

Master 571

Chapter 571 - 571. Pondering The Yellow Slimes

The arty watched as the ice was melted away. Walker was prepared to use another set of firebolts when he noticed that the limes were also falling in to a puddle. The cores had been punctured by the ice. "Ice is the best bet to beat acidic slimes so far. Note taken." Gil had another of the water elemental arrows already notched and released it to put it back in to the quiver.

"I thought fire would damage them more. But it seems that it only helps burn off some of their outer body." Walker was examining the damage the slime bodies were doing to the ground and ice. "I think they have a unique sense for the earth elemental mana within the ores and that attracts them. They went after us as soon as there was more metal on us than in the steel worm skin."

"That should mean they can be lured and defeated easily. If we get enough earth elemental mana together." Su was already deducing a plan to gather them and defeat every single yellow slime possible.

"That will be tough. There is a lot of earth and a lot of earth elemental mana. Especially down in the city which is underground and full of different ores and metals. All being used by the dwarves, or mined, or traded." Walker could already tell that this would be a problem. There would need to be a better way to deal with them.

The party was silent while they looked around for more slides that may show themselves. "At least give me something to store more of their bodies. If we can ever get a core too, that would be nice." Remey was still looking at the possible silver lining and trying to gather some more of the yellow slimes' body.

"Sure," Walker pulled out some of the larger vials and watched as Remey very carefully gathered the slime body. He moved toward the steel skinned worms' body and looked at what had happened to it in the fire and acid. All that was left were the tougher pieces of ore that had not been broken down by the slimes or the worm. Walker did his best to store them away for any possible use later but had some doubt that they could be valuable at all.

"Something I have been thinking about, if the slimes are already underground and in the mines, what's to say they aren't in the main city yet?" Gil had hit on a tough subject. If the slimes were already within the city then it would be extremely dangerous for the dwarves. They would need to fight and escape their very own homes.

"We should speed up then. But I have a feeling that they aren't that far gone yet. If they weren't I don't think that smoke over there would still be burning." Walker pointed out the cloud of black smoke in the distance. This was the smoke from the ever burning forges of the dwarves.

The party started to travel again after Walker was sure that there were no embers left from the burned work body. He wanted to make sure that there would not be anything that could blow away in the wind and start a fire somewhere. It was the same principle of extinguishing the campfire they used for their camp at night.

"If I can learn some other water spells maybe I can dilute the acid slimes' bodies and make them unable to hold together just leaving the core?" Walker had this idea while they were walking. He had only learned to make water in to ice more or less and not used it in the liquid form as often.

"That would need a lot of water though, right? Where would you get enough in a battle?" Remey was sure that this was not some easy task that Walker could just perform like nothing.

"That's the question. Leader could somehow control it to come with us. But I think he will need to use the flooded mines from the rainy season." Su knew that the rainy season was the biggest issue for the dwarves. There would always be a decrease in trade due to the rain naturally flooding caves. By the end of summer and the start of fall, the dwarves would go in to their busy season and mine more and more as the caves dried out.

"Then it might be possible to deal with them in the lower parts of the city which is good since that is where the majority of the ores will be." Gil already saw the plan coming together. He had some of the failed prototype arrows just in case and some only made the area slightly misty or foggy with the moisture in the air. He had thought them failures but now they would have their uses.

"If we dilute it and obtain the cores then we might be able to find someone with a unique system to make the acid slimes less dangerous. Maybe another slime breeder or something. I just want them to be used for alchemy." Remey was sure that these slimes could be a massive benefit in the world of alchemy. She had been thinking about this since she saw how fast they dissolved the steel skinned worm.

"Alright, so we have some small personal goals like gathering yellow slime cores, meeting the golem builder, and looking for better ways to deal with the slimes. Add those to our main goal of helping the dwarves and getting them to join the Genesis alliance and we have a full schedule." Walker felt invigorated and picked up the pace. He liked having these solid goals to keep moving forward. He was

also more confident now that they knew the slimes' weakness and could do more to them than just retreat.

Chapter 572 - 572. Deeper In The Earth

The party felt that having their goals all set in front of them was a little daunting, but they also could feel that they were ready to push on them faster. With their morale higher than usual, they were able to cover a significant distance on the rocky trails.

"I feel like we could walk through here forever and still not make it to the mountain." Remey could swear that they were not making any progress in the last hour. She thought that they would never reach the mountain in their lifetime.

"We do not need to get to the mountain. We just need to reach the smoke which is near the entrance to the dwarven city." Su assured her that they were not actually going all the way to the mountain but actually in front of it.

"The entrance to the city should be above ground. It will be smaller than what is below but that is also the center of the trading for the dwarves. Not that we will focus on buying things." Walker was sure that they would see some amazing gear and materials. However, he knew that they could not stop and focus on them or they would end up losing even more time.

"I doubt we will get the chance to wander and check things out. Every time we enter another city someone catches us and drags us somewhere." Gil was speaking a fair truth since this did indeed happen. All of them were thinking that and dwarven guards they met would whisk them away to a king the moment they were in sight.

"I just hope that when we reach it tomorrow we can get a clear view of how the dwarves are handling the yellow slimes." Walker was focused on the major problem that he believed the dwarves were facing at the moment. However, he was not very sure what their real state would be.

They had walked for most of the day and again covered a major distance. The party had not encountered any other monsters on the way. There were many remnants of risen steel skinned worms along with a few signs of the yellow slimes. But nothing alive.

"I am going to stay up with Gil for the first watch. I want to try and meditate on the higher earth elemental mana around here. Maybe I will try and focus on water too if I don't have any luck." Walker

had been thinking about this in the back of his mind while they traveled and decided that it was time for him to start to play with the elemental earth mana to learn more.

"Just don't go making too many things and waking us up." Remey gave a warning as she bundled herself up in some blankets and quickly fell to sleep.

"I will take a walk. Just to patrol a little." Gil Was already prepared for the first night shift and watched as Walker sat down to experiment with the earth elemental mana.

Walker was already feeling that it would be easier to manipulate the earth below him due to all the earth elemental mana. He could even tell that the earth wall he could make would be mostly made of harder stone due to the surrounding rocks around.

The first thing he tried was to raise a small round pillar. It was not large and was only the size of his twin blitz sword. The earth had responded to him much faster than he was used to and this made him wonder if he would be able to create more in depth structures faster. He was thinking back to the tower he had made and decided it was best not to make such things for no reason.

He could feel that there were larger pieces of stone slowly moving through the earth. If he had to compare it to anything it was like watching a fruit sink in a cup of honey. He had seen his mother mix these things in the kitchen and the comparison was still faster than how the earth moved of its own natural volition. However, it was an easy comparison for him to make to better understand it.

This realization made him realize that the earth was always moving and most people never noticed it. The air would move quickly in bursts which always brought it to mind. Fire could be seen moving and so could water. The only thing that was rarely seen moving on its own was the earth. Therefore, Walker began to feel that movement below him.

He let his mind delve deeper and deeper fonding that there was also hidden water and fire elemental mana below him. This was a shocking discovery that he easily explained. He had seen wells dug in to the ground and knew that the water would somehow get trapped underneath the ground in its' own ponds.

The fore elemental mana was something that he only explained through the books he had read before. He knew this as lava, magma, and volcanoes. For some reason the deeper in the earth he felt the more

fire elemental mana was mixed with the earth elemental mana. This made him wonder just how well he could combine the earth and the fire elemental manas together to make a fusion attack.

This raised the question, water elemental attacks would eventually dilute the slimes acidic bodies, but what of a fusion elemental attack using fire and earth elements? Walker was eager to try this out and gather a small ball of rock in his hand using the high earth sculpting skill. Next, he used his grand elemental manipulation to pull some fire from the campfire.

He guided the two together in front of him and watched as the stones began to take on the heat and easily come together. There was little effort in combining the two elemental manas. Walker could tell they easily worked in harmony with each other. It was the perfect start to his experiments.

Chapter 573 - 573. Earth And Fire

The balance that Walker had needed when fusing the light and darkness elemental manas was not a huge requirement for the earth and fire. If there was more fire elemental mana he found that the earth would become more liquid. If there was more of the earth elemental mana he found that the earth would slow and have more heat before beginning to become lava.

This was an interesting occurrence that guided him to the realization that he could manipulate the two at the same time in the same way he did water if he had the right balance of elemental manas.

Walker decided to use the space in front of him to continue his experimenting. He isolated a portion of the stones and dirt to gather more and more of the earth elemental mana. This caused it to solidify more and more in to a very condensed circle of stone.

Next, he pulled on the fire elemental mana left from the day that heated many of the surrounding rocks. He also pulled a great deal from the campfire he and his party had started. Before he knew it he had done so to such a degree that he had left the campfire a pile of smoldering ash.

In front of him, there was a quickly changing sight. The Earth that had been condensed in to a stone like substance was turning red and orange. Before long it had become white and seemingly melted. This brought the substance in to a molten churning hole of lava. Walker had managed to create this in the course of an hour using a decent amount of mana.

He could feel the heat in front of him nearly burning his skin but he held on through the pain to experiment more.

'The skill fire resistance has been taken from the magma hound system. The user has automatically learned the passive skill fire resistance due to their prolonged exposure to fire elemental mana.

Fire resistance- passive

The user can more easily survive within an area with high fire elemental mana and heat. This will prevent the user from becoming burned easily and overheating. This also prevents the user from overheating. The users' skin also gains the ability to touch and hold hotter materials'

Walker wasn't paying attention to the system but did notice the sudden coolness instead of heat. This prompted him to add more and more fire elemental mana. But this was not the end of his experiment. He wanted to test if he could fuse this pool of lava with an existing skill. One, in particular, was almost calling out to him.

He used the trench skill underneath the pool of lava he had made and opened his eyes to watch the earth split and the lava fill it. This result made a rectangular hole in the ground filled with lava. It radiated the heat that could burn away anything that fell within and Walker could tell that he could easily manipulate it if he desired.

His testing of the skill and the lava creating seemed to go hand in hand and when he pushed the lava to grow it started to pull more of the fire elemental and earth elemental mana towards itself of its' own volition. Walker could feel it rising from deeper in the earth to meet the pool he had made.

With a slight shake beneath the ground, Walker felt something click in to place as the trench widened and the lava inside started to bubble. He knew that he had made something that could defeat string opponents if they were to fall in. But more importantly, he could feel that he had the control to make this happen much faster.

'The user has taken two skills from the volcanic lord system. The skill lava manipulation and the skill lava fissure have been learned automatically.

Lava manipulation- cost dependent on user action.

The user can freely manipulate lava as if it were water flowing through a stream. The actions the user takes to change and shape the lava will cost greater mana the more the action requires movement. The user must expend mana to retain the heat and solidarity of any shapes made. The more fluid the lava is allowed to be the less mana it will take due to the less control available to the user.

Lava fissure- 15 mana cost.

The user calls to the earth and fire elemental mana deep within the earth. They answer in a brutal burst of lava that splits the earth and creates a deep fissure full of lava. This lava will last for an hour before cooling and the fissure will collapse upon itself. Any and all things that fall within will be subject to the high temperature and churning lava.'

Walker could feel that these things were like second nature. He freely used his mana to cause the lava within the trench to move side to side like small waves. He even was able to make smoldering spikes of lava that burst on contact when he had the air elemental mana push them in to a nearby rock.

'The skill lava lance has been taken from the natural magma golem system. The user has automatically learned the lava lance skill.

Lava lance- 5 mana or 20 mana (dependent on the situation.)

This skill is only able to be used when the user has the lava manipulation skill. The user can freely use existing lava to create a lava lance and fire it through the air. If there is no existing lava the user must take longer to form the lava lance and attract the elemental mana needed. This will come as a higher mana cost. The lava lance will burst on contact and cool, leaving the target burned and also partially bound by cooling molten stone.'

Walker was overjoyed seeing these skills. He was about to test more when he noticed a few sounds behind him. He looked back at the entire party awake and watching him with careful looks.

Chapter 574 - 574. Interrupted Sleep

"Erm...why are you all awake?" Walker knew that he was most likely the cause of everyone being awake but he also didn't see the reason for all of them to be watching him.

"Well, I was taking my walk when I saw a weird glow and found you." Gil was sure that there was nothing in the immediate area so he decided that this was a safe time to check up on Walker.

"It was too cold to sleep...So I was going to punch you for putting out the fire. It's warm here now though." Remey was a little annoyed to have been awakened from her sleep, but this was a cool way to get warm.

"Leader, your skills look very strong. I want to know more." Su was woken up by Remey when she was cold and grumbling about the fire. However, when she saw Walker had started to succeed with a new skill she wanted all the information. She wanted to make sure that she would be able to think about how it would change the strategies of the party and her defense.

"Sister and I want to see what you can do. Sister says she wants to sleep near the pool of warm rocks." Onyx and Midnight had paired up and were enjoying the warmth of the nearby stones.

"I'm not surprised that you want to sleep here now. You always sleep by the oven." Walker knew he should have expected this from Midnight. "Sorry for disturbing your sleep. I was having some interesting realizations about the fire and earth elemental mana." Walker did feel a little bad about it.

"So spill it, what is the deal with you making a pit of lava? It's definitely different than the drawing in the storybooks about the dragons living in volcanoes." Gil was mesmerized by the cooling lava. The colors of yellow, orange, and reds were slowly changing as they faded to the black hardened stone they had become through this entire process.

"I was trying to learn more about the earth elemental mana. I wanted the trench skill to become the fissure skill so I could trap or take down a lot more monsters if I need to. But I realized something else." Walker was sure that he could feel the fire elemental mana more easily leaving the lava pit he had made. It was another thing he took note of due to the nights' lack of sun and heat sources.

"I found that I could find the fire elemental mana very deep in the earth and that the earth and fire elemental manas were mixed together without any negative effect. They can change the more or less of each one in the mix and end up in different forms. When I learned this and added a ton of the fire elemental mana to the earth it made lava."

Walker gestured to the pit, "Then I used the trench skill and tried to make it bigger by adding more earth mana. Then the mana from deeper in the earth pushed up and I felt the trench widen and I had a new fusion skill; lava fissure. It would be really useful for stopping the progression of enemies or defeating them if I make it under them."

"What about that long arrow like attack?" Gil was more interested in the lava lance attack. He wanted to see if Walker was trying to learn some form of al archery.

"Well, I got the lava manipulation skill. It is pretty much like the other skills I have to manipulate the elements but specific to lava. That and the shape of the lava with a little wind elemental mana, " Walker manipulated the lava in the pit and fired off another of the lava lances. It slammed in to a nearby rock and burst.

"The skill lava lance became another long ranged attack in my arsenal. I think that it will be able to stay strong enough to pierce the yellow slimes' body then pierce the core. By the time the basic earth attacks get to the core, they have dissolved in the acid. And the fire attacks only burn off some of the slime. But combined the fire elemental mana burns away the acidic slime body while the hardening earth spike pierces the core."

"So we can fight the yellow slimes easier. But I thought you were going to try and use water?" Remey was glad that they wouldn't need to worry so much about fighting them But she was also interested in why Walker had not tried water since he had said it would get rid of the acid aspect of the slimes.

"I tried to think of the lava as water and that let me shape it better. If I add enough fire elemental mana It is harder to control but in theory if we make enough I could make a wave of lava or something." Walker knew that the amount of mana needed would be much higher than he had. But it was possible in theory.

"That attack could also break through tough defenses. If I still had an iron shield it could melt it and pierce it." Su was seeing that there were great ways for this skill to be used against tougher enemies.

"Then it should be a pretty good skill to have around when we go underground. We all know that the slimes won't be the only things down there." Gil was sure that the earth elemental monsters underground would be tough in general.

"It took a lot of mana but it was a lot easier to get this skill than I expected. It was like the earth and fire elemental mana were meant to be this way. I think I should focus on nature a little more when I try to learn skills." Walker had a much better idea of how fusing elemental skills came together. But he also was much more tired than before. After talking for a little longer he took his turn to rest after he was made to restart the fire.

Chapter 575 - 575. First Sight

"Finally you're awake. We already have camp just about cleaned up." Remey was the one to catch Walker when he first opened his eyes.

"Oh, sorry. I didn't realize that I was so tired." Walker had not noticed he was so tired that he had slept right through the rest of the night. He must have used more mana than he expected and his body needed the sleep.

"It's fine, I took your shift and netted some rock finches for breakfast. They aren't super meaty but they are perfect for bird soup." Gil was happy with his catch and offered Walker a bowl which was gladly taken.

"This is pretty good. Why haven't you made it before?" Walker had not expected that Gil had such a good soup recipe hidden away.

"I haven't caught many small birds recently. It's one my mom and dad taught me and I used it a lot when I was younger and hunting with my dad. Plus, we always have rabbit around so no point in making something else." Gil shrugged as he made himself another bowl before getting up to start putting the fire out.

Walker thought that this made sense while he finished the bowl and got up to clean the rest of camp. "We are ready to head out. We should reach the dwarven city today, right leader?" Su was sure that they would arrive today based on their current pace.

"We should get there just as night falls. I assume we will want to camp outside so we can avoid any meetings with officials late in the night." Walker knew that the party would be tired and that it was not very respectful to any leader of a country to show up in the night. It would set them up on a very poor start.

"Does that mean we will be entering the areas they patrol soon? Do you think they have been finding the steel skinned worms and yellow slimes like us?" Remey was sure that the guards that patrolled the area around the city would have found evidence of the yellow slimes and have increased patrols.

"They have to have found them. There are places all over here that show the worms coming to the surface. I bet that they have guards all over the place." Gil was almost certain that they would encounter dwarven guards in their journey as they walked closer to the smoke and entrance to the dwarf city.

Midnight huffed to get everyone's attention, "I don't think it is real dwarven guards that patrol the area." Walker was watching a group of five things that were definitely not fitting to be called dwarves.

"Those are the hand made dwarf golems. That is their main military force. I didn't think they would be so big." Remey was very excited to see them. She had seen in many books how big and domineering the dwarves would build their own golems to be.

"So their hand made golems patrol the area and the dwarves are in the city. Look at them. They are made of metal and spew smoke. That is incredible. I wonder if they are also powered by mana?" Walker wanted to know how the golems worked.

The seemingly sentient shape of the dwarven golems were contradicted by the blades at the end where hands would have been and the thick metal tubes that coiled around the arms and legs. There were multiple blue crystals that appeared to be controlling them as they walked through the worn paths.

"Wait, look. There is a bone break vulture headed this way." Su had noticed the singular vulture flying towards the golems. There was a sizable rock in its talons and it was definitely aiming for the golems.

Before the vulture even got near the golems one raised its bladed hand and fired it through the air. The blade slashed the vulture in half without any resistance. The next moment the wire that was attached to the bladed hand was retracted and the golem was heading to pick up the slain vulture.

"So, avoid getting on the bad side of the golems. They are pretty powerful." Gil was rethinking just how cool he thought the golems were. On the other hand, Remey was full of even more energy seeing this attack. The two were opposite sides of the spectrum.

"We should continue on. We may not enter the city today but it is better to be closer." Su pushed the party on and they soon saw the aboveground portion of the city.

The large smoke stacks that towered in to the air let free constant bouts of smoke. The ground was made up of many larger stone buildings that housed a myriad of dwarven golems. There were a few armored shapes running about from building to building but the party wasn't sure if they were dwarves or another form of golem.

"I wouldn't say this is an above ground city as much as a military camp." Walker was sure that there was more to it than he could see from their distance but it was still hard to tell.

"That is what their main city is. It is for merchants and military use. We will need to pass through to be allowed entrance in the morning." Su had remembered the warnings from the merchants and other rulers when they came. It was sure to be tough entering in the morning.

"Then we should rest up and prepare. We should be able to get inside without an issue but I am worried that we will need to go through so many military buildings." There was something about having so many golems built for battle around that put Walker on edge.

"So that means Gil is making more soup!" Remey was already volunteering Gil to make dinner and Mifdight fully supported her. The day had passed again without any issue and had been full of a few small learning opportunities. They needed to fully rest and prepare to act their part as ambassadors of a new alliance.

Chapter 576 - 576. The Surface City

The party was ready to go again early in the morning. They could tell there was a lot of movement from the aboveground portion of the dwarven city. There were many of the golems moving about and transporting supplies to the designated areas for the day. "Let's go and see what they say at the entrance."

Walker was excited but also nervous to be entering the dwarven city. It was an intimidating military force on their continent and was only held back by their own desire to work on their forging instead of war. These feelings only increased as they drew nearer to the stone walls and massive steel gate.

"Halt. Place proper identification underneath the verification orb." A strange echo like voice came from one of the nearby golems as it raised a pointed hand toward an orb glowing with mana and runes.

"We are from the Genesis alliance. Will our symbols work?" Walker was sure that he could use the various plaques and pins could work as identification.

"Any and all forms can be scanned by the verification orb." The golems strange voice replies and the party began to gather their forms of identification. After each had held them under the orb the glowing increased and then stopped.

More golems came to the gate worrying Walker since they were not speaking like the two at the entrance had been able to do. The party was holding close together for the worst when a more normal voice came to them. "Ambassadors here to see us? What could you need right now?"

There was a shorter armored being in front of them. The gold inlay on the helmet completely obscured a face of any kind. But Walker was able to tell that this must be a real dwarf beneath the armor. Walker responded carefully knowing that it would be best not to offend the first dwarf they met.

"We have come from the newly formed Genesis alliance to extend an olive branch and an invitation. We are also here as the heroes known as the omnipotent party to assist in the issues surrounding the yellow acidic slimes that are tormenting your people. Furthermore, we are also here to share knowledge and grow."

The dwarf paced around for some time before stopping and waving at a few of the golems. "You are welcome to come in but you will first hear the word of the surface king of the dwarves. It will be up to him if you are allowed to proceed further." There was not much else said. Golems came and flanked the party to lead them.

The dwarf was sure the party was in a strange fearful quiet but that was just because the dwarf did not know that Onyx was translating for the party in their minds.

"What is with the harsh treatment? I thought they would be a lot more of a trading hub than this?" Remey was the one lost on this. She had thought there would be many more merchants and travelers around the entrance than golems.

"I feel like they are on edge. One dwarf and tons of their golems. They are all working too, there has to be more going on." Gil was taking note of all the metal parts he was seeing on the surface. The sheer amount of parts was more than he could count just looking quickly.

"I agree, there appears to be trouble. If they are bringing so much to the surface it may be an effort to protect them from the slimes." Su had already drawn her own conclusions as to why there would be so much movement in this area.

"I think Su hit the nail on the head. There are multiple stone buildings that seem to be converted for storage or are new. My theory is that Su is correct, and more so that they are changing the way traffic flows in to their city due to the issues they are having." Walker was sure that there were more merchants and such elsewhere but they had not been left on the surface.

"Brother, there are a lot of vibrations from under the ground." Onyx had been having trouble focusing because he could feel the constant vibrations from underneath him.

"That is going to be the normal here. There are many caves and such of dwarven homes, buildings, forges, and even more below us. And even more, there are the mining caves. I have a feeling that the ground is calm up here compared to what is going on down there."

This made Onyx slither up and find refuge on Walker's shoulder. He was not going to have the most pleasant time being underground let alone around the many vibrations. "Don't worry, I have plenty of light elemental crystals for you to snack on while we are under ground."

The party was being guided to a slightly larger stone building. There were many different versions of the dwarven golems around it and some even opened the door for the party as they entered. "Surface king, I have brought those who have come to speak to the three kings about the new alliance and the slime pest." The dwarf that had come to meet them spoke up first causing a dwarf at a table full of maps and documents to turn his attention on them.

Unlike the other dwarf, this one was wearing a basic forge attire and was bolstering multiple tools and hammers on his belt. He looked nothing like a king in their eyes from what they had seen thus far.

"So, you come all the way here when we are busy to talk politics? Give me one good reason why I should allow you to go down any further?" The dwarf may have stood shorter than them but the entire party could feel a pressing force above them.

Chapter 577 - 577. Proven King

The so called king looked at the party waiting for proof. They were feeling a mountainous aura coming from him. It was as if his very presence held the weight of all the stone on a mountain. "No words to explain why I should trust you and allow you further entry? Do you doubt that I am king of the surface? Looking for the shiny jewels and luxurious fabrics your kings and queens adorn themselves with to appear important?"

The so called king was rambling on about appearance and respect while standing in front of them. The pressure of their mana ever growing. Walker was not sure what to say that would give them proper access to the city. However, he was sure that there was something that would tempt the dwarves, something he could say to hook them.

"I came here as an ambassador to foster peace between our people and the people of the newly formed Genesis alliance. This is an alliance crafting a city that welcomes all races to share knowledge. If you, a dwarven king, are not interested in the rune and forging knowledge of other races to add to your own to make you better forgers then I see no reason to go farther."

Walker met the so called king head on. His words directly slapping the pride of a dwarf who would pursue the knowledge of crafting and forging above all else. He also knew that the dwarves were known to be strong willed and face many challenges with force. They were very used to stubbornly dealing with the heat of a forge and bashing on to a successful creation.

"So you would come here and throw fire at a dwarf? Tempt us with knowledge? Look for a way in to our city for more knowledge as well?" The so called king looked Walker in the eye as he stepped nearer to him. "Then I welcome you if you are so stubborn to argue against a dwarf. But I am indeed the king you search for. I just have no reason to hold grand court when I am busy with more important tasks."

The pressure fell away from the party and the so called king returned to his table. "So you have come to look in to our standing with those pests because you are the heroes we have caught word about? And you also come representing that fancy new alliance. On the matter of the pests, you may join the extermination in the lower halves of the city. We can use less metallic manpower."

The king of the surface observed a few documents then continues, "On the matter of forging knowledge, I doubt that you will be able to satisfy us. We have been blatantly banned from ever nearing the elves

because they do not enjoy their elemental spirits being used to create works of art far superior to anything they can craft."

"That is something I believe we can help solve. I have a feeling that there is more to this than we expect. If you allow us to do some digging around we may be able to find a middle ground. If I can not then I will not push any longer." Walker made this deal allowed and right in front of the so called king. He did not want there to be any room to go against this in an agreement.

"Is that a bet? Are you betting with a dwarf? Fine, then revel in your own loss. I accept your bet. I the king of the surface will gladly aid my support to this new city and alliance if you are able to resolve the issues the elves and dwarves have with spirit crafting. Mark my words." The air seemed to shiver slightly as the system responded.

' Alliance quest: spirit forging

The king of the surface had agreed to give their full support upon certain requirements. To garner the full support to the Genesis alliance the heroes must,

Requirements:

Learn more about Spirit crafting

Find the middle ground between spirit crafting and spirit speaking

Rewards:

Unconditional support from the surface king of the dwarven kingdom

Unique effect on all spirit crafting systems.'

"Ha! Even the world wishes to test you. I see this quest visitors and I will await the answer. You are allowed to pass to the lower city. But know this. There is more danger down there than here. We have

managed to move a lot up here for safety reasons, but those pests are still after anything clad in metal." The party felt this warning was more than sufficient.

"I am sorry for doubting you as king. I was just very caught off guard by the appearance." Walker made sure to apologize for any rudeness since he was just shown that this was in fact the king before him.

"Here we do not dress elegantly like the other kingdoms. King is a title given by those pushing the dwarves forward. I control the surface and that means I control who comes in and out. If we send our soldier golems out, I make the final order. But I am not in charge of the entire city. I have gained this from my own accomplishments and can lose this title at any turn."

This was an interesting way of choosing and king. It would explained why there were three kings. Due to the levels, there were different needs for each king and they had an equal chance to lose or gain their titles. It was a very large motivating factor for any who would like to rise to royalty.

"Guards, guide them to the grand stairs we use for the larger merchant orders and deliveries. See that they reach the main city safely." The king of the surface called and five golems answered. "I expect to see this quest complete in a timely manner. A dwarf that can not keep up with the times is a dwarf forgotten in history."

Chapter 578 - 578. Quiet Descent

The meeting had lasted minutes and been filled with ups and downs. So much so that the party could only read over the new quest they had to wonder if it had really just happened. "Leader, the king was very...different, than what we know." Su was the first to come out of her own head and speak.

The golems were leading them toward an opened downward staircase that appeared to be well traveled. There were even rotating hooks on the ceiling to attach large bags. The mechanisms were hidden from view as they rotated downwards and upwards.

"I did not think he was actually king at first either, but he proved it with the quest showing up. It is strange that they act this way but it makes sense. The way the pride of a dwarf works does not seem to be in their standing but in their ability to craft and lead." Walker was actually glad to see this. If this was the case they were going to meet many more honest dwarves than he expected.

"I thought he was going to keep us at the surface longer. It looked like there was almost nothing up there to do, even the inns were changed in to storage areas." Gil had been worried they would have been required to stay on the surface for much longer and not make any progress at all.

"Has anyone else realized that we have to deal with this spirit crafting thing? You know, the thing that the elves hate completely?" Remey was the first to bring up the main problem they faced.

"Yes, we need to figure it out. But I have a feeling that there is something missing between the elves and the dwarves. They both have spirits as part of their culture. The elves speak to them and use them to understand the world better. The dwarves guide them in to weapon forging and create powerful weapons. But both require them to better their people. The real question is how can the two meld together safely?"

Walker posed this question while they followed the golems down the steps. The unending darkness below them was only broken by the lanterns holding crystals that illuminated the stairs. "There has to be a way for them to come together, I can't imagine that the dwarves can't even speak to spirits they use in their crafting, right?" Gil had a feeling that he was speaking the opposite of the truth but wanted to see proof.

"We should not draw inferences before we know the truth. We will need to meet spirit craftsmen and see how they operate their craft." Su made sure to slow the assumptions Gil was making. She knew that they were completely in the dark when it came to these forging methods.

"I think I am also more worried about the pests they keep calling the yellow slimes. He even went as far as to warn us that they go after the metal more. We have a decent amount in our gear but not as much as the golems. That could mean their armies are being devoured as we speak, along with tools, everything they craft, and their ores." Walker felt that this was not a small problem for the dwarves and that it was worse than expected.

"Well, if we saw them on the surface chasing after the steel skinned worms then I bet they are pretty common down here. We even saw them start to melt together to attack us. So gross." Remey was afraid that they were about to encounter many more of the slimes this way.

"They could definitely form together more easily than the purple slimes that needed to devour each other to grow. It seems that since their bodies are acidic and they break things down inside them that it is easier for them to combine together. It worried me that we will find a massive slime more easily, or even worse something further grown."

Walker fell in to silence with this worry. He knew that there could be something that had grown past the massive slime stage and possibly to a lord slime. If this happened then it would take a serious amount of effort to defeat a slime like this. He was not sure the party would manage in such a different environment like the caves.

"Leader, we have come this far and have a duty to protect people. I believe we can do whatever we require and stop these slimes." Su was full of confidence still. She had no reason to doubt the party's power and the things they could do with it. Her words were enough to focus everyone.

"I'm surprised he didn't say anything about Midnight and Onyx. They are both sure to be monsters that they don't see here, right?" Remey spoke up with something she had just realized.

"I would assume it is because they are used to living near dragons maybe? They are the only race that I am sure has spotted them coming and going from the mountains. It might be something they are used to." Walker could see this as a possibility. On the other hand, Midnight was making dramatic huffing and slight growls in annoyance since she had not received more attention while the king spoke. She was used to the reactions of the kings and queens thus far being more grand than the surface kings.

"Sister says she will get more attention later when she defeats all the slimes. The kings will need to show her their acknowledgment." Onyx shared Midnight's thoughts and made Walker smile despite the dangers to come. He knew that having Midnight motivated like this would only help them as they went on towards their goals. The only thing that was nagging at him was the fact that he couldn't hear any hustle or bustle from below them, a clear sign that something may be wrong.

Chapter 579 - 579. Steam

"It seems way too quiet. I know Onyx could feel vibrations up on the surface but for the ground to be vibrating it seems...too quiet." Walker finally broke and said it out loud. He felt that there was something more to the silence.

"So what, it is getting way too hot." Remey wanted to agree with the silence being the issue but she was having too much trouble with the growing heat.

"Oh, is it hot? I can't really tell much since I gained the fire resistance passive skill." Walker laughed nervously since he realized he had not explained that to the party.

"Leader, you must teach me that skill. It is imperative to my ability to defend the party!" Su was suddenly right next to Walker wanting the knowledge as soon as possible. She was sure that she would be able to block all manner of fire elemental attacks with little to no damage to herself or the party.

"Sure sure, after we get our bearings on the underground portion of the city." Walker had not expected such a storing reaction from Su. He knew she had been thinking about how to best use the educationist titles and this must have hit what she believed she needed most.

"Walker, you do not understand. If I can gain all the resistances from your teaching then I will be the best guardian any party will have ever had." Su broke her formality showing just how much she wanted this skill.

"Alright, I promise I will use the educationist knowledge swap skill when we find a place to rest later. I swear it to you." After Walker made a solemn swear to her Su appeared to relax and become much more joyful.

"That is great and all, but we are literally going to melt down here, aren't we." Gil was visibly sweating and had removed some of his more minor armor to try and keep cooler.

"Look at those pipes coming from the walls. I bet they are the source of the heat." Su pointed out the many small and large pipes that had begun to show in the walls. Some had writings and numbers next to them showing that they were some form of power source.

"I wonder if my all around appraisal skill will work on that?" Walker was curious and gave it a try on the largest pipe.

'Exhaust steam pipe.

The largest pipe for the exhaust smoke and steam used to power the majority of the underground dwarven city. Crafted from extremely dense and heat resistant metal alloys to withstand rusting and heat.'

"They are for steam!" Walker knew that some small golems and machines made by dwarves had been said to run on steam but this was more than he expected. He had no knowledge of how it could power an entire city let alone the small things he had heard about from travelers.

"Wait...is this for real? I thought that was all gossip from merchants." Remey was falling in to thought wondering if this was truth or some fantasy they were walking in to.

"If this is true, then it means the steam powered forges whispered about by merchants are real. That will be a sight to see." Su was feeling more excitement than usual, however, the silence was still nagging at them.

"If there is so much steam that explains the heat. But it should be louder, right?" Gil was becoming worried. He was imagining the loudness of a teapot on a stove screaming that it was done.

The party increased their pace down the stairs following the dwarven golems. They wanted to see the things that they had only ever heard about in rumors and gossip. It was not a hidden secret like the elves but it was a harder to explore place. The caves and forging methods of the dwarves were rarely seen by travelers and easily explained. They were things that other kingdoms did not have and could not easily relate to, therefore, the tales were hard to understand.

As they reached closer and closer to a brighter light there were some sounds. However, they were mostly of golems and some hammering. Other than that there was a rhythmic clicking coming from lower. The silence they had heard was still there. It wasn't actual silence, but the lack of voices and rolling carts. It made them feel as if there was silence.

Their rushing brought them to a large round room that held multiple paths and gates. "Welcome to the inner city. What business are you here for today?" There was a series of golems at each entrance and in the very center of the room stood a pillar that had just created the voice they heard.

"We are ambassadors here to see the king. Please allow us guidance and passage." Walker tried to speak properly to the pillar but felt awkward doing so since it was not a real person.

"Your message has been received. Please wait while I contact those above me." The voice was definitely a female dwarf. Walker was amazed that the weird pillar was able to transmit messages across distances unknown to him. This was much better than the communication orbs that Scylla had relied on.

The party waited eagerly while looking around the room. There were many pipes leading through different passages in the ceilings. There was also a large clock in the center. Walker was able to make out the words on the gates explaining the directions. "So that gate is outgoing merchants. There is an incoming merchant's gate. That says mines, and the other says forges. The last is...administrative buildings?" Walker had not seen the term used before in a city. Normally it would say something like the castle or the queens' hall. But here it was administrative building.

"The safest route is through the merchant streets then through the secondary tunnels to the administrative buildings. Please follow the guide golem that will be provided. Weapons are allowed to be drawn under the current city alert. If danger approaches call for reinforcements." The voice gave them its warning and a small golem on wheels rolled to the front of the party while the larger ones returned to the stairs.

"I guess we follow this golem now." Walker stepped behind the small round golem on wheels and watched it begin a slow travel toward the gate labeled incoming merchants.

Chapter 580 - 580. Gears

As the party headed toward the gates there was a series of clicks and they watched as the gate opened by itself. They also witnessed some small gears at the sides that appeared to be the cause. "There is a little steam escaping from where the gears are. The steam makes them move! That is amazing." Walker was finally seeing the truth from the many tales told of the dwarven city.

"That is what the merchants meant by self opening doors. It isn't but steam and gears." Gil felt that a huge puzzle had been solved. This was something that many just assumed was that the merchants had not understood.

"They rely on mana powered and steam powered golems along with other things. This is a very wondrous city already. I just fear what this empty space means." Su knew well that this reception area was mostly for travelers and merchants. Seeing it empty was a foreboding of what dangers the city must be facing.

The tunnel they were in was filled with neatly organized steam pipes on the roof and a lot of space for many different sized cargoes. There were also some gears that protrude from small spaces that seemed to have crystals inlaid in to the walls.

The large space soon opened up in to a massive area easily the size of the Crystal kingdoms' city of Diamond that they were from. There were massive metal arches arching all the way up to the ceiling where a massive metal and crystal creation was constantly releasing light that mirrored the sun.

"How can this exist just under the ground. It's like a whole other world." Walker was turning around examining the massive area. From his view, he could see many shops and small forges set up to make modifications to different gear and items. There were even storage buildings with different merchant groups markings along with some personal crests used by those who forged goods.

"The roof is so high. Those metal braces must have taken years to forge. I wonder how they managed it." Su couldn't help but be caught by the massive supports that were keeping the ceilings held above their heads.

"I see why the city is in a state of danger. The acidic slimes could easily be eating away at those braces and risking a massive collapse." The moment the words left Walkers' mouth he knew he had just piled on a massive amount of stress.

"At least we will get used to the heat down here..." Remey knew that the sheer size of this portion of the city was going to take a long time to traverse. This meant that they would need to get used to the heat no matter what. She also wanted a distraction from Walker's words.

Midnight shook herself and stood taller than usual. "I am sure you are comfortable as ever. You like to sleep in heat like this all the time." Walker found her actions adorable and couldn't help but give her a few head pats.

"Some of these are homes. This may be a merchant area, and it is massive. But there are people that live here." Gil easily spotted the buildings that appeared to be homes and knew that this was a much worse situation than expected.

"I can see that this will need more attention. We should pick up the pace and get to the administrative section as soon as possible." Walker took the lead with his staff at the ready. He was sure that they may encounter some danger as they moved through the large market streets between the many mercantile buildings.

Seeing the boarded up and sealed doors made the entire party feel that there was already a loss. This was obviously the hub of their entire city and should be full of merchants looking to export goods or buy materials. However, there was only silence with the clicking of gears or steam.

"Look, there is a line of golems blocking this route." Remey found that the little golem was guiding them down a side street around a group of golems with significant damage. They had multiple limbs that had been melted by acid and it was clear that they had tangled with the acidic slimes.

"I have a feeling that beyond there is a mess of yellow slimes they are dealing with..." Gil could only imagine the issues that were behind the blocked street.

"We need to find a way to solve this problem. I wonder if there is a way to make some sort of poison or liquid to break apart the acid bodies of the slimes?" Walker was thinking that Remey might have an idea on how to do this. She was their resident alchemy expert and if there was any way to oppose the slimes with a potion she would figure it out.

"I might be able to make something. I need a place to start experimenting though. They are acid slimes and will dissolve just about everything. But if I can find something that is the opposite of their bodies acid then it might break their structure." Remey began mumbling to herself with this new focus.

The party formed up around her so she wouldn't need to worry about defending herself while walking and thinking. This was much the same tactic that they had used when Walker was meditating on the earth elemental mana and walking. Walker couldn't help but feel strange to be on the other side of things.

"You know how we felt now walking with you like this." Gil gave him a nudge in the arm as a joke to lighten the mood. Walker was glad that Gil was trying to relieve some of their stress. It was clear that Walker would not be able to use his new fusion spells here due to the damage it would cause. He was hoping that Remey would pull through with proper results.