Walker would be able to do this. If he did she would be able to attack up close and personal without the worry of getting grabbed and crushed at all.

"I can give it a try. But you all know how I get way too focused and lose the world a little." Walker was watching the rest of the party who had already started to set themselves up around him.

"We've got you. Just focus as much as you can and if you slow down we will let Midnight give you a push." Gil took the spot right behind him with an arrow at the ready for any monster that dared to come anywhere near them while Walker was vulnerable.

"Then, I guess I should give it a shot." Walker was worried that this might not be possible since he would end up being focused on walking instead of the earth elemental mana.

"Just stay walking and if anything happens we will snap you out of it. Trust me." Su was grasping both of her shields at the ready to guard against anything that could come their way as they neared the exit to the forest. This put Walker in a much more relaxed state. Even more so after he looked at the rest of his party members who were fully focused on the surroundings.

His words on the dangers that came from the orcs they would most likely face in the area were not ignored. The party wanted him to have this skill they would need to properly deal with future threats and display their strength properly. "Alright. Let's try this out!"

Walker hyped himself up with a slight stretch to his arms as he walked. With his head bowed and his eyes closed he continued to walk forward while grasping at the earth elemental mana below his feet.

Chapter 544 - 544. Trench

Walker was stumbling here and there with his eyes closed but he couldn't properly grasp the earth elemental mana without doing so. He struggled on and felt a soft nudge from Midnight's nose here and there to keep him from going astray. His feeling of safety increased all the while knowing that his party was always doing their best to protect him.

He knew that he would need to focus more on the earth elemental mana but was having trouble letting the feeling and worry of falling. The fact that he was keeping his eyes close was not helping this and he felt that every time his foot would lift it might become caught or he could end up playing it improperly on a stone or root.

However, Walker was not one to give up. He persisted to take a step over and over and soon found that he was noticing the nudges from Midnight less and less. He wasn't sure if this was because he was staying on the path much better or if he was not noticing the feeling any longer.

He also could feel the earth elemental mana beneath his feet had some form of vibration every time he took a step. It was as if it was reacting to his own body's mana when it came in contact with the earth.

Realizing that this was how everything world work Walker began to try and feel the same in the air. This was much like sensing the natural mana but instead, he was seeing the specific elemental manas and their movement around his own mana as a human being influencing it.

Stretching himself even more he could feel the elemental manas being pushed or shift to fill spaces that his party members were previously in or just entering. The earth would slightly vibrate with each of their steps while the wind would shift to fill the spot they had once been. This was bringing many ideas and thoughts to his mind as he realized that he had been neglecting this form of training lately.

Walker had been focusing on all natural mana changing and flowing instead of each specific element. Knowing how they each specifically changed when another mana source was added or when they were manipulated by an outside force would serve to heighten his own understanding.

The more he felt the earth vibrate the more he began to understand the rare time the earth would quake under foot. He could tell that the entire world must shift here and there when other events happened. It was only normal that there were times that those on the ground would feel this quaking.

'The skill trench has been taken from the earth battle mage system. The user has understood the shifting of the earth and automatically learned the low tier skill trench.

Trench- 2 mana cost

The user influences the earth elemental mana to shift the earth to a different location. This creates a small trench in the user's desired sight line. This skill can be used in cooperation with other skills to change the depth and size.

The user has the skill high earth sculpting which easily influences the low class skill trench. The user has not perceived the earth elemental mana enough to upgrade the trench skill to the high tier skill fissure.'

Walker was stunned at the feeling he had. It was like a damn had just been removed and a flood of information came crashing in. He was understanding that there was a way to shift the earth which would cause a natural trench or crack. He wanted to use the skill immediately but when he went to try he could feel that there was more knowledge hiding in the darkness of the earth.

He wanted to pry at this feeling more and more but it was tough and he was losing his focus for some reason. Before he knew what was wrong he stumbles heavily and forcefully opened his eyes to a world of darkness. "Umm, where...?"

"We have been walking for hours. We already left the forest and made it in to some of the tall grass of the fields. You didn't stop walking when we said anything so we kept up. Finally! We can rest!" Remey was the most annoyed but Walker saw the looks of worry she shot at him. It was clear he had caused trouble for the party for hours.

"Oh, holy lord. My legs feel like they are fire!" Walker noticed that his legs were burning in pain from walking constantly without a single second of rest. He quickly used his healing skill to mitigate some of the small damage but knew that most of it was going to need to heal naturally because it was muscle soreness.

"That's what you get for having us walk in to the night. Look, the moon is halfway over head and we are in the fields. The forest is almost out of sight." Gil was fair in his annoyance but he also was saying this out of sheer amazement that Walker had somehow meditated so well while walking.

"Sorry... I did learn how to do this though." Walker tapped his foot on the ground using his mana to activate the trench skill. The entire party felt a slight shake as the ground shifted and a trench of about seven feet deep and ten long appeared before them. "With my earth sculpting skill I can make it bigger but it will cost me a lot of mana. If I can understand the earth elemental mana I might be able to learn a skill called fissure. But there is a lot to learn." The party just looked at Walker with a hopeful expression. They wanted him to push even farther but were too tired to express it at the moment. It was time to rest and Walker was saddled with the first watch.

Chapter 545 - 545. Crumbling Earth

The night was uneventful and the only noticeable event was that the wind had picked up in to a light constant breeze. This was enough to cause the party members sleeping to pull their blankets around them tighter, unfortunately, it was already time to get up and get moving again.

"Leader, are you sure you are fine to walk right away?" Su was voicing her worry that Walker was going to be too sore to move again as they had before.

"No, I should be fine. I just worry that you might need me while we walk and I will be too focused on discovering more about the earth elemental mana." Walker had wanted to ignore training the skills more and understanding them but the others had argued against this while they ate.

"If we need you I will hit you hard enough to get you to focus. Sound good?" Walker stepped a little bit from Remey who was cracking her knuckles. They had already decided on what they would do but she was not having Walker constantly worry about it when he could be improving himself to prevent danger for all of them.

"Fine, but just be warned I think I will be trying to make things around us with the earth. I have a feeling that I will need to see and feel how it acts." Walker was going to change his style of meditating this time. He wanted to try and feel the changes he was making to the earth elemental mana and what that would cause nearby.

His idea was to first try and use the high earth sculpting to change some of the features of the area around him. If he could do this then he would be able to not only use the earth skills faster but also see the direct changes in the earth elemental mana around them. It would be interesting if he could somehow chain the skills together to cause each other to become stronger.

This theory came from the fact that the trench skill said that it moved the earth. If the earth was moving then it was expected to go somewhere else. That meant that there may be a spot that if Walker used this skill on it could cause the earth to become higher somewhere else. That would be the ideal situation to make some sort of earth spike or earth wall.

The party had already gotten rid of their fire and the camping gear they had used. Their breakfasts had energized them and they fell in to the same walking formation as the day before. This time though they were starting the journey in the fields. The forest was long gone in their view but there was a slight reflection of light way in the distance which they could tell was the river from the maps they had seen in the past.

Walker quickly began to look way ahead and use the trench skill. He could feel the earth shift and vibrate but he wasn't sure where all the vibrations were heading. The feeling was bouncing off of other

things in the earth and also interfering with the party's steps. It was making him feel like it might be an impossible task to track all the earth elemental mana's movements.

Yet as he realized the mana was being influenced in this way he felt it was more natural for this to happen. Instead, he tried moving two trenches at the same time and paid attention to the vibrations in the earth elemental mana between them. This resulted in more shaking and the small space between the two trenches to give away and partially fill in the two trenches.

"I get it!" Walker stopped and spoke for the first time in four hours of walking. The party had been silent for most of it but for a few random conversations and a moment where Gil spotted a regular rabbit to snipe and collect for their lunch or dinner.

"What did you get?" Remey was the only one to ask this since the others had figured that Walker would just end up telling them anyways.

"The vibrations in the earth elemental mana make the earth unsteady. So when the two skills are used next to each other it doesn't matter that no skill is used on the earth between them. It loses its strength and falls in to the trenches I made. That means the same will happen to anything on top of what I made."

Walker was already building strategies within his mind to use this phenomenon. He may not have gained a new skill but knowing this was going to make trapping heavier monsters much easier for them.

"So you will use two trenches to cause an orc to fall and get stuck?" Su was confirming this since she would be able to move forward and use her shield bash to force an orc in to the perfect spot for this strategy.

"Yes! Then I can try my hand at using the high earth sculpting skill to harden the earth and forcefully trap the orc. If they hold for even a few seconds we will have the time to deal the final blows." Walker was proud of this breakthrough that had taken him a decent chunk of time to understand.

"Then what about four orcs? Would it work on four?" Gil chimed in with this simple question.

"Well, yes. It should work since they would just destabilize the earth they were standing on even more, why four though?" Walker found it strange that the number was so specific.

"Well, mostly because there are four of them heading this way right now. Right over there." Gil pointed in to the distance at four large figures steadily making their way toward the party from the river which had gotten much clearer as they had gotten closer.

Chapter 546 - 546. Trapping Orcs

"Oh, so just casually point out the four giant pig things coming to eat us like a snack." Remey was not the most impressed with the causal mention that the orcs had spotted them and were moving in a direct line toward them.

"I feel like I underestimated their size." Su was worried that she would not be able to block the blunt attacks from one which was carrying a large branch in its hand.

"If my strategy works we won't need to worry about them attacking at all. My goal will be to get them trapped in a hole then harden the earth around them so we can easily deal with them. Onyx, I know you may want to bind them but if you wrap around them I am afraid they are strong enough to break freehand cause you a lot of damage." Walker made sure to say this to Onyx who he already noticed was preparing to attack.

"Brother, I will use my tail slam to push them in to your trap. Sister Su won't need to risk it." Walker and Su both gave him a nod. It was a good idea since he could pull his tail away much faster than Su could retreat.

"I will see if I can shake them up with a few arrows." Gil was already drawing one of the wind elemental arrows the elves had given him. He knew that its' piercing power was strong and could do some minor damage to the other orcs around the one he targeted.

The arrow absorbed and activated with Gils' mana. He took a slow breath and as he let it out he released it. The arrow was flying much higher than the party believed that Gil should have fired it. But as they watched the arrow arched and fell right in to the eye of one of the orcs.

The reaction was more than just an angry jump from the orc in the center of the other three. There was a burst of wind that tore at the orc that was struck along with the three around it. The party could

clearly see the orc was blinded completely and suffered a major fascial wound. The others were just annoyed with some small scratches to their surface skin.

"Was that the snipe skill? When did you learn the snipe skill?" Walker realized that Gil had officially learned the snipe skill he had been trying to learn for so long. He had practiced distance shooting and was able to hit farther away, but sniping from a long distance was still something he had lacked.

"I may have learned it from Wade one night." Gils' smirk said that he had been waiting to show this off to the party for some time. It was only to be expected that he was trying to improve while he was dealing with his own things in the elf city. But such a skill would be great for the group when trying to take out enemies from far away.

"I am going to need to practice my long distance then." Walker knew that some of his spells would dissipate before they reached a far off target. This meant that he would need to use more mana to force the distance.

"You two can fool around with that later, they are getting pretty close." Remey was warning them since she was starting to feel the orcs were too close for comfort. The smell of wet animals was overpowering as the wind pushed it from the orcs to the party.

Walker had already prepared himself and used the trench skill twice ahead of the party. The orcs had reached the perfect place for him to set up large trenches on their sides. He went further to create another behind them and in front of them draining extra mana to make all four of them deeper.

The ground shook making the party stand at the ready and looked around with a flurry. "That should do it." Walker gave them the heads up as the ground shifted and they watched the nearby ground open and a center column of earth begin to crumble in to the newly split hole.

This was right behind the orcs that had grown a little close for comfort, however, Onyx had been slowly reverting to his largest size and waited for this moment. He whipped out his tail slamming in to the three that were leading the group. The orcs were too slow to catch Onyx's tail and were sent falling backwards in to the trench trap Walker had created.

Meanwhile the fourth had already gotten trapped inside due to its' damaged vision. Walker did not waste any time and was using his high earth sculpting to cause the loose earth to rise around the orcs and harden as much as possible. This was not as easy as he had hoped but it was looking successful.

"Try and get some attacks in safely! I will have them tied down as long as possible." Walker said this as Midnight and Remey darted forward. They were right at the edge of the solidified earth trench ready to unleash attacks on the stationary orcs.

Their grunts and struggling noises were a mix of a pig and what sounded to be dyeing man. This was unsettling but neither Remey nor Midnight hesitated at all. Midnight used her decaying breath on two of them to try to cause them to rot away and weaken. It was working wonders on their outer thick skin. The party could see the flames burning it away while she focused them more and more.

Remey was in the perfect position to use the defense breaking palm attack. This was not her usual go to attack but with the high defense of the orcs, she had a feeling it was the best way to get damage through. When her palm made contact and she jumped back she saw that the orc had nearly crumpled on its' side and allowed Walker to trap it even more. This strategy was working!

Chapter 547 - 547. Thicker Skin

Remey was not letting up and ran around the trap letting off her defense breaking palm attack as much as possible. The party watched as she used the skill in the weakest places on the bodies of the orcs. "I'm backing out!" Remey gave a shout as she backed off from her attacks. She had used a decent amount of mana and needed a minute to breathe.

Midnight did the same and fell back since she had used her decaying flame breath consecutively. This did a huge amount of damage to the outside of the orcs weakening their defenses.

Walker was already prepared to relax his hold on them since they were incredibly damaged. This allowed him to begin forming multiple spikes of earth that he slowly manipulated from the sides of the trenches. "Leader, I will keep them from trying to climb out!" Su saw one of the orcs trying to reach a hand up and used her shield bash skill to knock it back down.

Gil took on the same job and was firing the earth elemental arrows now. The mana fluctuated around him as he released a different version of the prototype he and the elves had made. The arrow landed in the least damaged orcs neck which had been weakened by Remey and Midnight.

This time instead of enveloping the target in earth, the earth elemental around the orc shivered slightly. This caused Sui to sense some change and back away. The next instant, an earth spiker shot from underneath the orc and right through it. This was a single spike compared to the multiple Walker was preparing.

"Here it goes!" Walker saw the opportunity and used his mana to force the many smaller earth spike he had created forward. The sounds of the orcs squealing as the spikes depleted the last of their health was worse than any butcher the party had heard.

' Four orcs defeated. 360 exp multiplied to 3600 exp.'

"I had to hit them so many times!" Remey had not expected that she would even need to use her defense breaking palm attack multiple times.

"Their skin is very tough. I felt that my shield bash was just a way to push them here and there." Su also felt that the orcs' skin was much more thick than they had expected.

"Midnight's flames were a huge help to get their defenses down but I think we will need a better method. It looked like Gils' arrow to the eye caused a huge amount of damage to the head of that orc." Walker pointed out the massive cuts and scratches in the one orcs face where the arrow was still sticking out from.

"But if we do too much damage to their skin it can't be used as material for the bottoms of boats and coverings of lighter armor." Walker had already argued against himself. Knowing that the orcs skin was sold on merchant caravans to villages near the water and that the skin was also very useful for crafting lighter but decently durable armor.

"So we should try and focus on weak point attacks. I will try something out next time. I believe the pointed end of my shield can be of use." Su had been working on an attack in her own time and was ready to make use of it come another battle with orcs.

"I can keep sniping them with arrows like that. If I aim for their necks, eyes, and even mouth then I should be able to do a major amount of damage." Gil was already moving to try and take the arrows he had used from the orc bodies.

"Again, the snipe skill was a decent surprise. I think you will be the main attacker while I prepare the trenches. Just made sure you don't use too much mana in one shot." Walker was worried that Gil may get a little excited and fire off too many arrows. He knew Gil could replenish his mana faster but it was always a worry to run out of it.

"You got it, but can you help me get this arrow out? It is stuck." Walker headed over to find that the arrow had pierced the orcs' eye and lodged under the skin of the eyelid. This scene was not the most pleasant, however, it was educational.

"Gil, when your arrow pierced the weaker part of the orc it caused the wind to go unchecked inside the orcs' head. That severely weakened it. You should aim for this too."

"I hope he doesn't want our help. Those orcs smell like they have never bathed..." Remey and Su were watching this and were not too keen to get close to the monsters known for their brutal actions.

"Leader is going to store them away. We should let them handle the arrows." Su supported staying away from the orcs. She also didn't want to get covered in their scent and somehow attract more orcs to them.

Walker and Gil had looked and learned the way the arrows had damaged the orcs while Walker stored them away. "The earth arrow version two was pretty great but I think it lost a lot of power due to the orcs skin." Gil pointed at the spike that was now free of the orc. He highlighted the broken end which had been sharp but became blunt on contact with the orc.

"Definitely a weaker attack but I think it was very effective once I had them trapped. We should see if you and I can work together. I may be able to condense the earth which will make your spike even tougher and sharper." The two were already preparing themselves for this next test later.

Walker looked at the spikes and the trench he had created. With some of his mana and a little effort the earth partially closed leaving a soft slightly indented space on the ground. "Now the grass can grow back without a problem." The party checked their gear and drank some water before heading back on their way. They now had more focused eyes on the direction of the river.

Chapter 548 - 548. Herder

"Those orcs were at the river drinking or may have crossed it to get to this side. I am worried that more might be around." Walker voiced his opinion while looking toward the water shining in the distance. It was close enough to see but not enough to see any small details with his eyes.

"Leader, I can not discern details. But I can see that there are smaller shapes around the water." Su was able to glean a small amount of information, which was better than what Walker could grasp.

"I hope they are just animals. You said there was a bend in the river that was bridged up ahead right? If we pass it we could be in for some trouble." Remey was trying to think ahead. She had taken on this trait more while she was at the elf city which was a nice surprise to her battle strategy.

Walker had already figured out that it was a result of her alchemical brawlers' new skill. Since she was always recording new information within it on battle strategy and tactics about certain systems, it would only make sense that she was able to see further ahead and try to plan more.

"The bridge should have a group of strong guards protecting it. They are stationed there all year round just in case there are any problems." Walker was confident that there might be less trouble up ahead.

"The merchants that are heading in the direction are also often guarded this time of year. The adventurers guild issues many quests." Su followed up with her own knowledge making it feel that the party would have a nice place to rest for the night when they arrived.

"Then we could try and get some trading in too. We will have a few things that would make them pretty shocked." Gil was thinking about the extra water spikes and charms they had picked up from around the forest elf city. However, he already saw Walker shaking his head.

"The merchants from the elf city haven't begun to sell things yet. If we put things in the market then they may take on an unintended price or draw people to the elf city that we don't want there yet." Walker was thinking more on caution than anything else because there could be some unsavory people that try to take advantage of the elf city opening.

Midnight huffed a little and raised her nose in the air, "Sister says she can smell a lot of animals and people up ahead." Walker turned his gaze farther away and saw the area Midnight was catching the wind from. It was the direction they were aiming for.

"I bet that is a herding group. A lot of times when farmers need to breed their cattle to make them stronger in future generations they will trade half with another farmer from farther away." Gil was right in with this making the entire part nod in understanding.

"Do you think they might want some company?" Su was first to suggest this.

"I don't see why not. We will need to pass the bridge anyways and it is our goal to rest there. I also think it will be cool to meet some different system users." Walker had not met anyone with a herding based system or an ability to herd animals. This was a new experience for him.

"I have met a few. My family didn't have animals because we didn't have the systems or skills for it. But there was a retired one that took over the small goat ranch near us. He was pretty nice and said his sons had gained the sheep sheperd system and the great herder system. I can barely remember them from when I was little though." Gil was a little embarrassed to not remember the two.

"Is it a common system to have? I feel like I have not heard of many herding based systems before." Remey was also wondering just how common this was. She could see some white masses in the distance and believed that they were in fact sheep.

"Leader, I think we should move a little faster. They will get away before we join them." Su brought this to their attention and the party stopped their idle chatter. They moved at a faster pace slowly bringing the animals in to clearer view in the course of an hour.

There was a taller man in rugged leather armor with two whips attached to his belt. He was riding the back of a large white bull. "Heyo little adventurers. What brings you around my current operation?" The greeting was kind enough but they all saw the tension in his eyes.

"Just trying to catch up with you actually. We assume you will pass the bridge and we are heading the same way. Traveling with more company is much better than less." Walker extended a hand outward to show that he wanted to shake and welcome the man.

This changed the mans' attitude greatly and he hopped off the back of the white bull. "Well, I can not say I would ever turn back an open hand. My clients just call me herder and I enjoy that nickname so feel free to use it as much as you want. I am indeed, leading these cattle across the bridge but will stop to rest there first."

The man had begun to recognize the multiple plaques and badges the party wore. He was also impressed to see that they were currently identified as a silver tier party of the adventurers guild. "Then call me leader....actually, please don't Su calls me that only. I am Walker. This is Gil and Midnight. The little snake here is Onyx." Walker pointed out Su first but realized his joke was a little lame and blushed.

"Welcome to the herding life. If you have any worries of where to walk just shout. My father did this and so did my grandfather. My friend over there is the one in charge of the sheep though. He is actually from the city over that way. So you might be able to chat with him more." The man lowered his head to block out the sun and hopped back on to the white bull.

Chapter 549 - 549. Patrol The Herd

"So, a herder named herder?" Remey was on edge about the lack of name the man had given them. She thought that there had to be something suspicious if he was just going by his job's title.

"He probably just gets a lot of farmers that call him that instead of bothering to learn his name. It's the same with carpenters who build the fences or adventurers that come to exterminate pests." Gil had already gotten used to that. He had been called hunter along with his father when they had shared meals with neighbors.

"So it is a common greeting then? Interesting. Herder said that there was a sheep shepherd over there. Do you think it is the person that you knew?" Su was curious if Gil had gotten lucky to bump in to a familiar face.

"Nope, he herds black sheep. He found an injured herd of six black sheep one day and that is how he got his system. No one knew where the sheep came from so he was allowed to keep them. Pretty weird day now that I think about it." The others agreed. It was strange that the man had been lucky to find an injured herd of sheep as a child and manage to unlock his shepherd system.

"That sounds extremely lucky. But it is a good thing he managed to find and rescue the sheep. If he hadn't I am sure monsters or the elements would have defeated them." Walker was more concerned about the sheep's lives.

"So do you think we should look for this shepherd and meet him? Or wait until we stop?" Remey wanted to make sure that she was headed in the right direction now that she was following the path of the herd of cows and sheep.

"We can wait until we stop. It would be better for everyone. I think they will want to keep an eye out for any dangers instead of talking to us." Walker had noticed the herder was moving around the edges of the herd to keep the cattle in line but also looking out at the plains around them. If he saw even a small bird fly by he held his head up and hand on a whip.

"Then walking we go. If we see anything we should deal with it though. That might help us a little later." Remy had the feeling that the party should take the lead with monsters. She knew that these kinds of actions could go a long way with people always on alert.

"I agree, if they are willing to share their company we should be nice enough to help them with protecting their livelihood." Su tapped her shields together slightly as she readied them. "So we should deal with that horned rabbit over there."

Su had seen the head poking out from the grass as the rabbit hit. The horned rabbits had been hunted a lot in the recent months and were down to a low number again. This made them more apt to hide instead of rush out and attack someone. But that did not mean they would not attack when something passed.

"Who wants it?" Walker asked this because he knew it would not take all of them to defeat a single horned rabbit, especially now that they had leveled up so much.

"Leader, I actually want to show you the new skill I have learned. It is similar to shield bash, but it can use both of the shields I have along with the pommel bottoms." Su surprised them all by volunteering.

"We will wait here, if you need help just let us know." Walker was unsure if the horned rabbit was one with paralyzing poison in its' horn or not. Just that fact made him still worry for Su's safety.

"Watch me," Su said this and moved toward the horned rabbit in the grass. She walked like she was just going around patrolling the herd.

Herder was nearby and also saw the danger. But he had noticed the party pointing things out and then Su walk as if she was patrolling. He had already picked up on her plan and was watching intently. He was uncertain as to why the party had taken action but was glad to not need to use his own skills since he was sure they would encounter a few more monsters when night came.

The horned rabbit sprung from the grass as soon as Su had become near t it. She was prepared and used one shield to deflect it and the horn it pointed at her. She used her shield bash skill to stun and slam it to the ground.

She parted her two shields and raised them over her head. It was a strange stance but the stunned horned rabbit couldn't go anything about it. With a loud shout, she used all he forced and drove the pointed ends of the shields downwards.

There was a slight fluctuation of mana that Walker could feel came from Su. Walker knew she was using a skill and the shields were the focus. The pointed ends split right through the horned rabbit and it released a slight squeal and fell still. The horned rabbit had not stood a chance at all but Su had perfectly demonstrated the new skill she had been wanting to test.

"Leader, that was called shield claw. It uses my defensive power as attack power and as long as I have a sharp point or spike on a shield I can use it to attack." Su was standing tall explaining her skill as Walker stored away the horned rabbit.

"I have to say that the skill held a lot of force. Your defense is very high and having it act as attack is a little scary." Walker was very impressed that the skill had been powerful enough to completely split through the horned rabbit. He had a feeling that it could hurt a much stronger opponent as well.

Chapter 550 - 550. Dinner Ingredients

"Hey Herder, My party member just grabbed us some dinner if you are interested later?" Walker saw Herder patrolling in their direction with an eye on Su after she had defeated the hiding horned rabbit.

"Who am I to say no to a fresh meal? Of course, I will need to get the cattle settled then I will join you for a break." He smiled and welcomed the offer. However, he was smiling only for a second when he heard Midnight growling. "It looks like there are two more of those pests."

Herder took one of his whips from his belt while Midnight charged after one horned rabbit. She had seen Su take one down and it had made her much more alert. This led to her finding that there were others hiding nearby and she took her chance.

Herder whipped out with a single whip causing it to unfurl and land in a pile of grass which revealed another of the horned rabbits. He had seen the other one Mindoght had sniffed out try and hide again but was able to easily track it after so many years of watching for enemies.

Midnight had already closed the distance and was trying to pounce on the rabbit she was targeting. It was fast enough to avoid her claws but as soon as Midnight opened her mouth and shot out decaying flames it was caught unaware. The flames burned its legs causing it to fall and become victim to Midnights' shred skill. The cries of the defeated horned rabbit only lasted a second.

Herder was demonstrating a skill that made his whip arc back and forth striking the horned rabbit constantly. This was mostly made possible by the small triangle tipped blade on the end of his whip. The white bull had also changed color slightly, with small red spots appearing on it that appeared to be growing as it jumped back and forth.

The tactic was continuing on until the horned rabbit was caught on a leg by the whip. Herder finally removed his second whip and lased out catching the horned rabbit tightly. With switch movements, it was defeated. The sharp and binding skills herder had displayed were much faster and more efficient than any of the party were capable of. Their faces showed their amazement.

"I have been around the fields a little while," Herder said this and nothing else. Until he was about to return to patrol, "We can roast min up too" The whips had already been returned to his belt so he gave a wave. The entire situation had only taken a few moments, but it had shown them all a degree of their skills.

"That was something interesting." Gil was trying to come up for words with how the whips moved in Herder's hands. It was as if they had somewhat come to life when he started attacking.

"I didn't expect his whips to have a form of blad at the end. It added to the damage significantly." It was Sus' first time seeing the skilled use of a whip and at that, a whip with a unique build on it to cause more damage. The tactic also made her wonder if she would have been able to block every small movement of the whip.

"It was like the head of one of my arrows but a little longer. I wonder if an archer helped make it?" Gil and Su fell in to a debate while they continue to walk along. Walker and Remey just let them go on and on while they kept an eye out for any other dangers. Onyx had decided that it was the best time for him to curl up on Midnights' back and nap.

"I am pretty sure I have not been able to use my frost whip well at all in comparison." Walker finally spoke up to Remey who was walking next to him.

"I started to record some of his fighting style and I have almost nothing. The system recognized it as being called pointed whip herding style. It doesn't look like it is supposed to be used to defeat anything but to deter and guide things." Remey had gained this much insight but was more or less lost on anything more. The details would take much longer to learn.

"I can see that. Whips aren't supposed to be for killing usually. Tamers use them to train monsters sometimes but that was a little different. The bull he was riding is also strange. Did you see the spots that showed up as it moved around?" Walker had been caught on this too. The bull had acted in a strange manner but even stranger were the red growing spots all over it.

"Use your all around appraisal. I bet it is a monster of some sort. A herder needs to keep up with the things they heard, right?" Remey was just assuming that Herder had tamed a monster as a mount. It was normal for system user that needed certain partners or mounts to have a few taming skills. Mail carriers would often get a small bird that could assist them in delivering certain letters.

Walker nodded and followed Remey's advice. They were both very curious what Herder was riding now that they had seen the odd occurrence.

'Fury tainted bull

The fury tainted bull is normally a common and peaceful species in the large savannas across the ocean. When goaded into anger it will build until the bull's coat completely turns red. At this point it becomes enraged and attacks without any effort spared. The fury state will double the attack it can use making it a very dangerous opponent.

Fury tainted bull - "Bully" is bound to one rider.'

Walker showed great surprise making Remey wonder just what had caused it.