

Master 991

Chapter 991 Slime Trap

Walker stepped forward and pretended to be moving ahead of the group. He had the feeling that the illusion slime would not be willing to attack him but instead try to hide itself from him. It was clear that the intelligence the slime had over its' lesser evolved slimes was enough to know when to and when not to attack.

This proved correct as Walker neared the slime and felt the small amount of mana leaking around it. The light and water elemental mana the illusion slime used to create its snowman appearance was very well controlled. The affinities it had were able to unlock the path it had taken and was most likely the very reason it had become an illusion slime.

Part of Walker's mind dwelled on the slime breeder that has given them a massive amount of problems so far. Yet, the party had not encountered any ice slime since leaving Genesis city. Part of that worried him but that also mean that they may not have been set free as long as he expected. Not that the ice slimes were completely unnatural. Just uncommon. But it also could be the reason why an illusion slime had come to exist. The high numbers of slimes in the environment breeding could have caused a rare slime like this to be born.

All together, Walker was sure that bringing this slime back to hello Remey at the alchemy guild would be a massive boon for the city and the people. Being able to produce better potions would help everyone in need of healing, mana refreshment, and many other things related to potions. It would also keep such a slime from falling in to the slime breeder system users' hands. They already needed to worry about the acid slimes that the slime breeder had taken away from the deep caves.

Standing directly in front of the illusion slime, Walker could almost feel that the slime was shivering, or at least the mana was. The illusion was just above the shape of the slime making it appear as a snowman when in reality it was just a slime holding the shape and the colors being a trick of the light flowering through the slimes' body. This was the benefit of having a strong water affinity that could be seen as an ice affinity and the light affinity working together. No other monster would be able to copy this effect without having the perfect balance of affinity.

Walker started to manipulate the earth below them and cause it to rise. The wall he made left no room for the slime to escape. Being able to mold the earth in to shape to a round sphere with only a small opening was enough to scare the illusion slime in to wanting to flee. Since this was exactly what Walker hoped he watched as the light faded around the slime and the body was exposed.

The slime had a nearly clear body that reflected light like glittering gems. It was the ice crystals inside of it that were responsible for causing the illusions to be easily seen and used by the slime. Anyone seeing this at the first glance would be slightly mesmerized since it was an uncommon sight to see a beautiful slime. But this was not the focus at the moment.

The slime tried to force its way out of the small opening to escape the danger it felt it was in because of Walker. This was what Walker wanted though. As the slime escaped, Walker found that it pushed the core forward first, exactly as he had hoped. The core left the small hole in the earth sphere that was created and Walker slashed downward with one of his twin blitz swords. The core fell from the rest of the slime body and Walker scooped it up in to a large vial. Then he quickly gathered the rest of the slime body in to ten large potion bottles and stored them away.

"That was pretty impressive. I would have thought you needed to battle it and cut out the slime core." Remey jogged up beside him to hold the slime core as Walker had said. The body was already stored away and she couldn't be more impressed.

"The appraisal said it was less likely to attack so I went with an approach to scare it. The core is smaller than I thought but it might be better that way so that you can protect it while in battle. I just hope that you are able to better use it for the guild. Is everyone else setting up camp? I still have the tent." Walker realized he had not left the tents behind for them to rest in.

"I will ask around to find a tamer to join the guild. If the worst case happens then I will bribe you to tame it and let it live in the guild. And yes, they are setting up the area. Su and Onyx are pushing some snow aside." The two chatted a little while walking back over to the group. Walker had cleaned up his earth sphere so that it wouldn't hinder the fields when it came time to plant again.

"Here are the tents. I will start up a fire so we can eat. I will also take first watch so everyone else can sleep." No one argued with this and Walker felt that Midnight was ravenous at this point even though she had snacked on some jerky.

Alice was quick to help set up a tent. It was impressive that she had already learned how to do this but Walker had a sneaking suspicion that Su was the one that had taught her when he wasn't looking. She was setting up the tent in the same way that Su went about it. Once the smell of roasting ice claw owl graced their noses, everyone showed their hunger. The party didn't hesitate to dig in when it was cooked even though it was a little too hot.

Chapter 992 Nature's Peace

Once everyone had gone their own way to rest, Walker took the chance to meditate a little. He knew that Fleur had been resting in the spirit mark for some time and it was because of the natural mana she needed. There was also the eternal orb that had filled itself with natural mana and was resting as part of Walker's chest piece.

A short glance around landed on Onyx and Midnight who and curled up in the sun by the fire. Onyx was wrapped around Midnight to protect her since he knew how tired she still was. Walker had decided not to have Midnight and Su act as a look out while they rested. The two needed more rest so that they could get through the swamp lands and all the way to the harbor towns on the water.

As excited as Gil was to use the ice claw owl feathers for the arrow, he did not jump in to it. He wanted to use the time to rest so he could properly look out and craft a new arrow. He may have made some arrows to fight the kraken swarm but it was not enough in his mind, Having a water and wind elemental arrow would potentially give him an added strength. But he also wanted to preserve his own mana. Zephyr was also resting in the bow so that she could have a higher reserve of elemental mana. This was the same with the alchemy fire spirit with Remey and the earth spirit with Su.

The only spirit that had not joined them was the fire spirit that paired with the dragon style golem. It was not suited to underwater battle and instead had made itself useful around Genesis city doing patrols to keep monsters that got too close at bay. Walker hadn't even asked it to do such a thing. Instead, Midnight had used her bond with it to encourage it to do such a thing. This was just another boon for the city and the party. Having the dragon style golem around put people at ease and also showed the strength that the city had to defend the people that lived there.

While Walker sat and controlled his breathing, he knew that the natural mana around was stronger here than in other places. This was the simple fact that the elemental spirits had helped to rehabilitate the land and bring it back to life. Their mana was mixing and creating more natural mana. It was a benefit to healing the area but also for attracting more elemental spirits. This alone would make the human kingdom adapt to elemental spirits and facilitate the return of elemental spirits to every day life as they had been part of many years again. There would also be the connection with the forest elves which would increase due to the elemental spirits knowledge they could share.

Therefore, the pull of natural mana flowed through his body and Walker could feel his breath lighten. His body had been processing the natural mana when he learned the dance of seasons and natural regeneration. Both were causing natural mana to always flow through him and mix with his own mana. It felt right to him and he could tell that the young sage title reacted with this process.

There was natural mana getting denser around him and he could tell that the earth below him was reacting. The plants that had hidden under the small layer of snow were reaching up and the light was getting brighter. Overall the air felt fresher and the world just a little more peaceful.

'The skill meditation has been affected by high natural mana density. The skill meditation has been changed in to the skill nature's peace taken from the pure sage system.

Nature's peace- passive (requires natural mana)

The user is able to allow their consciousness to reach a peaceful state with high density natural mana. The user is able to better sense the flow of nature and also see around them at the same time. The mana around them will affect the world and cause higher growth for plants and animals. Rot and poison near the user will lessen in strength. The user will be able to calm themselves easily and clearly work through many trains of thought. The speed of gathering natural mana and separate elemental mana will increase. There are other benefits gained due to the high density natural mana.'

Walker wasn't sure what the other benefits would be but he just relaxed and kept watch while meditating. He could tell that everyone else was relaxing more and resting better the more natural mana he brought to him. But he could also tell that Midnight and Su had absorbed a lot of the natural mana. Their bodies had been through an ordeal when the ritual happened. Since Su had a large change in her body that now led her to gain a fire breathing skill it was clear that she would need to recuperate.

Since Midnight had gained the skill to shift in to a dragonkin form she also needed to recuperate her body. The changes that occurred were well ahead of what she would normally be able to do at her age. Knowing that the two were benefiting from his meditation was bringing a deeper peace to Walkers' mind and body. However, he was soon looking at the sun rising higher than he had wanted it to. He still had to rest himself and he stood up feeling calmer than before.

Gil had no issue getting up and looked more refreshed than usual. The high natural mana had truly aided his rest as he got up and prepared some of his arrows to be adjusted with the ice claw owl feathers. The last thing Walker saw as he lay down to sleep for some time was Gil stretching and starting to cut the owl feathers for the fins of his arrows.

Chapter 993 New Songs

Walker was literally dragged from his tent before he knew it. There was only one little dragon that could do this without causing any noise. "Midnight what-" She huffed slightly making Walker stop completely. This was when Walker heard the sound.

"Is that Alice?" The overwhelming nod from Midnight told Walker that Alice had been singing for a little while. "I wonder why she is up already?" Walker knew he couldn't have been sleeping for long and that Remey would be on look out now. They were still going to rest for a little while longer before they would push to the swamp lands.

After he sat up, Walker found that Alice had moved a slight distance from where the group was resting. Remey was sitting by the fire and cast a sideways glance at Walker before nodding slightly. She knew exactly what was going on and didn't bother to interrupt Alice.

The song that Alice was singing was low and slow. It was drastically different than what she normally sang. The song of healing was uprising and powerful. It brought energy and joy. The song of blades was energetic and even a little frantic. The difference was clearly what made the song have certain effects on the light elemental mana.

As he came closer Onyx came in to sight. But what surprised Walker was what he also saw. There were chains and weights made of light fallen around Onyx. Onyx struggled to move around them and constantly absorbed the light elemental mana. The pair was training against each other while the rest of the group gained more sleep. It was always clear that Onyx wanted to be more powerful so he could stand next to everyone else in the party. But Alice was also behind in terms of level. She felt useless when it came to any danger and most of it would come down to learning on the go. But this was training that she could perform right now to get more powerful.

Alice was slowly letting beads of sweat drip down her nose and cheeks which showed just how hard it was for her to keep up such a song. But the results were massive. Onyx was in his largest form with almost no shadow showing. He would be able to easily cast off normal chains but these light chains and weights were keeping him pressed down. There was also the impressive rate at which Onyx absorbed the light elemental mana. If the sun wasn't high enough then Alice would not have been able to create such dense chains.

Sooner than expected, Alice finished her song and the chains began to dissipate back in to the air. Onyx slowly began to move again looking as if he had eaten more than he normally would. He was almost lethargic. "You two have been working pretty hard. Feel like sitting down for a while?" Walker pulled a small towel from his storage and offered it to the embarrassed Alice who had not even noticed him watching.

"Brother, I am going to sleep for a while." Onyx no sooner said this than he took his smaller tattoo form and rested on Walker. It was clear through their bond that Onyx had exhausted himself in mind and body. Which was fine since there was time to rest and Onyx had been working hard since they left.

"I didn't know you could use a debuff song. It looked like it would be very deadly for an opponent to be trapped like that. Is it a new song you just wrote?" Alice shook her head. Walker had not seen the song in her book so he had thought it to be new.

"I couldn't because I was too weak. This is the first time." A brilliant smile spread on Alice's face while she spoke. She had been working hard to be able to perform this song through an entire verse. Now that she could she would be able to do much more to help out.

"I bet that will be perfect for holding down any giant alligators or giant vipers." Walker knew that these would be monsters better avoided. Beating them would be hard and take a lot of time from their travels. Therefore, having a way to slow them down and escape was the best possible way to keep moving without fear that they would catch up easily.

The recognition made Alice a lot more confident. She was sure that she would be useful to the group because of this skill she had developed. It had taken her a lot of time and effort. "Come on and grab something to eat. I will pull a mana potion out too." The pair sat by the fire together while Remey finished her watch and woke Su, Midnight, and Gil up for them to eat as well.

After the group had finished their meals and cleaned up their small camp, Walker was prepared to set out. He had gathered enough natural mana to feel even better rested while he could tell that Fleur was better prepared if she decided to show herself. "Can we keep an eye out for white mushrooms with small ants on them? They are used to attract bugs mostly but can also be used to make monster attracting potions. I want to try and sell them in the guild when we open everything." Remey knew that Walker was the only one that could safely store away such a thing.

"Sure. But only if you keep an eye out for some dead wood, poison oak, and purple willow trees. They can be used for some interesting arrows." Remey and Gil made their deal while they eyed the slowly changing landscape ahead of them. The journey was just at its beginning now that they were about to enter the outer swamp lands.

Chapter 994 Rotting

The ground was losing its firmness as the group began to walk along the planned trails. There were many trails that lead in to the outer swamp lands because they were the best places to hunt certain monsters and gather certain herbs., But when it came to the deep swamp lands, there were no paths.

The mud and changing water levels would wash away and change any trail carved through. That wasn't even considering the warm seasons where the plants would overgrow everything.

The benefit of traveling in the cold was that many of the plants had temporality died off due to the temperature. There were also some thin layers of ice that would make traveling easier since some of the mud wouldn't let them sink in to it. However, there were some downsides. The water was cold and could cause more problems if someone fell in. The monsters that were aggressive would be able to spot them from further away. There was also the fact that some of the deeper water might be hidden by the snow and the ice built up on top of it.

" Su is going to stay in the lead while Midnight takes up the rear. I know we aren't in the worst of it yet but we need to stay prepared. Gil, if you notice anything just say so." Walker trusted Gil and Su the most since they had the best eyes for details. If they saw that there was a problem they could potentially save the group from the worst.

While they walked they were very glad for the water proof boots that they had for the colder and rainy seasons. If they did, it have them then the cold water that filled the muddy holes from their feet would have caused them to stop constantly. Where the party was used to some mud, they were not used to the swamp lands mud. Every step they took was in ti deeper mud that would latch on to their feet more than the overused merchant trails' mud.

As they walked they did not take a single straight path. Su was changing the way they waked because she could see the areas where the mud was deeper. However, what made her stop from time to time was the movement under some of the snow and moss she could see. There were portions where she swore that she could step on them, but as soon as she got near she would realize that it was not safe.

The swamplands had a great many species of moss that would grow year round. One type was able to grow over the top of deep water pools which was what caused people to accidentally fall in. Normally monsters and animals would fall in and get trapped. But sometimes there would be monsters that made these places their homes and would wait for something to fall in to become their food. This meant that falling in could be a death sentence.

Since Midnight was following up the back end, she was the one that needed to be sure that the rest of the party was following Su to the exact step. Her small growls were enough to warn someone that they were moving away from the path they were supposed to follow. Yet, there was an exception here or there.

Midnight would need to move to push someone off of a spot that could make them slip. She focused on Alice the most for this kind of thing since it was easy for her to see the inexperienced steps that Alice took. No matter what, having the experience to step on firm ground took time. When Alice would try to follow Su she would often get caught on small roots and even the odd rock or two. Thanks to Midnight none of these ended with Alice falling in to a dangerous situation.

"It's good that it's old out. If it hadn't snowed we would have to deal with more of the venomous snakes and frogs." The idea that they were traveling during a better time of the year made Gil more comfortable. However, he knew that this small victory led way to more danger. "But the trees up ahead seem to be moving." This would be normal if there was a breeze or there were leaves on the trees. Yet, there were none of those two things.

' Rotting treant

This is a species of trant that has been part of the swamp lands for too long. Often treants will grow in the forests and be able to become stronger over time. Unfortunately, some treants wander in to the poisonous swamps and can not return to the forests they know. Instead of growing strong their wood rots and they become aggressive to anything they see. They are slower in the cold weather since their rotting soggy wood freezes but they are still able to attack with poisonous vines and heavy club like hands. It is recommended that these monsters be avoided at any cost since they can easily trap large creatures by controlling vines. They will eventually rot in to an extremely potent fertilizer that can grow a number of rare herbs and fungus.'

Walker was quick to stop the party completely. He had slowly read the all around appraisal so that everyone knew just how bad the forward path was. "We are going around them." Su bent her knees and did her best to sneak in a wide circle to avoid the treants. There were three that they could see swaying side to side while some moving vines went in to the waters around them.

There was warmth on Walkers' back and he felt Fleur show herself on his shoulder. Her eyes were trained on the rotting treants ahead of her and she started to pull natural mana from the spirit mark and air around her. She had a focused look and Walker could feel a sense of hate towards the rotting treants growing.

Chapter 995 Fleurs' Anger

"Walker, what's going on?" Remey had a worried shake in her voice as she saw Fleur was making a move toward the rotting treants.

"Fleur is angry. I think it's because they are causing the poison of the swamps to spread. They are rotting treants. I would guess that they spread rot until they are defeated or turn in to the fertilizer the appraisal mentions." This hit the nail on the head. Fleur looked Walker dead in the eye and pointed at the treants.

"Rot is poison, right?" Alice spoke up and made Fleur nod energetically. She took a deep breath and let a solemn tone out of her mouth. It was loud and triggered the rotting treants to look toward them.

"Why did you do that!?" Gil notched one of his water elemental arrows with the goal of freezing the treants in place for them to run. The song that Alice had started was one that the party did not recognize but had an uplifting tone. It started low and sad but rose to a pure and high pitch.

"Wait, this is the purifying song that Alice sings when people come in sick from alcohol or other poison and venoms." Su recognized it and put herself between Alice and the rotting treants that had slowly started to hobble toward them. Midnight dashed forward and breathed out a distracting breath of bright orange flames. The dances in the ice crystals and made the treants hesitate before they pushed forward mindlessly.

One treant raised its hand which was covered in purple and red vines. It whipped them forward at the party but didn't even get near where they stood. Instead, a wall of earth rose from the ground and blocked them. It quickly crumbled away due to the heavy water content within it but it had done its job.

"I will block the attacks. If Alice is going to purify them then maybe we will win this fight." Fleur was pulling natural mana toward her while floating above Alice. The light elemental mana appeared to be gathering more as well and the area around them seemed to change. The little puddles of water that had been cloudy cleared and the fungus mixed with the moss crumbled away.

The part that made Walker shudder, however, was that Fleur was taking away the light elemental mana that Alice was gathering. The song which would have made some effect on the light elemental mana to travel from Alice and purify things was gathering with Fleur. Before he could focus even more the treant struck out again and Walker raised another earth wall in haste. It blocked the treant again but was smashed in to nothing by the second treants club like hand.

"You said Ice slows them down! Let's see how you like my light and water knuckle combo!" Remey used her speed and dashed forward delivering a vicious five hit combo of jabs to the main body of the treant. The result was a cracking sound and a splintering of icy rotting wood. The light elemental mana that

stuck to her light affinity knuckle made the splinters seemingly dissolve while the water knuckles caused the ice to freeze and be shattered by Remey's other jabs.

Just as the third treant struck out, Remey dodged backward and was covered by another flame breath from Midnight. This one made complete contact with the third treant and caused the smaller vines to burn away. There was no further damage but it was enough to make all three rotting treants pause before anger overtook their feeble minds.

Walker wanted to attack and willed the eternal orb to change in to a spear form. He knew he would be able to channel elemental mana through it and use the spear skills he had to attack with speed and distance. But at the moment the eternal orb finished changing in to a spear he felt a connection. Fleur willed the natural mana in the light elemental mana toward the spear that Walker made before she fused with the eternal orb spear form.

There was a shining if light and Walker felt unseen hands guiding him. He could tell that the purifying power of Alice's light elemental song was channeled through the eternal orb spear form. There was the control that Fleur had used over it to move through it and to the tip of the spear.

His legs moved on his own and Walker used the spear to jab forward in three insanely fast stabs. The light elemental mana reacted with the rotting bodies of the treants and there was a burst of light. The pulse of mana that resonated around them had no way of harming anything but for the rotting and poisonous swamp lands.

Before they could gain their sight back they heard the sound of falling wood in to water. As their vision returned all of them were able to see the purified broken bodies of the treants floating in a crystal clear pool of water. The snow had even been purified in to perfectly white snow. The moss was a lushes gree where it had been darker and covered in multiple forms of fungus. This scene covered a large area around where Walker had just attacked.

Alice stopped her singing and braced herself against Su who had moved right to her side. She smiled while looking at the spear where a tired looking Fleur sat. "You really had to do something so reckless just because they were rotting away from of the swamp lands?" Fleur didn't respond but looked at Walker as if she had just accomplished a great deed worth more than all the gold in the world.

"So, we are never doing that again. Because the arrows I fired barely slowed them down." Gil had managed to hit two of them in the feet with water elemental arrows and watched as the rotting treants easily broke the ice that formed where his arrows landed.

"I can't say it won't happen again but for now, we should camp here a little while and drink some mana potions." Walker handed one to Alice before he willed the eternal orb back in to its previous form.

Chapter 996 Purified

"So I grabbed the wood from those rotting treants and it's not rotting at all anymore. I would say it's almost petrified now." Gil help up a piece for the broken rotting treant wood. It was clearly purified but that had led it to become a dry and petrified wood that was tougher than usual.

"Think you can use it for arrows? I won't stop you if you want it." There was nothing else that Walker could use it for if it was good for arrows then he would let Gil have it all to himself.

"I don't think I can carve this well enough. It is too hard for me to make much progress on. We should just give it to the wandering blacksmith. He should be able to use it better than us." The reasonable conclusion made sense since it could be used for handles to swords or other armors and weapons.

"I want some of it. Some potions use wood to keep them from dissolving or to separate ingredients. Depending on how well they are at sealing certain ingredients maybe I will have boxes made from them." Walker knew that storing potion ingredients was very important but he had overlooked the how to when it came to them.

"Alright, I will store it away." There was a surprising amount of the purified wood floating in the now crystal clear pool of water. If it was rotted it would easily sink down to the bottom. Walker could make out small fish and some bugs swimming in the purified water, however, he knew it would return to the original swampy state sooner or later.

"You really went all out when it came to purifying this area. But that was reckless. What if we had not had Alice? We could have been hurt. I know you were unhappy and wanted to purify them from the rot and poison they would cause. I understand. But that was not okay to do." The lecture seemed to make Fleur shrink. Walker could tell she had not processed that there would be a threat that could hurt them. Ever since she had come to be she had been safe without much worry. Now there were threats and she had no way of knowing what was too dangerous or not.

"We can share our feelings and wants with each other. Just get my attention next time and we will see what we can do about it. I don't want the worst to happen to my family. That includes you." The soft pat on her head made Fleur brighten up slightly but she was still timid since she had caused Walker to be so unhappy and worried. It would take some time for her to learn more about traveling.

"Walker, have you seen what happened to the moss? There is literally no mold or fungus. There are even small moss flowers growing now. This is great!" Remey was gathering the tiny white flowers as if they were some rare commodity. "They never bloom like this in the winter. They should have a higher water elemental mana than when they normally bloom in the summer. That means they could be the best ingredient for the water affinity potions." The smile Remey had mirrored that of a child handed an entire bag of candy without parental supervision.

"I have a fire going. Let's eat something before we move on." Su had already started a fire and in a few moments Walker had roasted some more of the ice claw owls and handed it out. Midnight had snatched up an entire one for herself making it the end of the ice claw owls but for the valuable parts for crafting.

"Alright, let's get back to it. I want to see if we can make a decent cut through the deep swamp lands before it gets too dark and any fog sets in." There was some worry about the toxic fog that usually roamed the swamp lands. But the cold usually held it at bay since the rotting waters couldn't evaporate in to the air.

"If that happens will you be able to purify it Alice?" Remey knew that she could use her potions to a degree but if there was a that could work on it better then she would feel safer.

"Yes." Alice was sure she could purify it as long as things were not interrupted. She did eye Fleur a little since she had her controlled and used differently. It was a mystery that she wanted answers for but knew that Walker would say something when he fully understood how Fleur was able to manipulate someone else's mana and the light mana with natural mana.

"That's good. I think some of my light arrows can do it too but they are kind of a double edges sword. They heal you at the cost of being shot by an arrow. Really an impractical arrow. Hence why I haven't used it at all. I still have them though." Walker had nearly forgotten the arrow that Gil was talking about. It was a strange mix but had some potential.

"You know, if we see any very bad rotting places in the swamps maybe we can purify them. I can't believe we didn't think of it when we encountered the rotting treants. It might have been better than the water arrows." Walker pondered this while he took the lead of the party this time. He had the feeling that he would need to use his to make their path easier to traverse in the deep swamp lands. There was the higher possibility that they would find rotting pools and overgrown terrain. Not to mention the monsters they were sure to encounter. The rotting treants were just on the outskirts. He couldn't fathom what else there might be.

Chapter 997 Tough Shells

"There are some pretty dark clouds coming in. I don't think that will help u at all." Gil was looking at the distant sky through the dread branches of a few trees. There was also a small breeze that added to the chill they felt.

"It's definitely going to rain. I can feel the water elemental mana getting dense in the air. It will make things muddy and hard to walk through but I can try to freeze it a little." Walker's suggestion helped but they all started to add extra layers on for the rain. The cloaks that Walker had stored in his storge were longer and covered most of their bodies but had been specially waterproofed by Lisa.

"Avoid the low parts on the ground as we go through. They will start to fill with water and be the muddiest. I don't want anyone to get stuck as we move." The warning from Su got a resounding yes from the rest of them. Midnight had huddled closer to Alice as they started to walk and the moist rain began.

It was not a powerful downpour but enough for them to know that they would be colder and colder. The torch that Remey had been carrying that burned the skunk weed was easily extinguished. "Let's hope that the monsters stay in their little hiding spots because of the rain." She was clutching the water knuckles just in case she had to use them.

"I hate to say it, but I think we will see more than we want. The misty makes it perfect for the water dwelling monsters to leave and travel in the open air." As if waiting for Walker to say this a small brown fish wiggled on to the cold icy mud before flopping to a nearby pool of water.

"I forgot catfish lived here. If we can catch a few they are very good for energy while traveling. My father said that he used to make catfish stew when he was near the swamps." This was another recipe that Gil had in the back of his mind for the right situation. Walker took note ready to make it happen. However, Midnight didn't seem to be excited about it as usual since she remained silent.

Due to this, Walker looked for her and found that she was glaring in the distance. The small brown shapes wiggling out of the water and mud were eclipsed by a much larger muddy shape rising from the mud. "I think that's a mud scale turtle. They won't attack but they are very hard to capture and defeat. Their name might suggest their shell is weak like mud but the name comes from the fact that they cover their scales in mud." Walker had seen one of two on the market. Many nobles would request them from the adventurers' guild to be ingredients turtle soup.

The main problem was, that due to their tough shell and dangerous environment many people would avoid hunting them. They were also heavy and hard to bring back to the city. Thus, it was the least hunted monster around. "I don't see any reason to bother it. We can pass by and let it be. We have ground to cover." Su beat Walker to the call but it was the same one he had wanted to make. It would just waste their time to hunt a tough to beat enemy that wouldn't normally attack them anyways.

"Then we go around." Walker manipulated a nearby pool of water to freeze in to ice thick enough for them to walk over. This allowed them to give the mud scale turtle a good amount of space to keep doing what it was doing. However, they encountered yet another just a few minutes deeper in to the swamps.

"How many of these turtles are there around here? They are huge, you think they would have a larger territory." Gil was used to the animals and monsters he hunted not wanting to encroach on each others' territories. It was a normal behavior for any creature.

"Gil, that one isn't moving." Remey had fallen in to a stance as she noticed that the mud scale turtle ahead of them was not moving an inch. There was also a very strong scent of rot nearby. Walker also noticed that Fleur had scrunched her face in to the same angry disgust she had before.

"Stay calm. We can't risk fighting something in these conditions. Before we were lucky but whatever managed to beat that might be too much to handle." It was odd for Walker to make the group sneak so much. But he was sure that the monsters that had not been hunted and kept somewhat under control would be able to defeat the party. There were many very good reasons the swamp lands were feared.

"No, there is something moving." Su picked up on some movement in the mud around the mud scale turtle body. However, when she realized what it was she was not happy at all, her skin crawled and she was sure that they needed to move away from there immediately. "There are small purple worms moving in and out of the mud and in to the shell. I don't think they ate through the shell but they definitely ate the turtle."

Since Su had spotted the problem Walker used his all around appraisal skill and whispered out what it came up with.

'Purple blood worm.

These are vicious dark affinity monsters. They hatch in clutches of a thousand and live for a week at most during any season. They will only hatch and feed during the night or cloudy rainy days. They use potent dark elemental mana to cause severe rot in any living creature before devouring the rotting corpse. They are extremely dangerous but hold an extreme weakness to any light elemental attacks. Even sunlight can cause them to die in minutes'

Chapter 998 Squirming

"Walker, I want to try my light elemental arrow this time. We are far enough away and they are slower moving worms. We can run easily enough with your to get away from them." Fleur supported Gil's plan and pulled at Walkers' hair. However, this was a risk. There was no way that Gil would take out all of them in one arrow. But there was also the chance to remove such disgusting monsters that only caused rot and decay.

"Give it one shot. If the results are good we can use them in the future. But under no circumstances are we going over there." This was made clear as Walker put his food down heavily on the ice he had made. He was not going to allow even a single one of the purple blood worms near his party. They were dangerous and he was not sure he could protect them completely from them.

"If you can you should try and pull that shell over here with your frost whip. I bet you can store it away without any of those worms. To be honest, you could probably just freeze them all solid. But don't do that." Gil was pulling one of the wither spike arrows he had charged with light elemental mana. It was clear that this would be a devastating blow to the purple blood worms.

"Those arrows might not be very good for living and other elemental monsters. But for darkness elemental and undead, they are a poison like no other." Su spoke these words as Gil activated the arrow and let it fly.

His aim was good as always. The arrow landed right in the mass of squirming mud and rot. There were only a few seconds between the party holding their breath and the flash of light elemental mana. The purple blood worms began to squirm and flair as they started to literally melt in to mud. The light elements mana was dissolving their bodies due to their extreme weakness to light elemental mana. The smell of rot only increased in the area while all of this happened.

Gil had notched and fired a second arrow even though Walker had been fine with one arrow. There was something in Gil that made him want to get rid of these things too. It might have been the rot reminding him of the undead ruins or possibly Zephyrs' relation to natural mana since wind elemental mana was part of natural mana. Either way, the second arrow hit, and the pulse of light elemental mana killed off even more of the purple blood worms.

Ince the mana had settled the entire spot around the mud scale turtle shell was a dark rotting pile of mud. The best way to describe it now was high quality fertilizer. Three was sure to be a lot of future growth after the cold receded. Gil glanced at Walker. "Yes, I will try with my frost whip."

The frost whip froze in to the slushie familiar shape in Walkers' hand. The skill formed much faster due to the rainy weather. With a simple flick of his wrist, the whip arched out and landed on the mud scale turtle shell. It froze on contact and Walker attempted to pull it back only to find that the shell was much heavier than he had ever expected. "Now I know why they are so tough. They are heavier than iron."

"We don't really need it. I mostly wanted to try my arrow out as a solution to the problem. We can leave it there." Gil was happy that the arrow had worked against the purple blood worms. Not being able to harvest a mud scale turtle shell that the worms had defeated was nothing that would ruin their day.

"Let me give it a second try. It would be nice to get it on the way. Not many people manage to get one and we can give it to the wandering blacksmith for his forging." A second frost whip formed in Walkers' other hand and Midnight clamped down on it with her hand. The two pulling together managed to release the shell from the mud and it popped in to the air. Just before it hit Walker and Midnight he touched it with his hand and stored it away. "See, no problem." There was a single drop of sweat that made Walker's claim seem false, but no one was worrying about that.

"There are more..." Remey and Su had locked in on thicker looking purple blood worms. They had been underneath the shell protected by it and able to grow during their short lifespan.

"And they look to have found us." Su raised her shield and looked to Walker for what to do. They all knew they had played with fire since these were larger purple blood worms and had hidden under the turtle shell by instinct.

"Another arrow Gil!" The arrow that Gil pulled seemed to slow down as they saw the large purple blood worms begin to open their small mouths full of razor like teeth and breathe out a dark purple mist. It was enough to rot some of the branches and twigs from swamp bushes and saplings around them.

Fleur was already melting in to the eternal orb which was fusing in to a staff form in Walkers' hand. He wasn't sure if he would be fast enough to use the light elemental mana and get rid of the mist while also defeating the purple blood worms. It was all about speed on his feet since they had done something they knew was unnecessary.

The arrow that Gil had just notched was still aimed at the worms but would have no effect on the mist. Walker could only hope that Gil would manage to take down the worms and the mist. It was not something that Remey and Su could deal with. Midnight also was out of the running since her light elemental breath attack was too weak as of yet.

Chapter 999 Team Alice And Onyx

Just before Walker conjured a combination of wind and light elemental mana to send a burst from the eternal orb staff, He heard the soft melody begin behind him. Alice had started to sing with a powerful tone that said she would stand there for the rest of her life if need be. It was the song of shields that she had struggled with.

The light elemental mana flowed around them as if it had been waiting for such a moment. Onyx had emerged from his shadow tattoo form and was currently wrapped around Alice. The glow of light elemental mana around his scales meant only one thing. Just like the shadow where he hid away his body using darkness elemental mana, Onyx had learned to store away some of the light elemental mana he absorbed for later use.

'The user has been affected by the skill; Chorus of light.'

The eternal orb staff glowed brightly with light elemental mana and so did Gil's arrow. A shield of light slammed down in front of the purple blood worms causing a sizzling sound. Gil's arrow flew and impacted them causing the same reaction as earlier with a larger burst of light.

Walker raised the eternal orb staff and a gust of white wind gathered around before it flew out from Walker in a single gust. The mist that the purple blood worms had created was blown away and began to dissipate into nothing before their eyes.

'The skill purifying gust has been taken from the half born system. The skill purifying gust has been learned through assisted skills and user combination .

Purifying gust- 8 mana cost

The user is able to fuse light and wind elemental mana similar to a pure being of mixed blood. The wind carried the minor healing and purifying properties of light elemental mana to push away poisons and

illness. The mana usage is high due to the wild nature of wind wanting to flow away from the light. This skill is best used when the light and wind elemental mana density is high.'

"Brother, I am hungry." Onyx slithered slowly from Alice's arm and Alice stopped singing. She looked a little pale whereas Onyx was sluggish.

"Here, eat up as much as you can. Then make sure you nap for a while. We will push on out of here as soon as possible." Walker was done with the swamps but knew that his best chance to get out was to follow the water and potentially leave the swamps a little south of their desired destination. "I have a mana potion for you too. Chorus of light, that's the skill you used with the song of shields? I assume that you and Onyx worked on that when we weren't paying any attention?"

The blush that Alice had was cute enough that Walker had trouble handling it. But when she hid a small smile he thought that he was about to melt right there. "Walker, those things look to be gone but I don't think we should stay around here. Things are too quiet and that gust of wind and light did not do anything to hide our presence." Zephyr had finally left the bow and had been whispering to Gil about the changing wind she could feel around them.

"I agree. We are going to double down on our efforts and follow the water to the beach. I don't care if we end up too far down from the port town. We need to get out of here." The thought to follow flowing water was normal. If they followed the direct flow of water they would end up heading back toward the kingdom. Against the flow of water and they would find themselves heading toward the beach and eventually toward the marches. However, they could easily avoid the marshes since it was a very small space between the beach and the swamp lands.

There was some worry as Walker looked at Alice who definitely needed rest. But they didn't have a choice. They had alerted every monster in the area to their presence by being reckless and it was the price they needed to pay. Midnight brought Onyx on to her back while he ate away at the light elemental crystal and Remey took the spot next to Alice. After Walker felt for the flow of the water by sensing the mana around him they turned and pushed forwards.

There were ice paths being frozen in the ground by Walker so that they could walk unimpeded. He was pushing on with a speed that they had not carried for some time and it was clear that they were struggling. Alice was stumbling but at every step Remey was there. "I don't like the sound of them. Keep pushing." Gil was taking up the rear and could hear a soft rumbling behind them. The sound of cracking sticks and sloshing mud reached everyone's ears as well.

"Just keep going and I will buff us." Walker was straining himself by constantly creating a solid footing using ice. The water elemental mana being around was useful and made things easier but it was still a lot of his own mana being used. The multi buff skill on top of that was a heavy strain but sped them up a lot more.

Clashing vines and water became louder around them. Walker dared not turn and see what kind of monster they had awakened to pursue them. "Run!" Gil's warning pushed them all in to a sprint. They matched Alice's pace so that they would not leave her behind. The sounds grew even more intimidating as they broke through the dead trees and swampy ground to reveal sandy wet ground and overgrown sea grass with frozen seafoam around them. The beach had been so close without their knowledge but they were not stopping yet.

"Go right to the water! The things that live in the swamp lands don't go in to salt water oceans!" This was one thing Su had read and committed to memory just in case. It more than paid off as they reached the water's edge and turned to see what had been following them.

Chapter 1000 Wow Just Wow!

The party turned and backed in to the surf slightly while looking at the large creature rising from the swamplands to glare at them with beady red eyes. Hidden in a tangle of vines small scaly fingers with webbing in between held a rotting pointed stick. A sharp spiky tail waved side to side before the creature retreated back with a his and a grumble.

"Are lizardmen supposed to be that big?" There was a shiver in Gil's voice as he hoped that this was the end. But as he looked harder he saw there were easily ten or fifteen more of the monsters roaming around on the edge of the swamp lands.

"Su, that was a good call coming toward the saltwater. They are lizardmen that are used to fresh water. Well, rotting water. The salt must be painful on their skin so they won't even come over here where the ocean spray might get them." This was the simple conclusion for Walker to make while he helped Alice stand straight.

Alice had run for her life. This was the scariest thing she had ever experienced and she had no idea how they had survived it. Not only had she managed to use a skill that she was not able to fully master, but she had used the skill chorus of light with Onyx on top of it. There were so many things that could have gone wrong that she firmly believed that someone in the party had a hidden luck skill of some sort.

"Just take your time and breathe slowly. It will be fine. We are safe for now." Remey said this as calmly as possible even though she was dying to take deep breaths herself. She had gotten used to controlling

herself when her younger siblings had thrown tantrums then couldn't catch their breath. Now was the same result but a different situation, yet, she still knew how useful a calm voice could be.

"We are staying close to the water the rest of the way. As long as we walk that way we should leave the rest of the swamp lands behind us and get to the port town... huh, I never knew the beaches were so rocky." Walker had come to the beach for the first time. He was sure that he had been told about the perfectly clear sands that would soften each step. But from what she could see he would be stepping on and over rocks constantly.

"Crabs." Alice shook her head while leaning a little more on Walker and pointing to one of the rocks.

"Is it...It is! These are crabs? Rock crabs? I didn't know they would be in their breeding season. There are so many!" There were some stories about the massive number of rock crabs that could be hunted during this time of year. Walker had totally overlooked that the timing lined up just right for them to see it while also leaving to the port towns to assist them. "Midnight, they are edible raw. That means you can eat as many as you want. Just remember to avoid the edge of the swamps until we are more north. I don't trust those lizardmen."

"Just because we can't see them doesn't mean they gave up. I have a pretty good feeling they are waiting ahead of us or they are blending in and waiting." This hunting prey and hiding to ambush them was what Gil had a lot of experience in. He was not going to let anyone he saw fall for a trap such as this.

Midnight carried Onyx on her back while he consumed the light elemental crystal Walker had given him. She snapped her jaws over the smaller crabs and they were eaten in a blink of an eye. As much as Walker had thought her dragonkin form was cute, he knew that the real Midnight who was always eager for food and to nap in a warm place was the true meaning of cute.

"I will keep an eye on the waters. I don't trust that we can't tell what is going on under them. If there is a swarm of kraken how will we even know?" Remey had some faith that Walker would be able to sense it coming. However, she had not realized just how vast the ocean really was. Part of her was whispering not to even risk going there.

"We should. I don't see any birds floating offshore or any ripples of fish or other monsters." Remey had a feeling that the crabs may not be there for breeding season and instead there so that they could escape the baby krakens.

"Why do we have to keep planting red flags like that in life. I just messed up in the swamps and attracted the very monsters that could have ended out adventurers forever and you-" Gil was cut off by a larger wave breaking on the shore. The entire party looked over at it to see pieces of wood being washed up.

"That might be a part of a ship." Walker wanted to investigate but they felt the air get denser and pressure descend on them. It was the same pressure that came with the royal and elder dragons. It was the sign of a powerful creature coming near.

"That is what turned the ship in to broken planks." Remey pointed a shaky finger at the massive tentacle that had extended out of the water and seemingly grasped at something else floating in the water.

I think the mother is larger than a whale. Much much MUCH larger than a whale!" Out of all of them, it was Onyx that was freaking out about this. He had imagined that the kraken mother would be smaller than what he saw. His lack of knowledge of the world came crashing on him. He had no idea how they would be fighting this even with a few dragons in tow.