

## Master 981

### Chapter 981 Seaweed

"If you need arrow materials I will need to send you away. Everything here is for the alchemy guild and has already been factored in to the starting budget. We won't even sell anything yet since we need to properly place and store these things." Trish was very firm on this. The herbs were mostly hand picked for quality and right now they were in need of attention.

"Well...you see."

"Come on. Out with it. I swear you are acting like a lovesick puppy. Timid and slow. I know you are at that age but come on." The old master alchemist knew Gil's personality and didn't hold back at all. He didn't know that Gil was actually there for something like that but he had hit the nail on the head if only unintentionally. What he did know was that Gil would normally be more aloof and brash. Seeing Gil act timid was strange.

Tris had caught on as well that Gil was not acting the same. From what she remembered, Gil was more driven and excited by arrows. She had spoken with many of the elves that helped him learn about his arrows and experiment. They had shared the same obsessive drive with high energy. "I don't need some materials. I have already worked with the enforcers to come up with a few arrows. I'm actually looking for seeds or a plant." The surprise that Trish and the old master alchemist had was all too clear on their faces.

"I need one that can grow in the ocean. One that can grow fast and might be similar to a vine or ivy..." This was the factor that made Trish understand why Gil would be looking for such a thing.

"We have a few options. I think Alma will be able to use them very well." She didn't even smirk when she spoke. She knew that Gil was trying to be as serious as possible and it must have been tougher for him to ask her. "I will help out with this. I can be back t keep counting in a few minutes." The old master alchemist threw his hands up in defeat as he was left to his own devices.

"We could use the tanglewood kelp. It's strong but it is more of a rope than a vine. I would say that we should use it for capturing something instead of dealing damage. There's the razor whip weed. That's very dangerous since the small patches of ocean it grows in are devoid of fish due to the razor sharp leaves. And maybe I can give you some green barnacle. It looks like a living barnacle but it's actually a green kelp that stays small and dense."

Gil was thinking about what he had to choose from. He knew that giving all three would be pointless. Alma wouldn't have much time to learn how to use them and giving her one was the best idea. "I don't think green barnacles would be useful. It could be a shield kind of but if it's small then it won't save her life. The tanglewood sounds good too but you said it is thick like a rope and could capture things. But Alma will need attack power instead. Razor whip weed it is. If fish avoid it then it could deter any ocean monsters." The decision was final and Trish started to show him up the stairs.

"If you haven't been around the alchemy guild this is the best time to take a look. We are expecting more alchemists to come and interview for positions soon. Remey has already helped us make the tests for them." Trish appeared very excited as she opened a door to a large storage room. "This is my personal storage. The razor whip weed seeds need to be kept in saltwater or they will die. Add a little mana and they will start to grow. Just let her know that they need to be cleaned up. If the seeds get away they are invasive."

The small vial with a few seeds in saltwater was carefully taken by Gil. He knew that this was more valuable than Trish was telling him. "You can take it, but when you go to the merfolk territories keep an eye out for pink clover. It's a rare herb that only grows in the ocean. It can be used for a personal potion of mine." For some reason, Gil had felt the condition coming but accepted it nonetheless.

"I will keep an eye out for it. If Remey knows about it she will have an eye out too. Knowing her, she will claim it before we even know it's there." The joke didn't go over well since Trish wanted to lay claim to it but she quickly shooed Gil out.

"And before you leave, do me a favor. Tell Alma your intentions before you go to battle. Our queens will give up their names for their people. They struggle with such things and having someone around at that time gives them something to hold on to." Trish had softened her voice remembering when Reina the current forest elf queen had given up her name after her mother had stepped away from the position. It had changed her for a long time before she had grown in to the position.

"I will. I just don't want to see things end like the nobles do in our city. They marry for status. Not who someone really is." The crux of the issue finally reared its head. This had been what Gil was worried about.

"Humans are very odd. I will never understand how you all ended up that way. Elves just look for those who are closer to nature why do you think we don't get along with the dwarves who break things down to build instead of guiding nature?" Trish laughed while she pointed Gil out the front door of the guild so she could return to her work.

## Chapter 982 Look Like...

"I didn't even think it was possible for someone to sew that fast. She pretty much just made a shirt out of nothing!" Remey had visited many small seamstress or other such system users before. Her siblings' clothing had always been ripped and she was always annoyed that she couldn't properly sew them. The people with such skills could always make the patches last longer whereas Remey's patches would fall off in just a few days.

"It's called the speed sewing skill. Add on the rune serving skill I got after I was able to memorize the water rune, fire rune, and earth rune, then I am much faster. The crazy part is I just learned the light rune too and I think I might be able to get an elemental rune sewing skill. But I have a quest to do first." Lisa had found many side quests and new quests because of her sewing and jobs lately. Walker had been the start of all of this when she made the partys' first set of snow gear.

There was a pause while everyone absorbed this. At the mention of the light elemental rune, Alice blushed. She knew that Lisa had made something for her with the wandering blacksmiths' help. But she was still unsure what it would be since it would involve both fabrics and forged materials. However, she did know what the light elemental rune would do. Having something passively drawing in the light elements mana would only make her stronger and her attacks faster. She would also use less mana who,e she sang.

"Midnight, pick out some of those buckles over there please." It was a wonder watching Lisa work. This was the same way that they felt when they had seen the wandering blacksmith forging or Gil making an arrow. It was an art and the skills they would never have were more amazing.

"I should have guessed you would choose the black steel buckles. They are tough so you can wear them longer. Plus they will match your scales. I will add some white stitching where they affix too." The fabrics and small amount of leather that Lisa was using were slowly but surely being formed.

"I was wondering how you would make the wings fit. But adding the belt to that she just has to fasten it back together is smart." The spot that Lisa was working on and Su was complimenting on was where Midnight's wings would go. The shirt that Lisa was making had large slits so it fit over the wings. Then the belt would wrap around and close it around the base of the wings so that all that was needed to remove the shirt would be a flick of the wrist.

" Remey, those boots over there match this perfectly. If Midnight wears them her claws on her feet should still fit." The boots were black and white as well but were many times larger than Midnight would need. Unfortunately, Midnight shook her head. She hated the idea of wearing any form of shoes. Luckily,

even in the cold weather, they didn't need to worry about this. Midnight was tough enough to handle many situations.

"And that is a rune stitched shirt. I gave it the fore rune since I used some magma salamander leather for the accent parts. There was a merchant yesterday that saw my shop and stopped to offer me some choices of monster materials. Naturally, I said I would look and I was proven that my first instinct was that the merchant was trying to scam me, but the materials were all real. I only wish I had more gold to buy more of the magma salamander."

Remey and Su shared a quick look saying that they would go hunting around the market to find the merchant. Ideally, they could provide Lisa with a lot that she needed. "Midnight, come over here." Midnight was holding herself back. The pants she had been given only took a minute to take on and off. The jacket slid on perfectly.

Once Midnight had been taught to tie a belt, she was quick to put it to use. It was helpful that she had seen the rest of the party put belts on before and much easier for her to put on. The shirt which was similar to a tight fitting jacket was perfect.

"I used some leathers to get things more flexible. But to be honest, I don't know what will happen to them if you transform back in to a dragon. They might rip but that other dragon didn't look like he needed to worry." Lisa was worried that Midnight would need more clothing than she expected.

"You know that is amazing, right? You made that in less than two hours." Su's mind was absolutely thrown upside down. She wasn't sure how everything had come together but she did know that everyone was equally entranced by the skills.

"We did see some dragons shift between forms though. Their scales shifted and shrank so clothing might be ally stored somehow. We should ask Current. And by we, I mean Walker since I'm not really planning to fight an ancient dragon. Royal water scary thing."

"Remey, I don't think he's actually that scary. Walker says he is very similar to Adair." Shaking her head, Su helped get the clothing on Midnight since she had to learn the basics.

"Current is kind and flexible." Alice chimed in having made her opinion about him from the way he acted around Walker.

The last buckle came in to place and the full sight of Midnight made them want to squeal in delight. The shift and pans were made of dark rune sewn fabrics. The leather was on the highest wear and tear areas making it feel like they were looking at an assassin.

"It's perfect." Lisa patted her own back as she looked over her adorable little sister in her first real clothes.

#### Chapter 983 Peace

Gil had left the alchemy guild building in a rush. He was going to do just what Trish had told him. He already knew Walker had gotten the courage to tell Alice his feelings. Gil knew that he had been able to speak to Alma in letters and grown closer to her, but he had left so much open. He needed to stop lazing around and show what he felt or he could lose the chance forever.

The krakens were a major threat. For an ancient royal dragon to tell them that they had been a menace before that were admittedly exterminated, then it was worth listening to. There was no doubt that they would struggle and have a hard time reaching their destination. Then having to find and battle something thought to be larger than any monster they had ever met, well, it made Gil face a reality he had yet to consider.

The thoughts of Alma getting hurt seemed to scream at him louder than he ever thought they would. He had gotten closer to Alma and been able to watch her grow and fight for her desires. As a hero, he had supported her. But now as Gil, he wanted to stand next to her. He knew that he wasn't an elf and that she was pretty much royalty. However, he let Walker's words echo in his mind and he pushed himself to stand in front of the now forest park that the elves had created.

The trees were not excessively tall but the feeling of mana around them was very high. Gil may not have the ability to feel all elemental mana as sensitively as Walker, but he could feel the wind elemental mana blowing around here and there. Zephyr had gone off on her own earlier and he knew that it was just him. The fact made him more on edge but also solidified his ability to stand on his own.

"Sir hero Gil, We believed you were done making arrows today. Do you need to speak to the enforcer group again?" One enforcer came to see what Gil needed since most of them had already been to his archery range and helped to make themselves arrows.

"Actually, I would like to speak with Alma. Is she around?"

"Of course. Would you like me to show you where she is resting? I believe she just finished a lesson with our queen." The lessons that Alma had undergone since the party had been in the forest elf village were long and complicated. Most revolved around the basic duties of the queen and how she worked with the elders. But some were on leadership and the attitude she needed to have as their leader.

All of the lessons seemed to be exhausting to a degree because Alma lacked the innate skills that the queen had due to the different systems. But that did not mean that she wouldn't be able to do certain things. Alma would still be able to control the first the same way as the queen but because of her system, she would never need to bind herself to the forest and have high costs to leave it. This was the main reason the elves had brought a spirit cedar to Genesis city. If they had not planted it and grown more trees from their first then the queen would be forced to leave and return to their home after just a few days.

Walking through the small forest brought Gil a wonder he had not expected. There were very carefully cut paths that lead to resting areas. All would be perfect for an elf to relax and feel at peace with nature. There were also some elemental spirits roaming about enjoying the small forest as well. What really stood out was that there were already branches of the speedily grown trees being shaped for homes and other small treehouses. The process that would normally take years was sped up by having the right system users use the right skills.

When Gil broke in to a small clearing, he found that Alma had sat down to snack on some berries that had been brought with them from the forest elf city. "Shouldn't you be making arrows? I thought you would want to have enough to take down an army." This was not an understatement. Taking down an army was more or less what they were doing. The young krakens would be swarming and that was the biggest concern while the powerful members of the joint force took down the mother kraken.

"I was. But I went to the mansion for food and to rest a little. But I was thinking..." Gil took a deep breath. "I asked for advice from Walker and even got some from Trish. I don't want to see you hurt and I know using your blue ivy underwater won't work. These are razor whip weed seeds. They are a very sharp seaweed that can cut most things in the water. I want you to be able to use them for your safety." Gil handed them to Alma and watched as her face remained calm.

"I don't know what would happen if you were hurt but I am pretty sure I would lose myself. I know I fool around and act dumb sometimes. But I am serious now. I care for you more than anyone else. Will you stand with me?" The silence was filled with a tension that Gil wasn't sure his heart could handle. But when he saw Alma place the seeds on the bench and stand up he saw flashes of everything failing in his mind.

"I have wanted to hear that since you walked out of our city to go and fight for others. If you didn't say it I was considering tracking you down and saying it myself. I know we are different but you are goofy and untamed like nature. You have shown some of my people more than we could expect and I'm sure more is to come. But most of all, you were able to hold me up when I made my stand to change my people's ways. And you never left me lonely. I looked forward to every letter you sent to talk. You better stand beside me now and for a long long time." The hug that hit Gil stunned him. He couldn't think but he still wrapped his arms around Alma as well. Words weren't needed from here. Just peace and quiet.

#### Chapter 984 Potion Checklist

By the time everyone had returned to the mansion, the day was more or less over. The only one that seemed to have any energy left was Onyx who had managed to absorb a ton of light elemental mana. He was preparing himself for the trip in the dim swamp lands which would be harder for him to gain the light elemental mana. Walker had reassured him that he would be able to use the light elemental crystals that he had for food. But Onyx wanted to be more independent to strengthen himself on the hunt for more of his species.

"I have dinner ready!" Walker's mother walked out with a roast she had made in the new kitchen she had been working on. She had walked it all the way back to the mansion to show it off to everyone. However, she nearly dropped it all on the floor when she noticed the smaller dragonkin sitting at the table.

"Midnight! What happened!?" She was a mother. There was no way she would forget a member of her family even if they weren't blood related. The food hit the table a little harder as she dropped it there and pulled Midnight to arm's length to look her over. "You're so adorable but when did this happen? These clothes are perfect too, they fit so well. Lisa must have made them. But how do you look like this? Is it permanent? Do you want me to cook you something different? Should I get you something to cover your lap so you don't spill? Have they taught you to use a fork and knife yet? How about a spoon for the soup?"

A million questions were rambling off causing Midnight to blink constantly in awe. She had never had this sort of encounter with anyone but she could feel the warmth in her chest growing. Even before Midnight realized it, she had wrapped her arms around Hilda and hugged her just tight enough so she knew how much she appreciated everything. There had been many early mornings spent trying to get her to give more food. But now, she could properly hug Hilda just as Walker and Lisa did.

The reaction was more than anyone had expected. Hilda froze as if she was afraid to even move from the precious position. No one noticed Walker's father smirking slightly and speaking. "That's our girl." Whether Midnight had known it or not at the time. Both Hilda and Garret had accepted her the moment

Walker had brought her home. There was the chance that another creature could have grown up without a family and for them, that was something they would never allow.

Before they could continue their meal, Walker heard a roar coming from outside. When he dashed from the table and out to the back training area, he saw the dim starlit sky full of wind and the reflections of armored scales. Ciel had returned and was carrying a large bat in his talons. There were many armored dragonkin that had water patterns engraved upon them. The smaller shouts of battle echoed through the city causing many people to look outside as well.

"I would say that we are just about ready to leave. I wish they would carry us there but I think we are being left behind. That should be good though. We will have a base of operation when we get to the harbor." The fact that the party recognized that the dragons leaving first was the best option made all the difference. That meant that any kraken swarming the harbors would be forced away and save the port towns. This would in turn allow them to take the plunge and hunt for the mother kraken.

"I know they just came from wherever their village was, but they really showed off." Gil watched Cile disappear from in to the distance after Current took off and joined the flight.

"I think it is a dragon thing. Look at Midnight. She always tried to sit up straight and show off."

"Hmpf." The speedy response from Midnight brought everyone back to the reality that they had been eating.

"On that note. I think I will finish up dinner and sleep early. Maybe we should leave a little earlier." The pressure had built up and most of the party had completed their tasks. The only person that wanted to do one last thing was Remey.

"I planned to have Trish help me with a few things. If you are fine with me working in to the morning I can be ready to leave around midday." None appeared to object to this. Instead, they were all interested in what Trish and Remey would be working on. Unfortunately, no matter how much they asked her before she left the table to go back to the alchemy guild, Remey wouldn't say.

The cool air caused Remey's breath to show itself in a white mist as she walked toward the alchemy guild building. She had been making mental preparations during the dinner. She had enough mana and health potions for the trip. Trish had even managed to get the ingredients to make some water



breathing potions. The only problem was that they needed to be aged to activate the properties in from of the herbs used.

Remey had tried to get the formula for them but Trish said she would only give it up if Remey brought back some rare underwater potion materials to grow. It was a tough to give up and accept that she would be stuck with transporting them but it was what needed to be done. Now Remey could focus on her next goal.

Trish had shown off the use of potions in a way that Remey had never known. Back in the forest elf city and forest, Trish had used battle potions to fight moths. Not many could do such things and Remey was one of the people who could not. But now that she had gained a higher system, then she was able to learn such things.

#### Chapter 985 Battle Alchemist

"What? Couldn't sleep with the noise out there? Or were you just listening to the calling of a real alchemist?" Trish found that Remey and wandered in to the lab that she had claimed as her own. They had all claimed their own with Remey making the guild master's office and alchemy lab hers for now. But she was ready to step down if need be. She would not be some miser reigning over the guild.

"No. I want to work on battle potions. We talked about it before and since the party wants to leave sooner to help out more, I need to be read. I have until midday tomorrow." Remey knew this was a lot to ask. But for an alchemist, long nights and harsh potion making was normal. They would often be consumed by research and end up lost.

"We can get to work now then. Most of my herbs already arrived from the city and I have plenty for us to play with. Do you want some paralyzing gas potions, sleeping potions, explosive potions, maybe even some acid potions? I will avoid the rotting flesh potions made from the purple slime bodies. They could poison the water whereas the other potions would be safer to use in the water." Trish knew that poisons would end up killing the ocean life and the merfolk instead of helping anyone.

"What do you think would be the most useful when facing an ocean environment? Do you think the explosion would hurt us more? I want to say defeating more enemies is good since they might be in higher numbers." The idea that Remey had was that there would be a densely packed baby krakens threatening everyone at all times. The mother would be dealt with by others so the babies would need to be completely oppressed.

"The explosive potions are the better idea. You can throw them a decent distance and allow for them to explode without worry. But they can also be strapped to an arrow and sent on their way. Both methods

work. But since you are in the water I can share a strategy that I have read about." There was a wicked glint in Trish's eyes.

The tactic she had remembered had come from a book another battle alchemist had left behind. It was very interesting because unlike others they had grown up during a time when floods had been more common. "The tactic is to use dense vials or even bottles to store the potion. It's made so that mana activates the potion in to exploding over time. The dense bottle will cause a larger explosion but also make it heavier. Drop the potion in deep water and allow it to sink. Then it had gotten further underwater to explode and take out further away enemies."

This tactic would be very useful against the kraken since they could remain above the water and drop potions down before anyone dove underwater. It would also leave a lot of the young kraken defeated and injured. Overall making things safer.

"I think that is a good idea. I want to learn how to make them so that I can use them in the future but knowing these tricks is even better. I don't have any idea about what herbs to use though. Part of me thinks using some water or fire slime body might be necessary but the look you have on your face says it is not." Remey realized that this would be a lot more simple as soon as she started to speak again.

"You need water, iron dust, some red star vines, and finally mana. That's it. The red star vine usually disrupts potion making and the iron dust will react with it to pull out the dense mana that ruins potions in an instant. The water bonds the two. But the mana causes the reaction to begin. It's simple. You don't even need to heat it. Most people won't come across this issue though since the red star vine is eaten by a lot of plant eating monsters or located in a small area of the forests." Remey wasn't sure what to say. It was really very simple to make a basic explosive potion. The issue she had was the lack of red star vines.

"I have three crates of red star vines that I brought with me to make some potions. I wanted to sell them but we will be growing them come the warmer days. They only take about a week to be grown enough for harvest. Let's get to work making some quick explosive potions in thick vials." The pair headed toward a storage room that had been newly organized by the old master alchemist and Trish.

The pair flowed in to their work and Remey was soon scraping the leaves off all the vines. Trish said that the leaves would release the dense mana first so they were made for the faster exploding potions and the vine stalk for the longer exploding potions. This made sense and Remey had a variation of the two. They all equally had thick glass vials from their storage though. The alchemy guild had personally hired a group of glass makers to provide vials monthly. It was one of the most important business deals for them at the moment.

By the time the morning came and midday was approaching, Walker had found his way to the alchemy guild and climbed the steps to the floor that Remey was on. He had to pick up the remaining mana and health potions but also saw over a hundred explosive potions. He also managed to find Remey asleep and drooping on her work table.

"She worked pretty hard to make these with me. If there is a carriage going with you, then let her sleep. If not, then give her this. It's not a potion but a drink made from coffee beans that I personally condense." Trish Left Walker to it after handing him a small cup.

#### Chapter 986 A Fathers' Love

"Remey...Remey!" After shaking her a little and increasing his volume, Walker managed to get Remey to begin to wake up. He wasn't sure how late she had actually been up but with the way she was acting, he knew that he needed to give her the coffee that Trish had made for her.

"Hmm? What?" The lost look was washed away by a face of understanding as Remey pushed herself from the work table and chair. She tried to stretch but managed to just somewhat move her arms then see that Walker was holding a cup. "Good..." She drank the whole thing in two gulps. "Elven reduced coffee. Not bad. You got the- yup. Let's go." Walker wasn't sure how Remey would be able to make it but he pulled some fruit from his storage and handed it to her.

The volunteers from the human kingdom would be on the move already. The king had sent his own communication forward and they should be setting off on their journey soon enough as well. The demi-human forces were being led by Scylla that had left as soon as the meetings were over to prepare. Apparently, they would be getting there through safe river passages that would allow them to swim the entire way. For an aquatic trait demi-human, it was much faster.

The dwarves already had most of their underwater golems marching. They had been set to obey orders of a select few elite guardsmen that the dwarves had sent. The three kings were not going themselves because of the massive undertaking in the city. If they were to leave then they would risk the future growth of the underground portions of Genesis city.

"Walker!" The high priest was waiting with Alice in front of the adventurers' guild. The rest of the party was already there. Walker was not surprised to see that Midnight was back to her normal dragon form. He had taken the time to speak with her carefully about the dangers of battling in the dragonkin form she was not used to. It was easy to make her understand and she willingly switched with a significant amount of mana spent. One thing that they had not expected to occur when the shift happened because the other dragons they had seen shift were unaffected in appearance when mana was concerned.

"Sorry for taking some time. I had to store a lot of potions that Remey made." Remey didn't even react when Walker blamed the massive number of potions that she had made for the issue that they had for not coming faster.

"That's fine. But you need to swear that you will be right there in front of my Alice." The worried look on the high priest was one only a loving parent could have. It was embarrassing for Alice but it also made her know that she was loved even more than she thought.

"You have my word that myself and the entire party will do our best to make sure that Alice is safe. I know that she had been training and is ready but I will still be there." Walker knew that he could use a lot of his mana to make the water around more dense if it came to it. This could act as an impromptu shield against attack. But it would be a worse case scenario since it would put Walker as a temporary sitting duck.

"Good. Then be safe." The high priest knew if he stayed even a second later he would not allow her to go. He turned quickly and walked back toward the cathedral. No one noticed the single tear making it down the side of his face as he realized that the little girl he had found on the cathedral steps had grown up before he even realized it.

"You look pretty amazing in that." Walker looked at the white rune sewn fabrics that held together thing metal plating. It was a mix of a priest's robe design and a so called paladin armor that was popular in the church during travels. The wandering blacksmith had also added light runes to the metal causing the light elemental mana in the air to be drawn to Alice and cause a slight glow.

She had what was seemingly an innocent wooden walking stick but as Walker examined it he noticed that it was more. He had to use his all around appraisal skill on it to sate his curiosity.

' Heartfelt Whitewood staff

Mana+8, Matk+6, Def+4, Light mana affinity

This is a special staff carved by a high priest. It is only able to be carved by someone able to manipulate light elemental mana for healing. This staff is made by a loving individual and added additional bonuses by infusing it with constant healing spells during the process, therefore, the white wood this staff is

made out of is able to store light elemental mana to a small degree. This staff is ideal for anyone that required light elemental mana to perform their skills.'

Walker didn't say a word about the staff. It was too pure and he felt that if he were to even add a word about it he would devalue how pure it was. The high priest knew how to show his love for his adopted daughter in more ways than anyone would know. But this staff right here was proof of just how powerful it was.

"I have my arrows and the elf enforcers already left ahead of us. We should be the last leaving but that's not a problem. We are the only group that will cut through the swamplands so we will get their first." Gil had spent the morning mapping the route again. He wanted to travel with Alma but had the commitment to the party. He would be able to stand beside her again when they reached the harbor town.

"Then it sounds like we are ready to go." The party nodded and prepared to head off again.

#### Chapter 987 Swamp Dangers

There was not much to see as they left Genesis city. Those that remained were hard at work. The merchants that had shown up to claim their shops and to start a new future. The golems were significantly less because the dwarves had put themselves in to water proofing mode to make them able to march to battle. It was incredibly impressive when it came to the speed and efficiency the dwarven golems could be adjusted. Not many armies could be changed at such a short notice.

"We will basically make a straight line. We have avoided the swamplands because of the imagers and plants with pistons that could kill us. It's avoided by adventurers for a reason. Walker Was sure that people wanted to keep avoiding the swamplands but they had no choice. "We have Alice with us and some potions from Remey. We should be able to manage even if poisonous mist shows itself."

"I can help with that." The group was surprised to hear that Alice was able to deal with poisonous mist. It was the biggest reason that people would avoid the swamp lands all together.

"That should be good then. I don't want to let Su and Midnight handle everything. They have resistance to poisons but I still want to get in to an all out brawl. It's been a while since I got up close and personal in a fight." This was true. Remey had been focused on alchemy which was fair. It took a lot of time and effort to gain a better understanding of a single potion let alone creating new potions.

"Just make sure that you are nearby. I know Alice can heal from a distance with her skills but I don't want the worst to happen." Walker still worried that everyone would get away from the sound of Alice's songs and mess out on healing.

"Walker is right. I read up on the swamp lands and there are poisons that you won't even know are killing you until it is too late." The support from Su made everyone take Walker's warning much more seriously. This was mostly because Su had been the person reading up on the swamp lands more than anyone else in the last day.

"It will only take us a short while to get there since we are using the fastest possible routes. But the swamplands are larger than you think. The streams and rivers that come from there never dry up. Even in the hottest of months." Gil had been near the swamp land and knew that they went all the way down to the forest. That was the main source of water for the forest.

"Alice, if you start to feel tired let us know. We aren't going to push you more than we should." There was some worry for Alice. All of them knew that she would struggle to have the same pace as them because of her lower level. It wasn't that she had never been able to level up, but she was not able to have the same method of gaining experience as the party. Instead of minsters, Alice had relied on healing and songs to gain her experience. It was impressive that she was level in general but to get to the same level as the party she would have to sing for much larger crowds and heal many more people.

"I will let her ride on my back if she is tired." Onyx was sure that he could resist the cold for some time and didn't mind letting Alice tag along. She was about to argue but Midnight took the lead and nodded her head with a huff. She wasn't going to let Alice struggle either.

"Good. Now, the monsters we should not fight at all. Swamp gators. Don't touch them at all. They are tough and if we attack them they barely take any physical damage. They shouldn't care about it at all but if we wander the wrong way we might have to deal with them." Walker remembered this single monster that could easily grow nearly the size of an adult dragon.

"What about all those venomous snakes? Or even the poisonous ones that can kill you just by touching them?" Remy knew that most of these had very good uses in potions but she didn't plan on trying to harvest any. It was too risky and they had other goals.

"I can scare them away. I am a stringer serpent." Onyx had faith that his presence would deter the snakes that were smaller than him. It was a difference in bloodline and monster hierarchy.

"Then we should also watch out for the moths that come out. They are poisonous but in theory, will be sleeping away in dead trees because of the cold. But that doesn't mean monsters are the only dangers. The plants can be dealt with by Alice. Don't forget that the water and the mud are dangerous too. Some people will fall in to a mud pit or a puddle that seemed to be shallow but is actually deep. It is much more common than you think. There are a lot of spots in the swamplands where there are large pockets of water underneath the ground." The books Syu had read to prepare focused on this greatly. Many people had gotten lost to the swamp lands this way.

"If we happen to meet lizardmen, we will also try and avoid them. They normally avoid other living things unless hunting but they can cause a lot of trouble. They are not weak monsters by any means but the main strength they have is the use of rolls. They are far from the dragonkin when it comes to intelligence. They often make rotting spears to attack people." This was the main danger in all the swamplands. It was why many would completely bypass them and walk around.

#### Chapter 988 Su's Advice

"Does anyone want a snack? I don't think we should stop just yet. We have a lot of those herbs that the soldiers had carried to deter monsters. Add that to Midnight and Onyx acting as deterrents as well and we should be able to follow the trails at night." Walker had made the decision after thinking through the route on the map.

"Skunk weed. It has the same smell as an animal called a skunk. Instead of being hunted it is ignored and avoided because the smell it lets off doesn't go away for weeks. Basically, it makes anything that attacks it or eats it a target for every predator around for a week." Remey chimed in as they walked along the path and glanced now and then at the sun slowly setting.

There was a lot of open space as they traveled through the outskirts of the forest. They were going to pass by their home kingdom on the way but it would just be in the distance and barely able to see. So they were not going to need to stop for any reason which was good. They also knew the area leading toward the swamp lands well since it was mostly farmland that was being rehabilitated.

"The patrols in that area are still heavy. I think it's the best chance. Alice, can you handle that?" Since Gil had grown up on the farmlands he knew that danger that would come with the farmland. However, he also knew that it was soft ground. It was harder to traverse for the average person and after the demons had attacked it was slightly harder to walk. The charred ground that had been rehabilitated by the elemental spirits but that new growth right before the cold set it caused the ground to shift and become harder to walk on.

The entire group had kept Alice in mind which would have normally made her happier because she was cared about. But this made her feel that she was holding them back. It also didn't help that the one time they encountered an imp it had jumped at her further proving that she was the weak link. Luckily, Midnight had been keeping an eye out and opened her mouth to spew fire over the imp and cause it to attempt to run away. Gil had finished it just as Alice had started to sing to create a shield in front of her.

This was a good way for her to see her weaknesses which was time. She was not able to quickly begin attacks. To do that she would need to already be singing when something happened. But if she did so then she would be out of mana and need to constantly rely on mana potions. Of course, that was not plausible because no matter how many mana and healing potions someone used, their body would still feel the mounting stress of using their mana constantly.

Since this had become evident to the group, Su took the spot near Alice so that she would better be able to guard her. It would be the best place for her to be for the time being. "Keep an eye on how Gil and Walker are scanning the area. They both have a better ability to see longer distances and feel the mana around them respectively. It will give you a heads up when something is going to happen. Gil will slowly fall in to his archery stance to pull an arrow and Walker will pull mana around him even if he will use a sword or hammer."

It was clear to Su that Alice was not feeling the best about being unable to keep up with the party. Knowing the small tricks to be alert and aware when an enemy showed themselves was good for her. It was an aspect of team work that not many people spoke about but was just important. It was never one person on lookout but multiple. It was never one person reacting but multiple. Not a single one of them would react, the entire party would react and be prepared even when it was something small and easily dealt with.

Having additional advice from Su as they walked made Alice begin to realize that even though everyone was looking at her, she was not their major worry. The only reason there was additional focus was because they knew she did not have a battle sense and the experience of being out in the wild often. The party was so used to being out and about on a journey at this point that even when they were home they would be somewhat on alert. Being able to understand and see how the party worked in silence while traveling was something that young adventurers either learned or failed to learn which in turn would lead to the growth or end of their adventures.

"Why is Remey doing that?" The whisper was low so that Alice wouldn't be heard by the others. She felt that it was also rude to be watching Remey so much.



"Oh, Remey is running through different scenarios while she walks. Those knuckles have multiple elemental affinities and work with her elemental fist skill. You have seen the light and fire combination so far. But if she fights certain monsters like the imp before, the fire knuckles are best. She is practicing shifting through them efficiently." Alice understood this instantly and even had some inspiration for what she could be doing.

She remembered her songs by heart but she could not sing them with speed to make them work faster. Therefore, she began to hum softly. It was not enough to drain her mana while wearing the bracelet. However, it was perfect for her to make the notes and tune to be second nature just like the healing songs she would sing. The night fell on them and they only stopped walking for a short moment here and there to drink water or snack quickly. The skunk weed was made in to a smelly torch that smelled but was warm enough to stave off a little of the cold.

#### Chapter 989 Noise In The Air

"Stop." Walker had noticed that there was an odd sound in the air. The nights would normally be silent since the cold caused most animals and monsters to migrate or sleep somewhere. But the monsters that came in to take their places did not make much sound.

"What is that? If they are imps then they are terrible at hunting at night." Remey was standing in her battle stance but was still comfortable enough to mock the annoying imps that hid themselves in the snow and ice to attack.

"Imps sleep. They don't stay out at night. This has to be something else." Walker was wracking his brain for anything that could be what they were hearing.

"I would say bats. But they leave the area in the cold and prefer the warmth. That's why they don't live in the mountains." As useful as this was, Su was not happy that she had only eliminated one potential threat it could be.

"Owls. Ice claw owls." Of all the people to speak up, it was Alice. The main reason she knew what this monster was came from a simple sight and question she had asked recently. There had been a large number of applicants coming to join the cathedrals so they could find their fame as a healer or receive a home there. One such applicant boasted healing powers that required them to use water to pull out toxins and speed up healing. They wore a very unique white cape.

The white cape had been made from the ice claw owl feathers that their bodyguard had defeated once upon a time. The healer was from a noble family so having such a material made in to a cloak was common. It was able to make their water elemental healing cost less mana which helped out immensely

when they interviewed. However, it was a nobles' attempt to get power in the church and the high priest had used their experience to make sure that things were smoothed out.

"Seriously? If that's what those flapping wings are then we could be on a gold mine. They are night time hunters and they are about the size of our heads. But they have talons coated in ice that cause frostbite instantly. That doesn't matter though. What is impressive is how useful their feathers are. A single one can make two arrows or a whole monsters' worth of feathers can make some basic armor. They are perfect for water and wind elemental crafting." This was a treasure that Gil wanted to procure. The only trouble was that they could not see them in the dark.

"If they are not going to attack us right in front where we can see by the stars and the moon, then I don't think any of us can take one down." As much as Remey wanted to jump and punch in to an owl trying to attack them, it seemed too unlikely.

"That is where Midnight and Walker come in. Midnight unleashes her dragon breath and Walker moved it to show us where my target is. Onyx can help by changing size and striking at it. Between our two attacks, we should be able to get at least one." Since Gil had a plan it was easier to give it a try. "To think there are snowball mice around here. They are cute and fluffy white mice that eat literally any food stores. The fires destroyed their nests so I bet the ice claw owls have been out feasting."

SU and Alice would have done what they could to help but just like Remey, they were not the best to jump in with the situation. However, there was the possibility that they could just leave and not shunt the ice claw owls. The only thing preventing them from that was how useful the materials were. "It's a good thing we are finding this out before more farm houses are rebuilt. They are responsible for stealing away piglets and other small cattle animals." The head shake that Gil had was proof of how annoyed he was. It was clear that he had remembered a lot after Alice had guessed what they were.

"Midnight, on the count of three." Walker started to count while Gil notched an arrow and held one in his teeth. Walker pulled at the mana around him and prepared himself to manipulate the fire Midnight breathed out. "Three...two...one...now!"

The bright orange and yellow flames brightened the night and The group finally saw the five ice claw owls flying in the air. They were pure white and had claws that glinted with orange light. The sudden light only expanded around them as Walker manipulated the fire elemental mana to form a ring around them.

There were more owls than Gil had thought but that wasn't a problem. He let loose two arrows then a third slightly after. By the time his hand had touched the fourth, the other owls had fled with fright. The three that Gil had fired hit their targets and loud screeching broke the silence of the night.

Onyx saw his chance and struck forward to end the battle before it could continue. He was faster than anyone expected. The precise strike with his fangs were enough to show off just how powerful Onyx had become without them noticing. "Walker, get over here with me and start plucking feathers. The blood will ruin them. Do not touch the talons!" Walker pulled out a torch and let it burst in to flames.

Remey took the torch and held it for the two boys who got to work plucking. It was a fast process and one that Walker had never done before. Gil was nearly an expert and was speeding along. In the time it took for Walker to learn and pluck one owl, Gil had done the other two.

Chapter 990 Blocked Path?

'The skill hunters dressing has been taken from the elite hunter system. The skill hunters dressing has been learned through multiple instances of breaking down game animals and monsters.

Hunters' dressing- 1 mana cost per hour

The user is better able to see and follow certain guidelines while breaking down hunted monsters and game animals. The user is able to move through the motions with better speed and accuracy. The user is able to better preserve the quality of the materials harvested over a longer time.'

This skill was something that Walker had hoped he would receive for a long time. Being able to properly help Gil out would go a long way to saving the materials that they used from monsters. It would also mean that Walker was now one more step ahead of being able to prepare the food they ate on the many journeys they had.

"Huh, towards the end there you looked like a pro. Looks like I can leave more to you." The sneaky grin from Gil was just enough to let Walker know that all the work Gil had done on this front was going to be dropped on him. It was a fair price to pay though, Gil had taken the majority of this work as of now.

"I gained a skill. But that's not important right now. Let's keep moving." Walker used some of the water he had manipulated to gather for them to clean their hands. Having this ability was also a massive benefit when it came to properly dressing hunted creatures.

"Sister wants to know when she can try some of the owl?" Onyx felt a little happy to be able to translate from Midnight to everyone. He couldn't lie and say he wasn't sad for when she would speak like any other person.

"I can promise that we will roast them when we stop in a few hours. I know she is hungry but we need to cover more distance first. If we really push we can make it to the swamplands and make camp to sleep halfway through tomorrow." Walker knew that it was pushing things but was happy to hand out some of the food he had in his storage. It was better for the party to push themselves to get through the easy portion of their route before hitting the swamps which would slow them down significantly.

"I think we should keep the torch. As much as I want you guys to catch more owls, I would rather see better." Remey had already refused to put out the torch and no one was going to tell her no. They had easily taken down the ice claw owls and had no reason to draw any more towards them.

"I doubt there are more around here after all that noise. To be honest, most predators and prey around us will be hiding for a while." It was a rule of hunting. If a hunter missed and made too much noise, then they would be stuck with the consequences. Everything nearby would be on alert and nothing would be easy to catch. Hence, most hunters would call it a day after they made a large commotion.

The night was more or less silent for the rest of the time. What Gil said rang true as the sun had started to rise up to light the way. Alice had grudgingly accepted to ride on Onyx's back for a while since he insisted that she rest. No one made a single comment when this happened because they knew that Onyx would be able to absorb the light elemental mana from the rising sun to warm himself. However, there was also the fact that Alice's clothing and armor were gathering more light elemental mana toward them so Onyx was able to benefit from it.

"Hey, does that look like a snowman up there?" Gil had come to a stop wondering what in the world a snowman would be doing out in the middle of the fields that no one was currently living in.

"Ummm, yes. Yes, it is a snowman. Who built it?" Su took the lead since finding something like this was very odd. Especially since they could tell that there was no one else around within sight.

"Wait, before we get too close let me appraise it." Walker was getting a strange feeling from the snowman. Mostly because of how odd it was to show up in such a place and also because it was too perfectly made.

"Good idea. I don't want to waste an arrow trying to test and see if a snowman is actually some crazy snow imp monster." The slight laugh from Gil was met with the small growl from Midnight. She wanted to fight a little since walking had been boring. Plus she was hungry still and wanted to be able to eat and sleep. Walker also knew that Su was fairly tired so he wanted to check things out first.

'Illusion slime- snowman form

A rare water/ice and light affinity slime that learned the illusion skill instead of the mimic skill. The slime is extremely rare and often casts an illusion spell to hide itself. It will copy a form that it has seen before using its inherent skill mana vision. This slime has tremendous use in alchemy because its slime can adapt to stabilize almost any potion. This is the easiest slime to tame since it prefers to be around other creatures than the lesser evolved slimes that would try and consume its body for their own. It boasts a slightly higher intelligence due to its unique slime core. It is better related to the intelligence of a dog or cat. Capturing it can be extremely easy since it is less likely to attack or break out.'

"Alright, well. How about Walker captures the illusion slime for me and then we make camp here." Remey didn't leave any room for argument. Traveling all night had tired them out and she was not foolish enough to believe that they would push on after finding something so amazing for her. She also made a nod to Su and Midnight who were still tired from their ritual and needed the rest more.

"I will capture it for you but you will be carrying the slime core with you while I store the slime body. But you will have to find someone to tame it and join your guild." Walker gave in easily as he stepped forward to handle the situation.