

Master 551

Chapter 551 - 551. Bridge Block

Walker was thinking and left Remey in silence for a minute. Her patience ran out and she tapped his arm with her fist slightly. "What are you thinking about? Tell me what the deal is." She looked like she was going to actually try and hit him if he kept holding it all to himself.

Walker Wanted to hold off a little more to tease her but was a little wary of her next real punch and the force that might be behind it. "The bull is called a furry tainted bull. It comes from over the oceans in a place called a savannah. The spots of red were it building up to a skill that doubles its attack due to its anger."

"So it would have become totally red? That sounds like it should be called a red bull or something. Hmm, I guess its white fur is tainted by the red." Remey was caught on the name but found that it was more fitting than she thought.

The two looked at the white bull a few more times before they realized that the red had completely faded from the fur. "I think Herder might have a pretty interesting story to tell when it comes to how he got his partner." Walker was sure that he could ask about it while they ate and was looking forward to it.

"I am surprised Gil didn't say anything about it. He is usually the expert for us when it comes to these things." Remey was looking at Gil and Su who were talking ahead of them. The party had always let Gil explain the things related to farming and related subjects. Him not knowing the details and catching that the white bull was not a monster from around here was a surprise.

"I am sure he would have said if he knew. But he seems like he was more focused on hunting and plants than herders. He is learning just like us." Walker easily explained the why and how of why Gil would be on the same situation as them. It just made sense since his farm didn't have animals at all.

Remey and Walker kept up their conversation for a little while longer before they decided to try and patrol around the herd as well. This brought the party face to face with a few more horned rabbits throughout the day but nothing other than that. They had more than enough horned rabbit to roast on the fire for anyone that needed a hot meal later.

"Leader, the bridge is coming up soon. It looks like there are a significant number of travelers and merchants waiting by it." Su reported this to Walker as soon as it came in to her view. There were easily twenty or thirty people camping out on one end of the bridge.

"That can't be normal. I doubt many would stop there all at once." Walker was looking for any indication that there was something wrong while they walked toward the bridge.

The river bend that the bridge was built over flowed fairly smooth and none of the party could see the bottom. However, the water was strong and could easily sweep away any orc or even larger monsters that tried to cross. This was why it was more common to see them crossing the river down stream where the water thinned out in to rapids.

"I see a lot of merchants that are held up here in camps. The guards are blocking the gate on the bridge too. Should we head over there and check it out?" Gil was already looking around to search out the issue as well and decided that the guards should have the best answers for them.

"Yes. We can go and see what the issue is. I have a feeling that there is a good reason for them not to allow us to cross." Walker waved to Remey and Midnight to come over. "Herder, we are going to see what is going on at the bridge. We will start roasting dinner after!"

Walker made sure to include Herder since they knew he would be staying with his herd of cattle and settling them. The party pushed their pace ahead passing the snow white sheep and finally noticing a man wearing a powder blue cloak and carrying a carved wooden walking stick in the middle of the sheep. Walker waves as they passed but didn't stop to speak since they were of to do something first.

The shepherd raised the walking stick in greeting and showed a bearded face full of age. The man looked like they had been wandering with sheep for generations. However, Walker saw that there was a great amount of energy within his eyes. They may have had the same color as the sky which made him feel that the shepherd was the freest person here.

The guards noticed the party approach ahead of the herds of sheep and cattle. They had expected those guarding it to stop and check in. However, they were genuinely surprised to see a silver tier party taking such an escort quest. "Silver tier adventurers. Welcome to the bridge. It is unfortunate that we can not allow any to pass at the moment. There are multiple groups of orcs beyond the bridge that have been hunting the road."

This was what Walker had expected to hear in some form. It was clear that the guards would not block travel for no small reason. If there were multiple orc groups then it was way too dangerous for even guarded merchants to travel through. "Hello, and thank you for the warning. We are not crossing here but those we ran in to on the way will do so. If you would like we can try and clear the way a little for you?" Walker did not hesitate to propose this idea. The guards stopped to think for a moment.

Chapter 552 - 552. Orc Slaying

"We appreciate the offer but word has already been sent for the guild to offer quests to multiple adventure groups." The guard still thought that they would be taking Walker's party off of another quest and knew that could hurt the standing of a young party no matter the level of the party if they gave up a quest.

"Let me check with out what quests our manager sent us," Walker said this and started to check out the system to find that the rewards for the quest issued were low. The funds needed to come directly from the guards' funds.

Walker found that Clara had strongly suggested this quest. It was partially because she knew that the party was traveling in this direction. The other reason was because it hit the identifies as a heroic quest which she was separating and making them more valuable for parties to take.

"Alright, I just selected the quest to slay five orcs. But there are additional rewards given by the guild for slaying more. " Walker said this to the party behind him then looked at the guards, "The Omnipotent party is here to slay some orcs. We will cross the river in the morning to slay a few."

The guards were stunned, the party in front of them had just contacted their manager and taken their quest without a blink of their eyes. Not only that but they had introduced themselves as the omnipotent party. "You are the party of heroes? Wait, I did see a little dragon with you." The guard was speaking without thinking and immediately ran inside shouting for his captain.

"I think you just sent that guard's heart in to the fastest it can beat." Remey had a smirk on he face while she watched the guard go running.

"I think he has to get the captain because someone who accepted their quest came. I doubt many other will accept it but it is natural for them to take it if there are good rewards from the guild. So maybe we will be the ones to prove it is worth taking. While the guard gets his captain let me read the quest to you guys." Walker pulled up the quest and read it from his system.

' Guardsmen quest: Slay orcs

The orcs are troubling the travelers that cross a common trade route bridge. The guards have requested adventurers come to slay them and make the route safer.

Requirements:

Slay five orcs

Additional orcs slain will be calculated by the adventurers guild.

Rewards:

15G per orc head

(1 heroic quest point for every 2 orcs)

Additional guild reward to be determined.'

"I see why there is a hard time to get adventurers to take it. The orcs are a dangerous monsters and the price on their heads is super low. But these are guards issuing the quest and they can't pay as a kingdom can. I bet this hasn't been processed by the castle yet and that is the reason." Gil was looking for the reason that this was the case and could only see it as this way.

"Makes sense. It is pretty lucky we decided to rest here then. We can easily trap and defeat a few of the orcs before we head out tomorrow. I also know we can cross the river a little more north at some rapids so we could stay on that side of the river and still be on course." Walker was recalling the image of the river from the maps he had read.

"Leader, that appears to be the captain." Su saw a taller man with slightly heavier armor come from inside the bridge barracks.

"I hear there is a party here to report for the porc slaying quest." The man came up and shook Walkers' hand firmly. "I am the captain of this guard unit and the bridge. I am pleased to meet you and thank you for your assistance." The captain was fairly polite and business like. He appeared to want to have this issue dealt with as soon as possible.

"My guards can not leave the bridge and we have slain a few orcs with the weapons at our disposal. That is the normal happenings of this position since many monsters will attempt to sneak across the bridge. However, we can do nothing to protect travelers on the other side. Therefore, I issued the quest with the finds that are allocated to us guards for such reasons."

"Then let us assist you. We should be able to deal with the orcs on our way north. We will just change our route slightly while dealing with them." Walker was happy to say this and felt the agreement of his party at his side. "We plan to leave early in the morning and will try to slay as many as we encounter. We will check in with you before we leave for more information." Walker said this and shook the guard captain's hand again. The guard captain was glad to see them resting first since the night was nearly upon them.

"Well, we have another quest to do. I hope we can manage to help them a lot." Walker said this more to encourage himself than anything.

"We will crush those smelly orcs in to the ground. I bet you can trap hundred if we need." Remey was all fired up since she would be able to keep using her defense breaking palm on the orcs to find their weaknesses and improve her use of it.

"Don't get too worked up. We may face more than we did earlier today. If we encounter five or six at once we will need to focus." Su was already thinking ahead to what they would need to do if they encountered many.

"We should relax for now. We have a fire, some roasted horned rabbit, and some new friends to talk to." Gil took the lead and changed the subject completely. No one knew if this was because he was hungry or because he wanted to sleep. The only one who didn't care was Midnight who wanted food.

Chapter 553 - 553. Roasting

"Sorry for getting held up. We were doing a little investigating on why people aren't crossing the bridge." Walker greeted Herder who was already resting by the fire with the white bull behind him.

"I thought you would find the answers, so what is the damage? Will I make my delivery on time?" Herder was worried that he would not make his deadline and lose out on the full payment he needed.

"We should be fine, my party took the quest to slay the orcs that are causing the problem. But if you want to wait a day or so I won't push you to go. I am sure that my party will miss a few of them so there will still be a danger." Walker didn't want Herder to be convinced that it was a perfectly safe trip.

"Then we will leave out with you. I can handle myself fairly well. I am more interested in why you took a quest when it was out of your way. You look like you have other places to be." Herder had noticed that the party was very motivated in their pace and was always moving.

"We have a place to be but it is to be expected that things will come up. The slight detour we take for the orcs will still allow us to be on the same path and trail changing absolutely nothing to our plans." Walker was quick to let Herder know that this was not at all influencing their trip.

"Well, I will let you be then. Now about that dinner, we talked about." Herder was eagerly awaiting the horned rabbit and Walker was ready to oblige.

The party sat themselves around the fire while taking turns spinning the meat over the fire to cook it evenly. Walker was actually enjoying the experience because the more he cooked the more it made him feel like he was back at home with his mother.

'The skill expert roasting has been taken from the smoke master system. The skill expert roasting has been learned due to the users' actions.

Expert roasting- 1 mana cost per hour.

The user can expend mana to assist the roasting process. The user will be able to more evenly roast the ingredient. The user will have better control of the heat being applied to the ingredient. The roasting time will be decreased slightly depending on the users' knowledge of the ingredient.'

The skill that Walker had learned instantly showed its' strength. Walker suddenly began to more efficiently cook the horned rabbit. "How did you get a skill from making dinner? It should have only been

a quick meal. You have done this before." Remey was up in arms about the skill. She had seen him do this before a few times and Walker had not gotten a skill before.

"I have no idea. It is probably because I have started to get to know the ingredient and also the process. It says that I am able to speed the process of cooking up if I understand the ingredient in the skill description." Walker tried to read it out but Remey was already done with the conversation out of frustration.

"Wait. you're saying that you just learned a new skill? What kind of cooking system do you have that you just learned a new skill?" Herder had watched this conversation and saw the change in Walkers' cooking.

"Oh, sorry, my system is called the jack of all trades system. I can learn pretty much any skill as long as I take the time to understand it and learn." Walker said this with a casual tone which made Herder even more amazed.

"He learns new skills often. It is always a little much to handle for everyone around us. But we have forgotten used to it." Gil thought someone should let Herder know that this was normal.

"Well, ehm, that is interesting. I hope that means the meal will taste better. Let me go and get the shepherd so that he can eat as well." Herder stood up and walked off a little shaky while trying to catch on to the fact that Walker could just learn any skill he wanted.

"Maybe I should start explaining this stuff a little earlier when we meet people." Walker felt a little embarrassed to have surprised Herder so much.

"Eh, at this point if we don't shock people it is not as much fun." Remey just shrugged as she rejoined the conversation.

Midnight nudged Walkers' side looking toward the food. "It should be done in another minute or so. Just let me start to cut it." Walker grabbed one of the carving knives he had in his inventory as part of his basic gear.

"Alright, this is the shepherd that joined me for this trip. He doesn't really talk since he was born mute. But he is pretty great company. He also can take care of an orc in his own right, so when we leave don't

worry too much about him." Herder surprised the party on his own by explaining that the weaker looking man was somehow able to defeat an orc easily.

"Welcome to dinner. Today we have roasted horned rabbit freshly gathered by our new friend with the whips there." The shepherd smiled and raised his walking stick. After tapping it on the ground five or six times he nodded and waited for the food.

Walker sliced off pieces for everyone and set up a large piece for Midnight. In a matter of seconds, Midnight had already scarfed down half of it. Walker just smiled as he added a little more to her plate and grabbed a piece for himself.

"So, I used my appraisal skill on your bull. It is very interesting to see a monster from across the ocean. How did you meet?" Walker was starting a conversation that he had hoped would get an interesting story.

Chapter 554 - 554. Salt Lizard Herding

Herder stopped eating. He did not expect this question to arise or that Walker would have an appraisal skill. "Well, that is a less exciting story than you might expect." Herder looked around the fire and found that all the attention was on him. Even the small black serpent had raised its head off the dragon's back to look at him. Herder realized that he had become the designated story teller for the moment.

"When I was half my age I was herding a group of salt lizards to the coast line. I went along the mountains then south to avoid the swamp lands. It is safer that way for myself and the salt lizards. My client wanted the salt lizards so he could train them to consider the salt that came from the ocean breeze. To be honest I thought it was strange that someone would specifically train salt lizards for this reason but I did it anyways."

Herder remembered the request fondly. He had not herded lizards before and found that the dog sized salt lizards were extremely docile. Their only focus was to find salt in the earth and roll about in it while eating. They had lived a very relaxed lifestyle and were not considered dangerous monsters in the least.

"Once I have made it to the coast I visited an ocean side village. Many of the people had close ties to the merfolk and survived on the waters by hunting fish and other natural resources. The old man that had put in the request greeted me and took me around to show off their village." Herder paused while taking a sip of water and glancing around the area quickly to make sure nothing sketchy was going on while they rested.

"I saw one of the largest ships in my life. It was taller than any monster I had met and I swore one could get lost underneath the deck if they were not careful. The old man that hired me said that he had struck a deal with the captain who was taking half the salt lizards I herded for him." Herer remembered that at this moment he had let himself get frustrated because he didn't like the dual payment method.

"I was escorted on to the ship and the old man pointed out many things I could take as payment. However, when I saw the small white calf I had a feeling that he would one day be a ferocious partner. I couldn't even take my eyes from him. Now I may still curse not being paid in gold, but gaining my partner has made me a much better herder." Herder was very happy to share this part of the tale.

"So you two have been together since the fury tainted bull was a calf," Walker mumbled this under his breath while thinking about the story.

"Fury tainted bull? I was told this is known as a fur changing bull. Maybe that is more of its natural name than the official name." Herder was pondering this because it would make sense. The bull calf had come from a different continent all together and would never be known as the same thing to every single race in the world.

"That is pretty amazing that you were able to raise it and keep herding. I bet that is why it is able to work so well together. Every time you whipped out we saw the bull change footing. The two styles you both used were perfectly combined." Remey let them have a little insight in to the way she saw things with her new skill. She had not only recorded Herders' style of battle but also the supporting style the bull used.

"We do feel like we are one in a fight. But sometimes he lets his emotions run wild and he takes things a little far. I once got cornered by a group of frost imps while herding some young icicle elk. Before I realized it, he had bucked me off and started to crush the imps by himself. I had not realized his horns had such strength. His fur was totally red and I thought he would never calm down. Luckily all it took was for me to mention a few sweet words..." Herder trailed off looking at the bull.

"So he packs a decent punch too. I bet his attacks style is similar to his supporting style." Remey started to mumble herself while she tried to add to her alchemical brawlers field guide. For her, this was a constant aspect of her new skill. She would always need to add more and more to complete the battle styles and improve her own battle style while also being on the look out for herbs to add to the guide as well.

"That is a pretty great story. I have only met two other herders before since I grew up in the fields outside of the kingdom. I thought that I might be lucky and met one of them but you're sheep are white and theirs black. And the other definitely does not ride a white bull." Gil laughed while changing the subject slightly.

"Black sheep?" Herder turned his head in acknowledgment. "I have met a shepherd with black sheep. They were some interesting monsters for use. They looked like normal sheep with black wool. But, when I got too close to the herd I found that they could actually use fire element attacks. It was pretty strange. Lucky for me the shepherd saw me and stopped them." Herder laughed himself as he recalled the blunder.

"Wait, they weren't black sheep, but monsters?" Gil was taken aback by this realization. If the black sheep were actually monsters then it would make way more sense how they would end up lost and abandoned in comparison to normal black sheep. "Who would have thought that someone I knew was actually herding a rare sheep like monster."

Chapter 555 - 555. Smoldering Sheep

Gil was in his own head thinking about these sheep monsters that someone he had met before was herding. It was an interesting fact to learn and showed just how little he knew about this aspect of farming. He had only even memorized the information about plants, now that he was seeing another aspect he was becoming much more interested.

"So there are sheep that breath fire? That sounds pretty hard to believe." Walker had not heard of such a monster before. However, he was not closed minded about this since he knew there were many things he had not heard of.

The sheep Shepard heard this and rummaged around inside of a medium sized satchel around his waist. After a few moments of this, a small leather journal was brought out. He flipped page to page to find what he was looking for before finally stopping and turning the journal around.

"Oo, so that is what breed of sheep it is. Interesting. Thank you for sharing. I might encounter them again one day on the trade routes." Herder was the first to read the passage in the journal. Walker was the next and read it out loud.

" Smoldering sheep. Beware of the black sheep that has red and orange light in its' wool. The smoldering sheep gathers the fire and light elemental mana from the sun and uses it in a devastating flame breath to deter predators and hunt prey. They are known to eat plant monsters and often ignorant animals that attack them. Do not directly approach them or else they will see you as an enemy. Instead, allow them

to approach you and they will remain docile. Once a year they will shed all their wool so that they may grow new wool. The smoldering sheep wool is incredibly fire retardant and is ideal for desert clothing and forging gear."

Walker felt like he had just read a mouthful. He read it again silently to make sure he would memorize it before looking back at the shepherd. "Thank you for the knowledge. I have never heard of smoldering sheep, but they sound like a very interesting creature." The shepherd looked at the journal and then pointed to his sheep. He stopped on a page again.

"Dreamland sheep

Thought to be sheep that were pulled from the dreams of children and become reality., the dreamland sheep is incredibly docile. They do not require any food at all and are incredibly resilient to all the elements in nature. Their wool holds an oil that they can disperse in the air when frightened causing all within a certain area of them to fall in to slumber. Those that fall victim to their slumber will be unable to awaken from their own dreams unless they realize they are dreaming or they are awoken from an outside force. Dreamland sheep wool is often used in pillows and baby clothing to prevent nightmares and assist in proper sleep."

Walker read this one out loud too. "I wish I had some of that for the orphanage! That would have kept everyone in bed way better." Remey was completely floored by such an effect. She would have given anything for this when the kids at the orphanage were acting up and refusing bed time. Or when there were nightmares plaguing their sleep.

"The oil they make sounds very useful. What if I made an arrow that dispersed it when I fired it over the head of an enemy?" Gil was already finding utility in this and wanted to try and craft an arrow that could do something like this right away. It was a challenge he wanted to give to himself.

The shepherd heard Gil and started to sift through his bag again. Surprising them all the shepherd pulled a bottle that was larger than the bag and handed it to Gil with an enthusiastic nod. "From what I have learned so far he really doesn't like when people get hurt or die. He even flinches at monsters getting hurt. I think he really likes your idea to put an enemy asleep instead of beating them." Herder translated the actions since he had caught on to this trait.

"I think that is wonderful. I prefer not to hurt anything when I can either. I may not have chosen my system but I became a guardian none the less. I find it important to protect those around me." Su was starry eyed hearing that the shepherd valued life to such a degree.

"It's pretty amazing that there are monsters that appear to be normal farm animals but are actually, well, monsters." Walker had always thought of monsters as being dangerous. He also only ever read the books about the dangerous ones that could harm them as they traveled.

"There are many animals and monsters that are like mirror images of each other. I see it pretty often. I have a feeling that the world used to be pretty boring before animals became monsters and mana flowed freely." Herder was referencing a well known story of how the world was thought to be before any of the races had been born. But there was never any proof to this since there was no proven history to showcase what it was like before the first kingdoms and such were formed.

"If the world didn't have mana then I wouldn't be able to make potions and help people with my fists. I like it the way it is." Remey surprised everyone by chiming in with this. It was clear that she had more joy and happiness for the life she lived now than they saw.

"Well, I agree little miss. On that note, I think it is time for me to take a walk around to patrol. I will rest when my partner here has slept. Goodnight." Herder stood up and wandered off to patrol the herd and make sure everything was at ease.

"I think we will follow his lead." Walker turned to the shepherd. "You are welcome to sleep here since we are keeping watch." Unfortunately, the shepherd shook his head and walked toward the sheep herd where he disappeared in to the mass of white wool.

Chapter 556 - 556. Styles

The night went by without any interruption. Walker took the first watch and was kept company by Gill who was taking some of the regular wither spike arrows and slowly poking holes in the arrow heads. His goal was to set them up so that the holes would be opened when he fired an arrow to release the sleeping oils from the dreamland sheep.

This was a time consuming task but Walker got the chance to see Gil at work and shaping an arrow. It was also a good way for Walker to learn what Gil could and could not do while they traveled. Since Gil could make an arrow that could spread a poison like the sleeping oil from the dreamland sheep, then he should also be able to spread other things.

Walker knew that the paralyzing poison was something that needed to make blood contact. But there were certain poisons that they may encounter that could be used in the same way as the sleeping oil. It would be an ideal option for large groups of monsters or even to throw off a dangerous single monster.

Gil and Walker had easily grown tired and switch with Su. She was more than happy to take over after the two had spent their time walking the area and also working on the arrow head. Little did they know but Su had also stayed up to watch the progress. She was very interested in the opportunity to be able to settle some disputes without a battle in the future.

Walker woke up to the smell of roasting horned rabbit and a nudge from Midnight who was eagerly awaiting someone to cut her some breakfast. Remey? What are you doing up before the sun?" Walker knew that Midnight and Onyx had taken the last watch so it was normal for them to wake him up. But seeing Remey awake was a slight surprise.

"I was thinking about the style Herder used with the whips. I gained such a small amount of information and can't fill up the journal entry. I know you use that frost whip so..." Remey trailed off with her face turning a little red.

"I bet knowing a style to partner with my frost whip[would make me much stronger." Walker pretended that he didn't see Remey getting red faced. He knew if he pointed it out she would deny it completely.

"Exactly. If you used a style it could make things easier. I was thinking that if I learned it and it was in my alchemical brawlers field guide that I might be able to use the educationist title and the knowledge swapping skill to teach you the style. But I need to test it." Walker was surprised that this was the direction Remey was going with this.

"I thought you were going to tell me you could give me details about it so I can learn by myself. But this is way better. If you can share styles and other information from your alchemical brawlers field guide then that opens so many different possibilities." Walker was

Intrigued by the possibilities before him.

Remey lit up even more while she roasted some of the horned rabbit for the party. "I also wonder if Su could teach you how to use her wid block skill. If she can you can have similar shields made that you can pull out of your inventory." Remey had really been thinking about all this and Walker was unable to disagree at all.

"I can definitely do that. I actually think I should look for information on a battle master system user. If I can learn how to chain attacks together better using multiple weapons then I would have a style similar to theirs. The only difference is . I think lack of knowledge is why I haven't learned your combo skill." Walker had also been thinking about this.

"You focus on your fists and have a very clear understanding of them. Therefore, you can combo your skills together more easily than I can." The theory was simple and based on the understanding of weaponry and fighting style.

"I was wondering why you hadn't gotten it. You use so many different weapons all the time and never seem to flawlessly chain your attacks. There is always a slight pause in how you attack when switching." Remey had seen this and recorded it in her skill, but she knew that this information could change as Walker gained more skills.

"It's a little weird to think I have a style in your alchemical brawlers field guide." Walker laughed nervously since it felt like there was a book about him being written.

"There is one for every system user I have seen. Mostly only those that can attack. Yours is the least filled out because it is changing a lot. Su's is the most and Gill's a close second. Mine is actually pretty barren since I am still learning my own style. I also am changing it based on what I see." Remey was unusually talkative this morning and Walker could only pin it on the fact that she was excited for the new scenery they would find when they reached the dwarven kingdom.

"Well, if you see anything you think I should learn just let me know. I will add it to my skills and keep getting stronger." Walker said this as encouragement and also to end the conversation. He saw that Midnight had started to lose patience and wanted breakfast. "Thank you for breakfast by the way." Walker started to slice up the meat which threw Midnight in to an excited frenzy of hops.

"Ahh, the smell of freshly roasted rabbit in the morning. This is why I love the road. So much fresh food. How did your three rest? Ready for some orc slaying?" Herder had walked the herd and returned for some food too. He couldn't help but test the waters for any anxiousness.

Chapter 557 - 557. Final Check In

Walker looked at Herder who appeared wide awake and ready for the day. "You know we are ready. This is adventuring at its' finest. We are adventurers to help those in need and you need to be able to cross that bridge safely so we will help." Walker answered him perfectly which got a laugh from Herder as he grabbed some roasted horned rabbit.

"In that case, I will let you do your job and make sure the path is safe. Just let me get some action so I won't be bored." Herder laughed even more as he ate.

"I am going to wake up Gil and Su. Hopefully Onyx is somewhere around here too." Walker left the fire and snake don his own piece of meat for breakfast. He did not forget to pull some fruits from his inventory before heading away though, he knew they would need more than roasted rabbit to make it through the day.

Walker nudged Su and Gil until they were both up and getting ready for the day., They made their way to the fire easily but Walker could still jot see Onyx anywhere. His eyes drifted toward the sheep where he could see the shepherd standing tall above the herd.

"Good morning. Have you seen the little black serpent that was with me? His name is Onyx and I want to tell him that we are getting ready to head out." Walker made his way to the sheep that did not pay him any mind at all. once he had made it there he called out softly to the shepherd as not to bother the herd of sheep.

"Brother, I have been speaking with my new friend. He says it has been years since he was able to have a proper conversation." Onyx had found a spot on the shepherd's shoulder and had been speaking with him for who knew how long.

"I am glad that you managed to find a friend. If both of you are hungry feel free to come over. I wouldn't mind hearing more about the sheep your friend has herded." Walker was very happy to see Onyx befriending others and making it possible for the shepherd to have conversations even though he was mute. It was a heart warming moment.

"We will be there in a few moments. He said that he will gladly share what he knows so that you can properly befriend all the sheep you meet in life." This was a nice proverb to live by for s shepherd. Befriending all sheep sounded like the exact goal that would come with the shepherding system.

"Leader, did you find Onyx? Remey said you didn't know where he had gone." Su was worried but knew that Walker would not have come back without finding Onyx anywhere.

"He had made friends with the shepherd, apparently they have been talking for a while. I bet the shepherd will have plenty of stories to share after being mute his whole life." Walker confused Herder since he did not know that Onyx had a skill that let him speak within someones' mind.

"Onyx can communicate with anyone through their thoughts. That is why Walker said the two have been talking so long." Gil realized the lack of information and readily shared the important fact.

"That little snake can talk? Well then." Herder was understandably surprised at this as well.

"Oh, he just looks small now. He is much bigger, just check out his shadow." Herder looked over at the shadows around the approaching Onyx and shepherd. His eyes grew wide at the large shadow stretching out behind him.

"Ehm, yes, I see. Your party is very interesting. I didn't want to say too much because it was already strange to see a dragon but, now it is another level of strange." Herder was finally speaking out about how odd he found the group.

"This is just how things ended up for us. It is all a long story. I'm surprised you didn't ask last night. Although, It sounds like you didn't want to be rude so, thank you for that." Walker realized the reason already but still felt like speaking out and telling a little of their story. By the time breakfast was over and they had all prepared Walker has shared some of the partys' history and Walker had also learned more about the shepherds' sheep herding experiences.

"We will lead the way and cross the bridge first. It looks like there are other travelers who saw us speak to the guards, or maybe the guards told them that an adventurer party showed up. Anyways, we will have more people behind us." Walker could see the many that were watching them and already packed up as well.

"Leader, we should take this more seriously if they are following behind us. They will be at risk." Su was sure to remind Walker. He nodded and looked at Gil who readied his bow as they started to near the bridge.

"We are here to start off the trail clearing. Is there anything your captain may want to say?" Walker found a guard at the gate of the bridge immediately so that they could do a final check before heading out.

Like he was waiting on them the guard captain approached. "Good morning. I wish I could send some guards with you but we are not able to leave this post. The only thing you should watch out for is the group of orcs with the one carrying a piece of stone as a club. It picked it up from the end of our bridge and now has it as a weapon."

The guard looked a little embarrassed that the orc was able to steal a stone from the bridge and no less, use it as a weapon. "Thank you for the heads up. We will be off then. I think we will have many following behind us after the herds. Good luck." With that, the guards opened the gate on the bridge and the party began their crossing.

Chapter 558 - 558. Baiting

The bridge looked very clean on the side the guards were currently. But as soon as the party crossed the gate they could see remnants of battles and broken stones. It was clear there had been multiple monsters that had tried to cross and had been taken down here. By the time the party crossed fully, they found the end column that was missing a piece of carved stone as decoration.

"I have a feeling that the orc that took this is a little big." Remey was examining the missing stone and realized it was nearly double her height.

"I would say it is too. But the guards were able to scare it off once so we should be able to finish the job." Waker turned around and saw that there were multiple ballistas and other traps set up on the higher parts of the bridge to deal with monsters trying to cross. "I would bet that it is injured somehow so that should work in our favor."

"I wonder why there are no signs of any of the orcs that the guards defeated?" Remey was looking around and found no signs of any defeated orcs. There weren't even bones or bits of broken parts.

"The other orcs ate them. They are said to eat anything and everything, even each other." Su reminded Remey of this causing her to make a slightly sick looking face. However, the entire party agreed with how she felt.

Walker turned to see the Herder guiding the first of his cattle slowly across the bridge. "I know we have some people behind us so keep an eye out. I think it will be a good chance for me to move a little ahead and use the luring orb skill." Walker didn't want the orcs to attack the cattle on the move and decided that it would be better to lure them in to one place that he could trap them and take them out. Or at the very least stop them from having a chance to attack any of those behind the party.

"I will keep an eye on you and send an arrow over if anything tries to sneak up." Gil decided that he was the best to watch Walkers' back while he moved up. This would make Walker appear to be an easy target but in reality, he was actually baiting them in with a that would completely capture their attention while he trapped them.

Walker glanced at Su who was slightly uncomfortable with this strategy but she also knew that she was the best defense to protect the innocent people behind her. Other than that she also knew that Walker had his own methods to avoid attacks and at least retreat.

Walker moved up and get a decent distance from the party. It was far enough away that Gil could see him but would not be affected by the blue luring orb. Walker pulled his staff from his inventory and used the luring orb skill. It was formed fairly fast due to the brightness of the sun and the multitude of light elemental mana in the air.

Walker kept his eyes averted so that he wouldn't fall victim to his own skill. So far he had not seen any sign or had any feelings that there was a monster around. This was strange since he knew that there could be a large group of orcs around. The only thing he could see was a very worn path from the many travelers that had taken it. However, there was a strange drag mark in the dirt of the trail that stood out.

This aside, he continued the walk keeping a careful eye on the tall grass and large thorny bush that lined the path. Walker was keeping the luring orb ahead of him just above his head to make it easier for him to look around without seeing the orb accidentally. He noticed that a few birds had taken to flying around above him because of it and was sure that it would also work to attract the orcs. He also knew that they could easily flee from any danger that showed itself.

The chirping of the birds that were trying to fly right next to the luring orb and even land on it was slightly distracting, but not enough when Walker started to hear some of the cracking of twigs nearby. He could not see anything yet but he could hear the bushes being crushed as something push through them.

Walker fell in to his stance and started to form the trenches as he had before a little ways ahead of him. He stopped moving completely to focus on this task while the sounds around him grew in volume. He could hear many more steps crushing the large bushes but still did not see past them.

He made the luring orb move above the place he was creating the trenches and noticed the shift in the sounds coming toward him. Now the sounds were moving a little away from him which made him relax a little more while he focused on the trenches.

Seconds later the first orc burst through the spiky bushes like it was nothing and was trying to reach out and grab the luring orb. Walker had expected the orcs to lose themselves in staring at it but instead, it was like they wanted to eat it. This was a normal aspect of the orc's character but still made Walker shiver slightly.

There were three more orcs that burst through the bushes and began pushing and fighting over the luring orb. Walker was glad he had let it move ahead of him while he watched the heavy blows that could seriously hurt him.

Walker felt something to his side and noticed Midnight revealing herself after using the shadow wrapping skill she had nearly mastered. "We are going to trap them as we did before, please get everyone up here and also, stop the cattle from behind." Midnight rushed off with Walker's orders just in time for another two orcs to burst from the bushes. This group was much larger than he had expected. Yet, what worried him most was the absence of a large orc carrying a carved piece of stone.

Chapter 559 - 559. Fat Orc

Walker kept sharp eyes as he watched the orcs grow in number. They had started to fight all out with each other over the luring orb making him worry that there would be even more problems. The sounds and squeals they were making were much worse because they were attracting more orcs over. This group was numbering up to seventeen now which was many more than the guards had expected to be out there.

"Leader, the battle has been stopped. There seem to be no disturbances over there but they can hear the ones here." Su was the first to make her way to Walker. She was sure that the travelers and Herder had stopped moving so she wanted to make sure Walker was safe.

"There are way more of them than expected. They are literally attacking and tearing each other to pieces to fight over the luring orb. I have just been waiting to see what happens." Walker was afraid to act right now since he knew it could stop them from their focus on the luring orb. It was better to let them deal with each other than for Walker to draw all of their attention right now.

"Do you think you can use the fire flower ? I believe that could deal with most of them." Su was suggesting one of Walker's strongest attacks because she knew it would cause serious if not fatal damage to the orcs.

"That would damage the path and possibly attract more orcs from farther away. I know they are making a lot of noise now but it is in a small area instead of a wide range." Walker knew that causing a massive boom could lead to a huge problem. If multiple orcs from far away were attracted to the path then there could be a growing problem of orcs instead of a declining issue.

Su was crouched by Walker averting her eyes from the brutal battle of orcs when an idea occurred to her, "Why not use that crystal ball to make the spear you used. Midnights' decaying flames worked well against them, so your spear should too." Walker had not thought of this yet since he was putting close ranged attacks out of his mind.

"I could do that, I have the trench skill more or less prepared. When they fall I can use my speed and try to get some good hits in. But I think I should manipulate the mouldable crystal ball in to a sword and use it with one of the twin blitz swords. I can use the lightning swordplay skill and get a lot more attacks in." Walker knew the twin blitz sword would most likely not do any damage but it would just be there to assist in the style and speed of attacks.

"Actually, if the decaying effect works well then Gil may be able to use less powerful arrows and less mana to attack. Then Midnight can also help break their defenses down." The two had started to come up with a safe plan to proceed.

"Leader, do you feel that?" Su could feel a slight vibration and hear a soft thud of heavy footsteps.

"I was worried that the large one wasn't going to show. Let's keep our head down while we watch," Walker and Su backed away a little as a large carved stone slammed the bushes aside along with two other orcs.

The orc that walked out through the bushes was slightly taller than the other orcs. But where it truly stood out was how fat it was. "That orc might pose a problem. I am not sure any of our attacks will pierce its skin." Walker could already tell that the orc would pose a massive problem for the party.

"I will get Gil up here. He should be able to see me waving for him. I think the darkness elemental arrows he had will help us in that aspect." Su said this while Walker watched the fat orc slam the carved stone down and crush another orc. The only good thing was that it was defeating multiple orcs in its own bid to get food. However, there was a terrifying aspect of the entire situation. It was also eating the other orcs that it crushed.

Walker heard Gil coming up behind him, "Holy lord, that orc is fat!" Gil explained this a little loud prompting Walker to cover his mouth. Luckily, there was no reaction from the orcs who were too busy fighting each other.

"We need to weaken its' defenses so we can defeat it. Sooner or later the orcs won't have anything else to fight. When that happens we need to move in and deal with whatever is left." Walker was getting Gil up to date when the fat orc turned and revealed its other side.

"Leader, that must be the ballista bolts the guards fired. They are lodged in its skin. They are made completely of iron. Do you think you can use that?" Su was brilliant as always and had found the best possible way for Walker to do some major damage.

"Change of plan, I am going to try and make lightning to aim at that ballista bolt. But we still need to weaken it and the other orcs. If I land a major hit on the fat orc then we should be able to deal with it and what others survive from there." Walker had understood Sus' intentions and prepared himself to activate the prepared trench then use the elemental manipulation to make lightning.

This would take a toll on him since he was using a significant amount of mana all at once, but it was much safer than running in to the battle and risking the blows from a large piece of stone. He also wanted to see what would happen if he tried to create multiple bolts of lightning in a row. This would double as harsh training and the solution to their problems.

Chapter 560 - 560. Lightning Rod

"Gil, when you fire that new prototype darkness arrow, what will it do?" Walker was looking at the completely black arrow. It had a few rune carvings that drew in the darkness elemental arrow. However, it looked like it had been carved from a single piece of burned wood which made him wonder.

"This is made from rot log. Apparently, it is a tree that grows in the swamp. It will grow really fast and large then die and absorb poisons and such as it decays slowly. One of the elves asked a dark mage to help him carve it. It always is absorbing darkness mana so when I fire it, it will release what is built up inside. I can use it again if it isn't damaged but it takes time to naturally absorb more mana."

This was an interesting arrow to Walker. He could tell the runes were speeding up the darkness elemental absorb[ti]on but he didn't expect it to not need elemental mana crystals to charge up. " Alright, there are only eight left alive and the fat orc. They are all injured. Here goes the quad trench."

Walker had let Midnight, Onyx, and Remey stay back to guard the merchants, travelers, and herds. He knew that they would want to be involved with the fight against the orcs but if one escaped them there needed to be someone to back up those behind them.

The ground started to shake and the luring orb disappeared. The orcs were in disarray as they started to fall deeper in to the forming pit. The earth fell around them and the fat orc lashed out all around it in anger. The other orcs took glancing blows from it and were severely injured.

"Gil, Now!" Su was in charge of timing since Walker was already starting to gather as much of the natural fire, water, and wind elemental manas as possible. He had an idea of what he wanted them to form and was not able to focus on Gils' timing.

Gil released the darkness elemental prototype arrow. The shadows slightly bent as it flew through the air making the arrow appear to be both there and not at the same time. This was very different from the first prototype that shot through the shadows and in to the target.

The arrow hit the fat orc since it was the biggest and most important target to take down. There was a burst of darkness elemental mana and the orcs were covered in a dark mist. They could all feel the danger of the dark mist and the decaying effect it had on the orcs.

The chorus of angered and pained squeals from the orcs was matched only by the sound of the carved stone being slammed around on the ground in the dark. Su and Gil were certain that it was a much safer choice to remain at a distance since the erratic behavior of the fat orc would have been deadly for them. This was not a set of attacks that could be easily blocked, deflected, or dodged.

Walker had gathered a significant amount of water, fire, and wind elemental mana. He was forcing them to condense in to a small rotating form. The formation of a grey cloud was what he was aiming for and what had begun to show between his hands.

He was imagining a storm and how it would look if it was somehow confined in to a crystal ball. This imagination was proving to add more energy to the elements that were fusing and rotating at a great pace. Just like the hair standing on end before lightning struck Walker knew that the orb he had created was nearly at breaking point. He would not be able to hold it back if he poured any more mana within it.

Walker forced the built up elemental manas to leave through one point in the sphere of swirling elemental mana he had created. The result was a terrifying crack of lightning that echoed through the entire sky. It echoed to the mountains and back keeping the sound from having a discernable starting point. This was the perk of lightning because it was common in the fields.

The lightning was not a simple single bolt. It was a bright yellow series of bolts that constantly shot from the orb Walker had created until all the rotating mana had dispersed. The sound had deafened Walker, Gil, and Su making Walker rush to use a healing spell on all of them. Luckily, they recovered their hearing to realize that there was still a deep groaning coming from the dissipating dark mist.

With a solid thud, the carved stone fell out of the mist, and behind it the fat orc which appeared to be burned from the inside out. The metal ballista bolt was glowing orange and even dripped some molten iron. Walker also fell backward with the effects of the large amount of mana he had just used. The fusion of elements had taken a full thirty of his mana at once to form but it had done major damage. The only problem was the gathering time of the mana.

Su rushed forward and used her shield to stab through the orc's neck. Its defenses had been severely weakened and it was barely hanging on to life. Su managed to deal the final blow without a single bit of resistance. "Walker, are you alright?"m Su used Walkers' actual name showing her worry for him. When someone was hurt she would lose her normal calmness which made everyone feel that much more important.

"Yes. I am fine. Just used a lot of mana at once. It looks like we completed our quest." Walker was looking at the two different system notifications he had received. One about the quest, and the other about the skill he had just gained.