

RAISING A FEW WIVES IN A BEAST APOCALYPSE

Chapter 21 Hope

Around twelve midnight....

The door to the principal's office was quietly opened and a shadow hurried out from the inside. The shadow slowly made it's way towards the teacher's lounge, and slowly opened the door and got went inside without even looking inside the room. Then faced the door to quietly close it.

When the shadow turned around it was startled. Everyone in the room was up and looking at the shadow from a distance. Then the lights were turned on, now everything could be seen clearly since only the moonlight was the source of light before which didn't offer much in visibility. The shadow turned out to be the female student from Mr Swindon's group.

"Care to tell us what you're doing here I'm the middle of the night?". Muku spoke with a curious expression. Well there was no way a little girl who hadn't even killed a single beast could be after their lives so he really was curious. And he hadn't been able to sleep after the air in the room changed when he made his comment about the girls. And it seemed they were also still awake, so there wasn't any anger from anyone about being woken up.

"I..uh..". The girl softly spoke, clearly nervous, she was so nervous she even forgot what she wanted to say.

"Do we look that scary to you little girl?. Why don't you breathe in to calm down for a bit then speak properly". Emily spoke seeing the "little girl" getting so nervous she was about to faint. As for why she would call someone who looked around the same age as her as little girl, only she knew.

"Uh, right, sorry. I.... Please take me with you when you leave tomorrow, I'll even carry all your luggage or you!". The girl said out loud after calming down a bit. Of course it was only loud enough to be heard in the room.

"What?!, what do you mean when we leave?, why would we leave, the school grounds is beast free...did you overhear something?". Muku was surprised by what she said, wondering how she found out, trying to cover it up then coming out and admitting it seeing how she looked certain that they were leaving.

"I- no, I didn't overhear anything, but your I guessed it from your behaviour and body language, you all don't seem to want to get overly familiar with the rest of us, like how one would do with people they don't plan on interacting for long.... And...". The girl gave her reasoning and was about to say more when she was interrupted.

"Okay stop, I get it. What a monster level observation ability. And as a sign of respect to that, I'll come clean to you. Yes, we really are leaving, and not taking any of you. And as for carrying out supplies..Jade will do it. Why would we want a person who doesn't want to kill to get stronger. Wouldn't you just be a bother then?. Muku said to the girl, when he mentioned Jade carrying their supplies she protested but he ignored her.

"No please sir, I'm willing to do anything you ask of me. I'm also willing to kill. After thinking about it more and seeing what you all are capable of I've realised that there's no

other option but to kill and get stronger. I also realised that none of the others in my group think so, so you're my only hope, I'll even be your sla..". The girl was close to tears as she begged. Muku had to interrupt her again from what she was about to say.

"Stop, so not only are you observant, you're a critical thinker too, impressive. But what did you want to say about being my slave, do I look like that kind of evil person who would go after little girls to you... You do think that you brat!. I will tell you now, I have not touched any of the girls here in an inappropriate way so stop giving me that look!." When he was speaking and asked her the question about what kind of person he was, he only said it on a whim but he didn't realise the little brat would give him a look that suggested that she really thought he was a sex fiend preying on little girls. This of course pissed Muku off.

"O-oh, sorry for assuming wrongly sir". Seeing how he was genuinely angry, the girl realised she and her group had made the wrong assumption about the relationship this Mr Chisen had with his students. And so she quickly apologised.

"Fuck!, you're even admitting it!?. Hmph!, if there was a chance of us taking you with us before then there now isn't, why would I go around with a person who thinks of me as a shady character, look at me, what part of me looks shady?!" Muku spoke again still angry. Though when he asked what part of him looked shady, he had forgotten that he was a teacher wearing a student's uniform so he kinda did look shady at the moment.

The girls who got this point couldn't help but giggle behind him. On the other hand, the girl, hearing that he won't be taking her with them, felt like she was plunged into hell. She knew that without them she is as good as dead with her spineless group when the dogs return or some other beast showed up. The tears she was holding back couldn't be held back anymore. They started flowing out of her purple eyes uncontrollably. She didn't know what else to say, so only silently cried.

This sight of course made all the girls in Muku's group feel sad for her to the point that even they were tearing up. Hell even Muku was holding back some tears.

"C-can't we just take her with us?, she's even willing to kill some beasts to get stronger so she won't be a burden for long. It only takes ten unranked beasts after all". Surprisingly it was Chloe who spoke up first this time.

"Yeah, what kind of man abandons a maiden in need?". Jade added looking at Muku with disdain after wiping away her tears that were threatening to fall. Emily and Layla just looked at him with puppy dog eyes expressing their position I'm also supporting the girl.

"Sigh, fine, if that's what you all want, who am I to disagree." Muku said, seemingly still a bit unwilling.

"Anyway, what's your name girl?. We're going to work together from now on so we have to know at least that right?.". Muku asked the girl.

"It-it's Hope sir". The girl said after stuttering a bit. Instead of stopping crying, she cried even more. This time though they were tears of joy.

"Sheesh, what a cry baby. Anyway get your emotions under control and go back and sleep. We don't want the others to suspect anything if you stay here after all. We will call you in the morning and discuss our plan then". Muku said to the girl. If one took a closer look at his face, they would realise he was actually trying to hold back a smile.

"Y-yes sir, I won't disturb you anymore. See you all tomorrow and have a good night". The girl quickly responded before leaving the room and heading off to sleep.

"You too, get some sleep, growing kids shouldn't stay up so late.". Muku said to the girls. They all narrowed their eyes at being called "kids" but didn't say anything and went of to sleep. The next day was likely going to be busy one after all.

{Phew, they agreed to let her tag along. As expected of me, such a great actor}. Muku thought to himself as he tried to sleep on his sofa.

That's right, Muku had long wanted the girl to tag along when she said she was willing to get stronger. Not to mention he was a virgin weak to requests from girls anyway, and Hope happened to be a pretty little girl with a bright future. But he knew he couldn't just come out and say it or the girls would call him a pervert or be angry that he didn't consult them. So he left it up to Hope to convince them by showing her hopeless situation, and lucky enough she didn't disappoint.

Was he being manipulative?. Who cares as long as everyone is happy.

Chapter 22 Departure and chatty Chloe?

The next morning....

"Oh, so you want to check out the area around the school and it will take up most of the day so want this little girl Hope to carry your supplies for you since the rest of you will be fighting?". Mr Swindon asked for confirmation while looking at Muku.

"Yes". Muku only said one word, clearly not willing to talk too much.

"O-oh, If that's your choice, go ahead". Mr Swindon replied with a smile, clearly happy that it wasn't him that was chosen for such a dangerous task. Even the others from his group were showing relieved expressions. They all still hadn't realised their precarious situation after all. And for some reason they really assumed Muku's group was willing to support them while they laze around for no reason. They were about as delusional as one could be in that moment.

Hope looked at her group with teary eyes because of their parting. After all they had created some form of bond after surviving the beast attack together. But they, thinking that she wanted them to say something to stop her from going onto such a task all looked away in embarrassment.

Seeing this Muku and his group could barely hold back their laughter. Hope though couldn't help but be saddened by their reaction after realising it, the little uncertainty she had about leaving them quickly shattered. She was now completely sure that she had made the right decision. And so, she carried one bag on her back containing some canned food while holding two others with some water and such. Though Jade, Layla's and Chloe were also carrying one bag on their backs.

"Once a person becomes an Evolver they need to consume a lot more food" Muku said without being asked.

He had noticed that Mr Swindon's group were wondering why they would need so many supplies for just a day long outing. And like the idiots they were they easily believed him,

well not like they could do anything to stop him from taking as much as he wanted anyway.

"Okay, now we're off. See you later Mr Swindon and group." Muku said as he and his group that now had an extra member left. Mr Swindon and his group happily waved him off.

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Minutes later, just outside the school gate....

"Hmm, so this is where they came out from huh, it looks quite mystical when you're so close to it. Not to mention the mana. It would have been a great place to practice your skills and quickly recover your mana if you there wasn't a chance of a beast coming out suddenly and killing you off." Muku said while looking at the portal. I was circular, green in color, with a radius of about a metre and a half. Mana slowly sleeping out of it.

"Hmm, it seems to be slowly changing colour though". Layla who was taking an ever closer look at it than the rest said. And as she said, its outer perimeter were really turning sky blue.

"Oh hey, you're right...and am I the only one who feels like not being around when it does turn blue?". Jade said as she also looked at it closely.

"Is that so, well lets get out here then". Muku said and he and his group quickly left. He and the other girls had long noticed that Jade had better senses than all of them so they tended to go by what she said. If course nobody admitted this to her or she would have gotten cocky and wouldn't let them hear the end of it. Later on in the future they found out that they had made the right decision to leave the school when they did because when a green portal completely turns blue, Rank Two beasts start coming out. And they were all Rank Ones without any beasts to kill to gain strength close by, so they would have been slaughtered without resistance like how an unranked beast can't resist a Rank One.

"Anyway, Hope give us our bags now" Muku suddenly said as they walked in the direction of the city. The school was a few kilometres in outskirts of it.

"Wh-what?, don't worry sir I can carry them, you will need to fight beasts after all. This is my job". Hope said while grabbing the bags in her hands tightly while looking at Muku with fear. She was thinking he had changed his mind and was going to leave her after all.

"Little girl, what are you thinking about?. I already promised you that we will take you with us and get you stronger right?. So why would I randomly ditch you now. Anyway, everyone was supposed to carry a bag each, I just didn't want it to be so obvious that you weren't really our porter. Besides, you're an unranked little girl with no mana meaning after a while the load will be too much for you which will slow the rest of the group down." Muku flicked her forehead as he spoke warranting a "yelp" from her and he quickly snatched the bags she was holding, giving Emily hers and carrying his.

'Bu...". Hope wanted to say something but was interrupted.

"Just give up, once our teacher decides on something there's no changing his mind." Emily was the one who interrupted her and said with a smile on her face.

"I-if you say so". Hope could only relent seeing how Muku was already walking forward ignoring her and the rest of the girls didn't seem to have a problem with what he was doing either. She was speechless but at the same time a warm feeling went through her heart, she was happy to have joined such a nice group.

"Focus, who knows if we will suddenly be attacked out here. You must always be ready to react"

As Hope was walking absent mindedly, Chloe tapped her shoulder and gave her some advice with a friendly smile on her face. The reason Chloe did this was because this timid little underclassmen reminded her of herself.

"Y-yeah, thank you senior" Hope said timidly.

"No problem, oh and I'm Chloe, senior year...you should be Hope if I remember correctly right?". Chloe continued to make conversation with her. Which suprised the rest. But realising that the two seemed to have somewhat similar personalities, they understood.

"Yeah, I'm Hope, third year. Nice to meet you senior". Hope was a lot less nervous seeing that the group didn't see her as a outsider.

"Likewise, oh and I'm sure you already know of our teacher Sir Muku....but I guess yiu know him as Sir Chisen. He prefers his students call him by his name though, his reason was that calling him by surname made him feel old. That blonde haired girl is Emily, the green haired one is Jade and the brunette is Layla, they are all nice people. I'm sure we will all get along." Chloe continued the introductions, hearing their names, Emily smiled at Hope in acknowledgement, Layla nodded while Jade made a v sign with a grin on her

face. Teacher Muku had only waved back without looking behind him and kept on walking forward.

"Oh ho, who knew our little Chloe would be such a chatterbox?" Jade teased, to which Chloe's face reddened in embarrassment.

"I hadn't gotten used to you all yet okay". Chloe defended herself, not wanting to be embarrassed in front of her junior.

And like that their banter continued as they walked forward. This made Hope feel a lot more welcomed into the group and she also got to understand them all a bit more. Of course other than Hope, the rest were still ready to take action at an moment if an attack happened.

As for why they were walking you might ask?. If a Rank One beast suddenly attacked you, would you rather be in a car constrained or outside?. Not to mention that a car's noise as you drove would basically be asking for trouble. Besides, other than Hope, the rest of them were a lot stronger than normal people with a lot more stamina too, they might not be as strong as Jade or Muku but they weren't weak either.

Chapter 23 Can this be eaten?

Maz city was a midsized city surrounded by mountains on all side, meaning the roads all went through mountains to get to it. Because if that the city looked like it was built in a giant not too deep hole like area. So one could basically overlook most of it from the mountain road.

Which is what Muku and his group were doing in that moment. Though inside of feeling awed by it like from the past, they felt their hearts tighten. Smoke could be seen slithering into the sky from all over the city, suggesting large fires in those areas. Cries of humans could be vaguely heard from time to time with growls of beasts that sounded different from the killer dogs.

They couldn't help but gulp down some saliva. After all, their little school already had four Rank One beasts not to mention their monstrous boss. From this anyone can deduce that the city was likely going to be filled with Rank Ones, if nothing of a higher Rank showed up.

Emily, Jade and Hope had their expressions darken. They all had families in the city after all. So seeing it's state they couldn't help but be worried. Before, they managed to keep calm and not think about it because, they themselves weren't safe and they also hoped that the situation wouldn't be as bad as the school.

The city had police officers who had weapons after all. But looking at the scene in front of them, they new that the police officers has probably made little to no impact in the situation. What they didn't know was that, guns, tanks, fighter jets, nuclear weapons or anything of that nature that didn't require too much human effort to kill no longer worked. So the cops were just as screwed as them, even the government was screwed. Hell it was the most screwed with their potbellies and zero stamina to even run.

(A/N : Nothing personal, just fiction)

"Okay, lets go...Hope, stay close to Chloe from now on. And Chloe keep her safe". Muku gave his order after calming down his nerves. Which he had to do, this place was a lot different from the school where there was one kind of beast with the same moves after.

"Yes sir" ×2 both girls replied.

"Good, Jade, beside me. Layla, back us up. Emily you're the rear guard. Oh and Chloe, be mindful of the sides. Our target here is a building that we can use as a temporary base, has to have a back exit and close to a food source if possible. Muku gave out the rest of his orders.

"Yes" ×5. All the girls called out, agreeing with the plan and taking their positions. Muku and Jade in the front, Layla supporting them from behind, Chloe monitoring their sides along with taking care of Hope who has also been handed back Muku and Jade's bags since they moved a lot when fighting unlike the mages of their group. Muku was also a mage, but he was also a warrior type like Jade, that's what a Warlock was after all. And was Emily monitoring the back.

....

"Hiss"

A few minutes after they started walking into the city, though they were relatively still in the outskirts. They had their first encounter.

"Well damn!, a Rank one snake as a welcome gift, what a generous city. Jade, as a cat, I'm sure you want this one right?" Muku spoke in a sarcastic tone at how their first beast being a low Rank One beast. He didn't forget to taunt Jade too, at this point it was basically part of his nature even. And she did the same so it was fine....at least that's how he justified it I'm his head.

(A/N : So, it seems there was no need to say Low "stage" Rank One or mid stage Rank One and so on. I can just say Low Rank One, Mid Rank One, and so on. Which I will.)

"Tsk, fine". Jade wanted to have a battle of words with him but knew it wasn't the time, and she couldn't deny that she felt an itch to kill the snake for some reason. Definitely not because she was a cat girl, at least that's what she was telling herself. And so, she turned cat and attacked. Seeing her transform Hope's eyes widened and her jaw almost dropped to the ground.

Woosh! Slash

"Well, what strong defense, and this is only a Low Rank One?". Jade said as she back away at the snake she had attacked with her claws but only managed to leave shallow wounds on its scaly skin.

HISS!

The snake was angered, this was the first time its food had dared to fight back against it after all. It slithered its Seven long as one metre thick glistening body forward, wanting to swallow Jade whole. It kinda looked like an oversized black python, even has a mouth full of razor sharp teeth without the two fangs venomous snakes were known for. So it was safe to say it wasn't venomous, which didn't make it any less dangerous though.

"You dare get angry at me you giant worm!?, hmph!"...Ahh!". Jade used her stun attack. She knew it would work because after the fight with the dog boss she realised that it only worked up to one stage above her. Meaning upto, Mid Rank One beasts for now since she was a Low Rank One.

And like she expected, the snake was stopped in it's path, it's large mouth wide open. Her eyes narrowed and she ran forward getting to finish the fight.

"Don't you dare get unnecessarily dirty you brat!" Muku shouted seeing her actions. He could tell she wanted to jam her hand into its mouth to kill it.

"Hmph". Jade disgruntled that he was taking the fun out of it, but she did as instructed.

She jumped into the air, landed on the giant python's head and jammed her claws into its eyes. The claws she could now extend up to seven inches dug deep into the python's head, killing it on the spot. All this was done in two seconds, while her stun effect only worked for about three to five seconds on Rank Ones.

[95 kills left...]

"Oh, it seems this one was a bit strong for Low Rank Ones, I got two kill points from it". Jade said as he tried to shake off the blood off her claws.

"Is that so, then maybe it won't take us as long as we thought to get to Rank Two if even a Low Rank One in the city pays so well". Muku replied her with a pondering expression. He was kind of happy actually, because if they had to kill a hundred Rank Ones to rank up then it would have taken them who knows how long for all of them to rank up. Emily, Layla and Chloe also smiled upon hearing what Jade said.

Hope on the other hand, didn't know how to react seeing how they were so nonchalant about facing such a monster and killing it. She was already shaking in her boots after all.

"Don't worry, you'll get used to it soon enough". Chloe tapped her shoulder and said with a smile on her face.

"Y-yeah" Hope replied, not knowing if she really wanted to get used to killing or not.

"Hey, can this be eaten?". Jade said while poking the dead python with obvious desire to eat in her eyes.

"What the hell, of course it can't. It's a freaking snake!" Muku wanted to shout at her for even suggesting it, but remembering where they were, he didn't shout and only spoke, getting a bit loud at the end.

"But some do eat snakes though". Jade retorted not wanting to give up.

"Yeah, but never oversized alien snakes though!... You know what, this isn't the time, lets get out of here before that thing's blood draws us some trouble". Muku's urge to spank her returned with a vengeance, but he held himself back and ordered for everyone to continue their journey.

"Sigh". Jade sighed as she walked away from the snake corpse, looking at it from time to time. Inside she vowed she'd find a way to taste its meat, or at least the meat of its brethren.

Chapter 24 Baneful Healer

"Hey I got an idea, why not go to a mall, there should be beasts, clothes, food and basically anything else we'd need. I'm sure in a few minutes, Hope would be Rank One too." Emily suggested as they moved away from the giant python's corpse.

"You do know there's a chance we'd get killed there right?. If that snake is any indication, I'm sure the beasts here are stronger than the dogs, not to mention even more in number....see look at that, there comes more now". Layla was in the middle of explaining why Emily's name idea wasn't too good for the current them. When fifty or so beasts that looked like large spiders as big as normal sized dogs came speedily crawling at them.

(A/N : No I don't have a thing for dogs, just felt it would make me sense than to say as big as goats or something like that)

"Ew, just had to be spiders huh. But hey, at least Hope can get to Rank One sooner now". Jade said with slightly disgusted look as she looked at the incoming spiders. Muku was looking at her intensely for a while until she had to ask....

"What?, you fell for my feminine charms already sir, how scandalous". She said faking some embarrassment while covering her mouth with her hand. The other girls other than Hope who had frozen as soon as she saw the spiders, flinched and intensely looked at Muku awaiting his reply.

'As if, I'm just wondering why you don't look at all scared like girls should, hell other than Hope who looks like she might pee herself or faint, none of you look that bothered by the insects, like what the hell!?' Muku finally asked, not even caring about what she was implying. This of course made the other girls feel relieved for certain reasons.

"Hmph, do you think we're those cliché girls from anime or something like that?, you do remember that we have basically been bathing in blood the last few days. Not to mention we even tossed out the principal's... You know what I mean. So better stop expecting some cliché stuff from us. Jade was a bit pissed how he clearly wasn't taking her seriously but still explained as the other girls agreed.

"If you say so...now time for some action". Muku said, the spiders where now only a few metres away.

"This one seems like an Emily thing, I'll go guard the back". With that statement Jade switched places with Emily who already had glowing eyes at this point. Her berserk state was again coming out to play.

"Don't kill them all please, leave ten for Hope". Muku said looking at Emily with a wily smile. It seemed it will take quite a while for her to completely vent and get rid of her berserk state.

"Sure...flame burst!"

Boom! Boom!....

Emilia replied to him as she got into action killing the spiders off. Even though she didn't need to say her skill name when she used it, she seemed to like screaming it out though. Which Muku found kinda cute if not for her crazed facial expression.

....

A few minutes later...

Only ten spiders were left and even that was because Layla saved them with her ice magic. Now Emily was standing at the side with a satisfied expression on her face. Everyone else looking at her like she was a weirdo, which honestly, she was.

"Okay little Hope, your time to shine is now. Kill these and you'd have theoretically caught up to the rest of us." Muku said looking at Hope who had recovered some after seeing the spiders being killed off so easily by just one person.

"R-right". Hope replied as she put the bags she was holding down and grabbed the sword Muku was holding out to her. She struggled to raise it up high since it was a bit too heavy for her unranked body.

She slowly walked to the closest spider whose legs, like the rest, had been cut off by Layla's ice attacks. She was nervous and her legs shaking her bit but she had steeled her nerves.

"Haah!". Stab!

She cutely screamed, lifted the sword and stabbed the spiders head, though she had closed her eyes at the last moment. The spider's leg stumps kicked around for a bit before it died.

[9 more kills left....]

Just like Chloe had told her, she heard a voice in her head followed by a numbness throughout her whole body.

When she opened her eyes and saw the sword digging deep into the spider's head. With some dark green blood coming out of the wound, she almost vomited on the spot, but managed to hold herself back. After collecting herself for a bit she moved on to the next. The others didn't say anything but just silently supported her. And like that Hope continued killing them.....

[Kill count met. Evolution Commencing. Initializing Specialisation]

With that statement, Hope like those before her, froze in place. Followed by the tingling feeling throughout her whole body, was especially her lower abdomen...no, not because she was pregnant..

[Mana core formation complete. Unusually High affinity for Healing and poison elements. Requirements for Pseudo-Legendary Specialisation met. Pseudo-Legendary Class, Baneful Healer awakening...]

"Step back from her!". Jade suddenly said to everyone.

Everyone quickly stepped back. They trusted her senses after all.

"Care to tell us why she stepped back?" Muku asked.

"I'm not sure, but I feel that the air around her isn't safe right now". Jade replied, also not sure why she felt danger just then.

"Oh okay,". Muku didn't ask more since Jade would have told them if there was anything else already.

(A/N : Please don't roll your eyes at me for giving all of them powerful classes okay. Let me explain, the truth is....I'm just extremely biased, sorry. But it will all make sense eventually so don't worry ^__^)

After a few moments, Hope could control herself a bit more and the air around her that had become poisonous was purified. She opened her eyes and looked at everyone around her with a grateful smile on her face. She knew that without them, she might have died in that utility room too scared to get out, let alone evolve to Rank One.

"Well, what's your class?. Don't keep us in suspense". Muku asked, his eyes glowing with curiosity.

"Y-yes". Hope was a bit disoriented by his enthusiasm so stuttered a bit.

"M-my class is Baneful Healer, I can use both poisonous and healing magic. I can kill Low Rank Ones if they are exposed to the poison for half a minute. Though for now I can only make Mid Rank Ones and above become weaker for five seconds or less with my poison. I can easily kill unranked ones though. As for my healing magic, it only works on minor injuries for now. Well at least that's what the information in my head is saying." Hope told them.

"Baneful Healer, sounds so cool, better yet, we now have a healer in our group. Though it sucks how I'm the only strictly warrior class...". Jade spoke in happiness before quickly becoming depressed upon realising that she was another mage type class.

"Stop pouting, like you would have liked being a mage who stood at the back. And if she had become a front liner you would have likely complained about her stealing some of your fun anyway.". Muku said to Jade rolling his eyes.

"Oh, you're right. It's better like this after all". Jade became happy again. And from then on, like the rest, Hope found out how easy she was to please.

"Congratulations Hope". Chloe said to Hope with a smile on her face, ignoring the dramatic Jade on the side. Everyone else congratulated Hope as well.

"Now you must get stronger, I have a feeling that you will be an irreplaceable part of the team in the future" Muku said to Hope with an approving smile.

"Yes sir, I'll do my best from now on". Hope was really happy, that was actually the first time he smiled at her after all.

"It's getting late, lets look for a temporary building to rest, we'll continue the journey tomorrow. Also we have to make a plan instead of randomly wondering around."

"Yes sir!". The girls replied to him as they all walked forward, looking for a place to rest. This time they were a bit more relaxed since there was no longer anyone who was completely defenceless.

Chapter 25 Backgrounds

In some random house close to the outskirts of Maz city....

"Hey, do we really have to stay in the dark?" Jade asked in a disgruntled voice.

"Yes, unlike the school, most places here are dark, if we turn on the lights now. That's basically asking for trouble...and can't you just turn your eyes into cat form and be able to see or something like that?. Muku replied her.

"Hmm, good idea....nope I can't. My control over my beast form isn't anywhere close to being enough right now it seems. Sigh, this sucks, did we really have to leave the school, we could have totally kept it as out base or something like that". Jade was excited for a second by the prospect before she felt down again, even missing the school now.

"Can you shut up for a second, we got an important discussion to do. And not like anyone forced you to come". Layla finally chimed in, she felt that Jade was being too childish when she clearly knew what situation they were in.

"Hmph, fine". Of course Jade didn't like being rebuked but she managed to control herself.

"Now, what's our game plan here?...we left the school because it was too close to that portal thingy but we never came up with a target to work towards did we". Muku asked the girls. He of course could easily think of a few things to do, but he wanted to hear their opinions since they'd be doing it together.

"Umm, why don't we look for our families?". Hope suggested, she had gotten a lot more comfortable with the rest now. As soon as she spoke though, everyone went silent, making her feel nervous. The only light in the room was from the moonlight outside so their facial expressions couldn't clearly be seen by the others.

Though if they could see each other, they would have noticed that Emily and Jade now wore worried expressions on their faces. Layla's expression didn't change much. Chloe's eyes flickered a bit, the light in them dimmed for a bit before going back to normal. As for Muku, he looked like he was stuck in thought for a bit.

"I-im sorry, I shouldn't have said anything". Hope quickly apologised, thinking she had said something wrong"

"No, it fine Hope, you haven't said anything wrong, I guess your words affected everyone so much they couldn't speak. I for one also have a family here and got sad thinking about them. A mother, father and little sister. We live on the other side of the city so if we were to look for our families, then we'll go to mine last so... anyway you said nothing wrong". Emily was the first to speak up in the relative darkness they were in.

"I also have a family here, two older brothers and a mother. We live close to the city centre, my mother works for some government big-wig so we live in the cottage beside her mansion. Though my brothers both left for another city. So there's only my mother here. And yeah, you didn't say anything wrong Hope, no need to feel sad" Jade said.

"My father is abroad, I only see him once every few months. We almost never talk, the only way I know that he's alive all those months is because of the money he sends me

every month. So there's no need to go to my house since I leave alone. It's a mansion at the centre of the city. Chloe said with an uncharacteristically neutral voice.

"I have a foster mother, we basically don't interact. I do my stuff and she does hers, she only adopted me for the money she receives from the agency. Though at least she doesn't abuse me, her house is close to here, I don't mind not going to check though. We can go to Jade's place or something." Layla said in her usual neutral tone. It was clear that she really didn't think much of her foster mother.

"O-okay, my house is a few kilometres away from here. I only have my two parents." Hope said at the end realising that none of them were angered by her words.

"It's decided then!. We'll go to Hope's house first. Then Layla, I don't care if she doesn't care because I do. Then Jade's place, then Emily and come back to Chloe's house which we can use as a temporary base if it's safe enough. Of course we will kill any Rank One beast we find during the journey and get as strong as we can, I feel there's a storm coming. And we have to be strong enough to repel it". Muku quickly made a game plan.

"Good plan sir, but, aren't you going to tell us about your family?". Emily asked, she was likely the one most interested in learning more about him among the girls after all. Though the other girls weren't too far behind her. In fact, as she asked they all looked in Muku's direct with burning eyes full of desire for knowledge. Except for Hope though, she was only just curious...for now.

"Oh that, there's nothing to say, I never knew them. I grew up in an orphanage, probably wouldn't have even been able to finish school if I didn't get some scholarships till I finished. Well anyway get some rest, not like there's anything to do now anyway...we should look for some phones coz this sucks!". Muku spoke about his life so nonchalantly that it seemed like he was talking about someone else.

Then went to the room he had chosen for himself to sleep. He didn't have first watch for the night. They were lucky to find this house that likely didn't have people when the apocalypse began because there were no bloodstains anywhere in or outside of it.

Seeing him walk away, his back looking so lonely in the semi darkness. The girls, Hope included, couldn't help but feel their hearts tighten and their throats feel a bit sore. While Hope only felt sad for him as one of her saviours, the other girls who had known him for close to a year felt something even beyond sadness. They all held some special feelings for him after all. One can say they had teen crushes but only they knew how deep what they felt was.

"I'll take first watch". Jade said in a croaky voice, she was trying to hold herself from crying after all.

"Okay". Emily, Layla and Chloe replied to her, their voices sounding somewhat like hers.

"O-okay". Hope was a bit embarrassed after being so late to respond. She was confused as to why Jade's voice sounded like that so she couldn't react in time.

"I'll join Jade, staying up in the dark alone would be quite scary after all". Emily said.

The house had two bedrooms, one kitchen and one lounge. Muku took one bedroom, three girls would take one room and the other two would go sleep.

Around midnight, Muku's turn came, and his partner was Layla, even though he had told her he'd be fine alone. She, under the envious gazes of Emily and Jade refused to relent until Muku could only give up.

"So, you and your foster mother, why don't you get along?". Seeing how they had been sitting in the darkness for a while the situation getting awkward, he had to break the ice.

"It was her decision". Layla answered after staying quiet for a bit.

"Why do you say that?" Muku pushed for more information, the silence from before was just too loud for him after all.

"When she adopted me, I was excited until she said "girl, I'm not looking for a daughter, I just want an easy pay day. So lets make a deal, you stay here with me, I get the money, and you get to live a life better than what you'd live at the orphanage. What do you say?"..... After that, I agreed to her proposal but we have been strangers living under one roof ever since. I'm not complaining though, she kept her promise after all". Layla explained, her voice still as calm and neutral as ever.

"Oh, is that so". Muku didn't know what to say to that.

"Now you know why I don't mind not going to the house". Layla added.

"That doesn't matter, she still provided you with a decent lifestyle after all". Muku said.

"Suit yourself then, and how about you?". Layla gave in to his idea of going to her house then asked a question of her own.

"Me what?" Muku asked, confused.

"Tell me about your life". Layla elaborated what she meant.

"Oh, there's really nothing to it really, just an orphaned child genius who chose to be a teacher". Muku said, glossing over the details.

"Okay". Maybe realising that he wouldn't say much, Layla took him at his words. Though she felt that he was being unfair in wanting to know about her but keeping his information to himself. But being a person if few words anyway, she kept quiet.

The silence prevailed for a few hours from then. This time Muku hadn't tried to make conversation again, he didn't know what to talk about with a teen girl after all. So until Chloe and Hope came to replace them, they stayed like that.

Chapter 26 Jealousy and Hypocrisy

The next morning....

"So, who wants these ones?". Muku asked looking at the two beasts in front of them. They had already eaten breakfast and left the house, continuing their journey toward Hope's place. The two beasts he was talking about were giant lizards about the size of a cow. They had green scales covering their whole bodies, large claws on their legs and bloodthirsty yellow eyes.

"Sir, aren't you getting a little too lazy". Emily couldn't help but ask.

"What are you talking about, I'm only giving you all a chance to catch up". Muku replied with a nonchalant expression.

"But aren't we all still Low Rank Ones?". Emily asked, confused. Even the other girls were wondering what he was talking about.

"Tsk, can't you just let your teacher be lazy for one morning you brats!. I'll kill one then, while Chloe and Hope kill the other". Muku rolled his eyes as he spoke.

Before anyone could say anything, he propelled himself forward with his telekinesis. When he got in front of the beast and it wanted to slash at it's head with his sword. It tried to move out of the way but one of its front legs wouldn't move. Before it figured out what was happening, its head was split in two.

[93 kills left....]

It gave him two kills points despite being a Low Rank One. As for why its leg couldn't move, Muku had been practicing. And his telekinesis could now barely deserve the name. Though it was still nothing impressive. After killing it, he ran back to the team. This all happened in less than five seconds. Stunning not only the girls but the other lizard too.

"What are you zoning out for Chloe and Hope?. Attack it before it chooses to run away...oh wait, seems there's no need to worry". Muku was afraid the other lizard would run after seeing its companion so easily killed, but whether luckily or not. It turned berserk instead and charged forward, its eyes having turned red. It was even giving off a Mid Rank One aura now.

Crack! Crack!

Chloe quickly reacted seeing it rush forward and sent out blue lightning bolts from both her hands. Her power needed to be built up to increase in lethality so her sudden attack only managed to slow down the berserk lizard.

"Hope!". She called out to her partner in the fight.

Hearing her name, Hope jumped into action, green mist came out of her hands and went toward the lizard, covering its whole body in it. Although with the lizard's current Rank,

the poisonous mist wouldn't kill it in a short period of time, it managed to irritate its eyes until it covered them. During this time, Chloe was building up and attack.

"I wonder if this would be enough...". With that statement from Chloe.

Boom!

A loud sound was heard, dark blue lightning with half a metre radius came from the space in front of her two hands, it flew out aiming at the lizard's head.

The force from the shot even through Chloe backwards, she hadn't been expecting it since this was the first time she tried it. If Muku didn't act quick enough and grab her, she might have been the first one in their team to be thrown into a wall by her own attack.

[99 kills left....] (Hope)

[97 kills left....] (Chloe)

The lizard's upper body was erased as soon as the lightning bolt hit it. The bolt continued for a distance into the sky before disappearing.

Hope and Chloe heard the familiar voice. Though Chloe couldn't care less in that moment. Her head has blanked out, her face red as a ripe tomato. All because she was still in Muku's hands. He was even carrying her like a princess.

"Can you put her down now?". Jade said in a grumbling voice. Emily was pouting, Layla has her eyes narrowed a bit while the air around her, got a bit colder. Hope the pure child who didn't think of such things yet was confused by why something seemed wrong with everyone.

"Oh right, sorry, she just smells so nice and is so sof.... I'll shut up now". Muku suddenly felt like he'd be in danger if he continued speaking when he saw the looks the girls were giving him. So he stopped talking and put Chloe down.

"Cough...good job Chloe and Hope. Chloe what an amazing attack skill, have a name for it yet". Muku spoke up trying to lighten the mood.

"Ah, oh, I don't have a name for it... I'll tell you when I do". Chloe's brain was still scattered from being carried and his words after that so she couldn't think properly at the time.

"Oh, okay. I hope you learn how to deal with the recoil though.... Of course I don't mind catching you until you do. Anyway let's continue, that attack will likely draw in some beasts here." Muku spoke, and as he did, he felt that feeling of danger again but this time ignored it continued to say what he wanted to.

"O-okay". The still bashful Chloe replied.

"Good". Muku said.

"Pervert". Jade came close to Muku and whispered before walking forward.

"Sigh". Unlike the usual super dense protagonists, Muku wasn't. He already knew that the girls all liked him more than they should a teacher. Except for Hope of course. Hell even before the apocalypse, he already knew. He knew that Jade was just expressing her jealousy.

Back then they tried to hide it.... except for Emily who seemed incapable of it. But now they were all slowly exposing themselves. As a man, he was happy to be liked, but as a teacher and also as someone who knows how old the little girls are, he can only pretend that he doesn't know what was going on.

For now he only sees them as his precious little students or little sisters at best. But of course if another dude were to show up and try something with them, that one would likely lose a limp or two...if not their their lives.

Was he being hypocritical?, yes. But in his point of view, humans are born to be hypocrites. The most hypocritical ones are those who claim to not be hypocrites. After all, deep down, they know how hypocritical they are.

...

"Flame burst!". Boom! Boom!

As they thought, the fight from before had drawn in more beasts. Right now Emily was fighting a giant python that looked like the one Jade fought before. Jade was on the side almost drooling.

The two golden fire bombs hit the beast but its defense was strong enough for it to only get inch deep wounds with a radius of around ten centimetres. Compared to the beast's large body, the wounds were manageable.

"Do you want some help?". Jade asked.

"No, you killed your own alone, I can do the same!". Emily shouted back as she prepared her next attacks.

"Sun explosion!". Emily shouted out in her cute voice as she put her hands together. And so a big sphere of golden flames with a radius of a metre appeared in front of her. The whole area felt a bit hotter. Emily's clothes were actually getting destroyed just by the heat.

The snake felt danger and wanted to flee but its head was stuck in place unable to move. Emily was focusing on her attack so she didn't notice this weird scene, but the other girls noticed it, they all looked at Muku briefly but didn't say anything. They knew that if he

didn't do that, Emily's long to prepare attack would likely miss, and it seemed to take a lot of power like Chloe's previous attack from which she hadn't recovered yet.

BOOM!

As soon as the attack made contact with the beast. An even louder explosion sounded. The snake was burnt to a crisp and died on the spot.

[96 kills left....]

Only Emily got the kill points, Muku technically didn't harm the snake after all.

"Well fu..! Did she feel that the noise from the previous fight wasn't enough or something!?". Muku said, feeling a headache coming. With this, they will definitely have to fight a few more times than they would have had to do if such a loud sound wasn't made.

"But you have to admit it's a cool attack though...even has a cool name too "Sun explosion". Jade chimed in.

"This brat!". Muku's developing headache progressed a few more stages.

Chapter 27 Ruined house

Around thirty minutes later....

"I knew it!". Muku shouted out as Layla was fighting a giant spider.

"Ice spikes!". She was copying Emily by shouting the names of her skills because she found that it made them easier to cast.

Psss!

(A/N: Yeah well I don't know what sound a giant spider would make when it spits out it's web okay)

The giant black spider got out of the way by jumping into the air, and spit out its web at Layla.

"Ice Shield!". A shield of ice materialised in front of her. She had realised that it's pretty easy to create new skills with her ice as long as they weren't too complicated.

Bang!

The web hit the ice and couldn't get through. Which was to be expected since the spiders web it used for capturing, so didn't have much power for direct attacks.

"Haaa!". Layla screamed and one of the ice spikes below the spider grew in size, consuming those around it. It turned into a giant spear that point to the sky. The spider that hadn't jumped out of the way but just up was impaled as soon as it came down. This was a new skill Layla had just come up with and it didn't have a name. It didn't even take as much mana as Emily and Chloe's attacks.

"Ice arrows!". Layla screamed out again.

[97 kills left...]

"Sigh, everyone is learning big moves but me". Jade said with a pout.

"What are you talking about, neither I nor Hope have any big moves. And look at the trouble Emily and Chloe caused us because of the so called big moves. I'm happy that at least Layla has some restraint, then again it's to be expected from my top student." Muku said. His words made Emily and Chloe look down with embarrassment while Layla started to vaguely emit a proud aura.

"Tsk, what are you talking about, you learned that fancy new freeze skill". Jade was still not appeased.

"Well technically I'm still just learning how to properly use my telekinesis, if I can't lift things up and toss them about with it then what's the point". Muku said with a deadpan expression, he really felt what he said.

"Huh, good point, you're a bit embarrassing for a teacher aren't you". Jade was finally appeased and started making fun of Muku. He and the others only rolled their eyes at her schadenfreude.

"Anyway, lets continue...Hope how close are we now?". Muku asked Hope.

"Should be around five kilometres that way". Hope replied pointing in a certain direction.

"Okay". With that, they continued walking forward.

...

Back at the school...

"It's been a whole day and some hours, do you think they died or something?". A middle aged lady spoke looking at a middle aged man.

"Sigh, very likely, they should have just stayed here with us and waited for the army to act. But they had to be idiots and got themselves killed". Mr Swindon replied. He wasn't even a bit sad at the possibility that their saviours could be dead.

"But isn't that also a good thing for us?. This means that there's more food for us, which will last us quite a while. Giving the army enough time to regain control of the land and come save us". The other middle aged man who hadn't spoke much when Muku's group was around was now speaking with enthusiasm.

"Yeah, you're right, I wonder why I didn't think of it like that. Maybe this really is for the best". Mr Swindon was easily swayed while the middle aged lady just smiled. The young boy just remained quiet at the side.

The three continued their conversation merrily, not even considering that they might have actually been ditched.

Just outside the school gate. Beside the wall, the portal could be seen. But unlike last time, it wasn't green with a vague hint of blue at the edges. One fifth of it has turned blue. If Muku's group was close by. They could have sensed that the aura in now radiated was definitely beyond Rank One.

One thing was certain though, I'm a few days. Mr Swindon's group will meet their maker if they don't leave the school. Though even if they were warned, they likely still wouldn't leave.

At the end of the day, one reaps what they sow.

.....

Back at Muku's group's side...

"This....". Hope only managed to say that one word before she couldn't say anymore. Her eyes started teary up as she looked at one ruined little house among a few others.

"Is this your..Ow". Jade was insensitively asking the obvious when Layla pinched her back. When Jade looked at her she noticed the look in her eyes, that's when she figured out that she was being insensitive.

"Don't jump to conclusions, maybe they managed to escape or weren't even home at the time" Muku finally spoke up after a moment of silence. His words gave Hope some hope.

"Y-yeah". Jade quickly supported him, wanting to make up for her oversight from before. The other girls nodded in agreement while Chloe even put her hand on Hope's shoulder to show support.

"T-thank you everyone, maybe you're right. I won't give up hope so soon.". Hope felt gratitude that they were so considerate, but at the back of her head she was already trying to make peace with the possibility that they were gone. There were a lot of blood stains

on the street accompanying the ruins after all. And her father was on leave while her mother didn't work so chances were...

In fact everyone was clear of this but nobody voiced it out. Those with families in the city also started fearing the worst. But since it wasn't confirmed yet or at least like Hope's case, they soldiered on. It wasn't the time to be overcome by negative thoughts after all.

"Let's go find a place to rest, we will continue tomorrow, it's already getting late. And we will have to find a place to restock on our food too, soon" Muku said.

"I-I know if a small shop we can check out tomorrow. It's a small shop so unlike a mall there wouldn't be a reason for many beasts to gather there". Hope slowly said, she hadn't recovered from the ordeal but wouldn't let it affect her productivity in the team.

"Good, for now, a place to rest for the night is our target. Let's go". Muku said as he led the way out of the ruined street. He couldn't help but wonder what beast could possibly cause such a thing. For some reason he was almost certain that it was stronger than the dog Boss from before by a lot.

Which wasn't hard to accept after all the beasts they had fought so far, it had made him realise that the dog wasn't too strong for a peak Rank One beast since even Low Ranked giant pythons, spiders and lizards were close to its strength. Just that the group had gotten stronger as a result of learning how to control their magic skills better.

...

A few kilometres away from Muku's group a monster was sleeping on top of a ruined building. Yes, a monster and not a beast. With its size the word monster seemed more appropriate.

It was a humongous python around twenty metres long and two metres thick. Its skin a glistening black with two little horns on its head. Its body was radiating pure brutality and malice even as it rested. This monster could easily swallow a grown man whole...which it likely already had, a few times too.

Its eyes opened briefly opened a bit for no particular reason, which exposed its yellow eyes that were full of intelligence. It then closed them again and went back to sleep. It was the overload of the area after all. So who would dare disturb it?

Chapter 28 I'll show you all!

The next morning....

Going the opposite direction of the monster. Muku's group walked toward the shop Hope was guiding them to. Her eyes were a bit red since she had cried away most of the night. But as a Rank One she didn't that much sleep so other than her eyes looking a bit wrong, she was mostly fine... physically.

It took them quite a few hours to reach the shop, this was because they kept on meeting a few Low Rank Ones every now and then. Muku's kill target dropped to 90, Jade to 92, Layla to 93, Emily 92, Chloe 93 and Hope 95.

(LR1 = Low Rank One. MR1= Mid Rank One. PR1= Peak Rank One)

They noticed a weird trend, they'd either meet a LR1 or few unranked ones. But never a MR1 or higher. Infact there were more LR1s than unranked ones. This made Layla come up with a hypothesis. That the closer they were to the edge, the higher the chance of meeting a weaker beast and the closer they got to the centre, the higher the chance of meeting a stronger beast. Although her hypothesis was mostly true, it didn't account for anomalies like the giant python they still didn't know about which was closer to the edge of the city.

"So that's the store huh....did it always have three LR1s as guards?" Muku jokingly asked as she looked at the three large lizards laying in front of the shop.

"N-no, I'm sorry for the terrible suggestion" Hope meekly spoke.

"You got a thing for blaming yourself for every little thing that goes wrong don't you?". Jade said while playfully poking Hope's nose.

"N-no". Still meek, Hope replied.

"Jade is right, you really need to stop that habit of yours. We're comrades and friends aren't we?. You should treat us as such". Chloe supported.

"And it's clear to see that you weren't the first one to think to come here, because of which these three beasts thought to camp on the spot waiting for their food to deliver itself. Layla added.

"So who wants them?, they are coming toward us after all". Muku suddenly said, making the girls refocus on the lizards. Their scent must have been carried over to the lizards by the wind since they were still hidden behind a building a bit of a distance away from the shop.

"I'll go, maybe I can finally get another core...wait I haven't seen these lizards use any special attack, neither have the snakes now that I think about it. And I don't want to spit out spider webs from my mouth so it's a hard pass on the spider ability.". Jade replied before she was lost in her own thoughts and start blabbering random things.

"Are you going or not!?. We don't have all day after all". Muku loudly asked her, rousing her from her thoughts.

"I'll go, I'll go, sheesh, there was no need to shout". Jade grumbled as she "high quicked" away leaving Muku rolling his eyes at how dramatic and difficult she was.

"Hope and Chloe you go too. Hope I hope you can manage to kill one yourself this time otherwise you'll always be behind the others by a bit of you play support all the time. Try concentrating your poison and we'll see what happens.". Muku gave out orders. He specifically mentioned Hope because he noticed that she was getting used to playing support, which was good and all but she at least needed to take care of some stage beasts on her own.

"Y-yes sir". Hope replied as she unwillingly stepped forward. Just as Muku thought, she liked playing support a bit too much so wasn't even willing to be a frontliner.

"Don't worry, it's easy, just do as I do and you'll be fine". Chloe encouraged her as she gathered her lightning in-between her hands.

Pzzzt! Bang!

The same attack from before flew out, this time it was more controlled and so wouldn't be as loud. The lizards were quite fast for such huge creatures but, they weren't faster than lightning it seemed. The lizard going toward Jade's battle with another lizard was quickly killed off.

[91 kills left...]. (Chloe)

"Wow, so cool" Hope said, looking at Chloe with sparkling eyes filled with admiration.

"I wish, but I can only do it one more time before I have to recover for around 4 hours". Chloe wasn't as impressed by her attack she could only use twice before she was down for the count.

"Even then, it's still....". Hope was still very impressed by Chloe and wanted to express it when she was interrupted.

"Hope!". Muku shouted bringing the little girl back to reality.

That's when she noticed that her lizard was only about five metres away. Which made her panic and almost run away. But she managed to stop herself and prepare her attack. She started gathering the green mist in-between her hands in the form of a little ball. She kept on doing it until she couldn't do it anymore. Of course she only got such a chance because Muku was holding the beast back with his telekinesis.

She was so concentrated that she started sweating a bit. Her purple hair sticking to her face a bit.

"Haaa!". She screamed as she tossed a golf-ball sized little green ball of mist at the beast. Oddly when it came into contact with the beast, it didn't explode out like everyone thought it would. It entered the beast's body through its nostril and then nothing...

Well that was the case for three seconds the green blood started coming out of the beast's eyes, nose and mouth before it slumped to the ground and died on the spot, blood still gushing out. Everyone was kind creeped out by such a death but at the same time saw the lethality of Hope's poison. Too bad no one had been hurt so far so they couldn't really test out her healing magic.

[93 kills left...]

Hope got the familiar message with the numbness. She ignored both as she was just happy to kill a Rank One on her own...well mostly on her own.

On Jade's side, she was still fighting her beast, grumpily as she had seen Chloe one shot hers. Her mood got worse when Hope did the same.

"Grr!". It was actually Jade who made such an animalistic sound as she grit her teeth in jealousy.

"Is that how you all want to play it huh, okay, I'll show you all!" She screamed out as her speed increased and her claws got longer and started glowing with green energy and all ten were sent at the lizard's large head. They poked it all over but because of its hard flesh, they didn't get too deep. But a surprising thing happened, all ten claws exploded at once. They were either on the beast's neck or head area and were complimenting each other's explosion. And so like that, the lizard's head, although wasn't blown off, it was stripped of its scales and skin. The injuries on its face severe enough to kill it, which they did.

[90 kills left....]

"Huff...See, I told you that I'll show you. You all thought I couldn't kill a beast without getting closer, well there you go". Jade said as she huffed for breathe. It seemed the new attack took quite a bit out of her, she was primarily a physical type after all.

"Yes we did, now lets quickly get some food before this place is over run.". Muku replied to her as he and the rest of the gang speedily went toward the shop. Although their battles this time weren't too loud, who knew what was close enough to hear it after all.

As they went to the shop, Muku and Jade subtly looked in a certain direction before looking at each other and continuing forward.

....

"Sir, those people actually managed to slay the beasts. And they managed it all in a one on one battle". A man said while looking at Muku's group from the top of a building a 3 kilometres. His eyes looked like those of a hawk.

"What!?, such people already exist?. I wonder if we should go meet them or not". The hawk-eyed man's boss spoke from beside him. His eyes weren't good enough to properly see from such a distance so only the hawk-eyed man could spy on Muku's group.

Actually they had arrived before Muku's group the previous day but when they noticed the lizards camping there, they could only wait and see if they would leave. The city wasn't safe enough to casually walk around anymore after all. And the shops of the area were all at the place the lizards where.

"Well there's one young man and 5 little girls, so they shouldn't be some bad people.". The hawk-eyed man spoke.

"Interesting...but lets study them a bit longer then decide...."

Chapter 29 Safe Zones?

"Everyone fully packed?". Muku asked the girls as he put his bloated backpack back on his back.

"Yes". They all replied.

"Good, now let's get out of here, I noticed a clothes shop close by, I think we all would appreciate a change of clothes". He added to which all the girls' eyes lit up. No girl can deny clothes after all.

"Let's hurry up then!". Jade was the first one to respond and speed out of the store. The others quickly followed after her, Muku just looked on with a speechless expression at their reaction before quickly following after them.

...

In the clothes shop....

All the girls chose short skirts with tights and loose fitting t-shirts. This, in Jade's case made Muku rather disappointed because she moved her legs quite a lot when she fought which was always a sight to behold for him. He could basically describe her underwear just from memory at that point. Of course Jade didn't know all of this or who knows what she would have done. Muku chose a gray tracksuit with tears of joy streaming down his face due to happiness of finally being out of a student's uniform.

(A/N: I'm not a fashionista so please excuse my bland clothes descriptions)

When they got out, a few unranked spiders had made it to the lizard bodies. But since they were too busy with their already prepared meal, they didn't bother with them and so they managed to get away without a fight.

"Now, on to the next target, Layla's place, and we'll try to find Hope's family as well... though now that I think about, we haven't seen any people since we got here, did they all congregate someone or something?" Muku spoke and made his enquiries known.

"I was wondering the same as well and like I said before, we don't have to go to my place". Layla said.

"Yeah well, too bad because we're going. And for the people, I'm sure we'll find out eventually". Muku answered with a smile on his face. He was determined to go to Layla's house. Even if things with her foster mother were as she said, she still had taken care of her. And Layla wasn't firmly rejecting the idea, which suggested that she also wanted to go and was likely just being considerate to those who were closer to their families. Muku had noticed that she had a tendency to make sure everyone else's needs were met before hers. But as a good teacher, he wouldn't let her be unfair to herself.

Layla realised that he wouldn't relent so could only give up on her idea to prioritize others. And so they're journey continued. And they happened to go in the direction of the hawk-eyed man's group. Whether it was a coincidence or intentional, only Muku and Jade knew. Both of them had sensed non hostile gazes from there after all, Jade had even noticed two vague human images. Since it was in the general direction they where going anyway, they thought they might as well check it out.

They got in front of the building, it was a three story residential building. The people in it seemed to have hidden when they saw them coming their way.

"Are you going to keep on hiding like rats!?". Muku screamed out a bit, which surprised the girls other than Jade. They hadn't sensed the people from the building nor been told about it. What made them even more confused was how nobody responded.

"Fine, if that's what you want. But we're going to have a real problem if you keep on spying on us!". Before the confused girls could ask him who he was shouting at, he shouted again. This time though, to their surprise, someone really did respond.

"We're sorry for our rudeness, we'll come out, give us a few seconds." A voice called out. As it said, in less than a minute, five men of varying ages came out of the building holding different weapons. From baseball bats to steel bars and the one in front who had a wooden axe (obviously the blade was metal). As for how effective their weapons would be against beasts. Everyone knew the answer to that one, but they should still be very useful against humans.

"Care to introduce yourself?". Muku asked, the men were just staring at his group curiously, especially at the girls behind him. Luckily nobody seemed to have any lustful thoughts at the moment, or Muku might have had to break a few legs. As for why he asked the other group to introduce themselves first, it was because they were the ones who were rudely spying on his group after all.

"Oh, right, you can call me Adam, I'm the leader of these four and we're one of the food gathering groups from the Stadium safe zone". Adam, who was a black haired man who seemed to be in his early thirties with aura of a leader, introduced himself. As for why he

didn't name his group...the author is just too lazy to give them names if he doesn't have to...

"Is that so...wait, what's this safe zone you're talking about?". Muku asked curiously, the girls were also curious.

"As I thought, you really aren't from the city...well at least not since the apocalypse began". Adam said, forgetting to answer what he was asked.

"Mr Adam, we don't have all day" Muku said, slightly annoyed at being ignored like that.

"Oh, right, sorry about that. You, see when the apocalypse began, after the imposing voice said evolve or die, another, feminine and robotic voice sounded in all our heads. It said, I'm going to quote this part, "[Number of people in relatively close proximity to each other detected to be more than ten thousand. Two temporary safe zones to be generated. Locations 'sports stadium' and 'local university' designated as safe zones until Level 3]". Adam paused for a bit to catch his breath. Then continued...

"Most at the time were still confused, but after seeing the people around them getting massacred most of us ran subconsciously ran toward these two areas. And when we arrived we noticed that the stadium was completely enveloped by a green barrier. Of course we were apprehensive to touch the thing, but with beasts behind us, we could only continue forward. And magically we didn't slam into it but passed right through, while the beasts slammed on it. Adams stopped for a bit again before continuing...

"From then, the beasts stuck around for a few hours before heading back into the city to hunt those who hadn't made it to the barrier. The lucky people who managed to make it to

the barrier are around two thousand if I had to say. The rest are either dead, still in the city, ran out of the city or in the other safe zone we haven't been to so I can't say how many are there. From then, after a day, we realised there was a big problem with our safe zone, it had no food. And so volunteers would be sent out to gather food in turns. With that, here we are, we noticed your group when we were scouting that shop. And I swear we had no ill intent." Adam finally finished speaking.

"Hmm, interesting, what do you think girls?, should we go check it out?". Muku said eyes full of curiosity, he didn't really care about the people, just wanted to see the barrier.

"Sure" they all agreed, they wanted to see the barrier as well.

"Who knows, we might even see some familiar faces there". Muku said, as for why he didn't say "see some family members", he didn't want to get anyone's hopes too high, especially Hope's.

"Yeah, and it would be pretty nice to sleep without keeping your guard up". Jade added as the others agreed. None of them had been able to completely relaxed ever since the killer dogs attacked.

Chapter 30 Random Classes?

"Good then, let's go...Hope you know the way right?". Muku said after everyone agreed to go.

"Uh, sir, can you please guard us, in return we'll guide you there using the safest pathways." Before Hope could speak, Adam spoke first. He wouldn't let go of this chance even if he had to thicken his skin for it, they could basically guarantee his life in this dangerous city after all. Not to mention, with them, his group can carry more food since they wouldn't have to worry about only carrying stuff they can runaway with.

"Yuh no, sounds like a tedious task, and we don't really mind meeting beasts actually". Muku said to him.

"Sir please!, I'll even introduce you to the leaders of the safe zone. I'll tell them how you assisted us with obtaining the food. That way you can gain a lot more benefits, like a personal room to stay, you must know, there are not that many rooms at a stadium.". Adam knew that he couldn't expect strangers to move for him without benefits so he shot his shit and told them everything they could gain by helping him.

"Hmm interesting, there are already leaders huh?...well okay, we'll help you out, just make sure to deliver on your promise." Muku said, he looked at the girls as he spoke and saw that they weren't objecting his plan so went ahead and decided.

"Thank you sir, I promise you won't regret it". Adam said, a smile beaming on his face. Which anyone can understand since his life was basically guaranteed now.

"Okay, and we might have to make a quick detour or two so don't be surprised when the time comes." Muku said, not forgetting their initial mission of looking for the girls' families.

"No problem sir". Adam said while still smiling, what's a little bit more time when your life is safe?.

"Okay, now lets go and get the food, we don't have all day, and the longer we delay, the more beast we'll have to deal with"

With those words from Muku everyone went back and Adam's group started collecting food into their huge camping bags.

Some beasts did show up, but they were mostly unranked. It seemed ranked ones kept some sizable distance away from each other which led them to take some time before they can arrive onto the scene. If the smell of blood even reaches that far that is.

....

Around thirty minutes later.....

[88 kills left...]. Muku has killed one LR1 beast that had shown up.

Adam's group had completely filled up their bags and even though they were a bit heavy, it didn't stop them from smiling. From this, they and their families would be able to eat properly for a few days even after they give half to the base. As for why they even had to give some out to a base that was technically public property...well the leaders said so. Not to mention if they went back with this food and kept it all to themselves, they'd probably

get killed for it. Some might be too scared to go out and kill beasts, but they weren't too scared to kill fellow humans for food. That's just how messed up humans were.

As they walked back, Jade couldn't help but ask a question in all her group's mind.

"Ahh, Mr Adam, you and this bird eyed man are Rank Ones right?" She spoke up looking back at Adam who was walking behind them.

"Yes?". Adam agreed in a confused way.

"Cool, cool, but why are you both so weak then". She the girl with no filter asked what she wanted without holding back. Hearing her actually say it, those from her group felt like facepalming while Adam and Hawkeye felt like arrows had just been shot into their hearts. Nobody would like to be so openly called weak after all, even if they themselves knew it and not to mention in front of so many people. It's like how a person can be ugly, know they are ugly, call themselves ugly, but if somebody else says it, it hits different.

(A/N: Like author-san here)

"Ah, cough, you see miss, a study has been done at the safe zone. It's not too detailed but it seems to be on the right track. It seems that a person's class determines their strength. Me and my friend here are random classes...and I mean that literally, we were found to not have any elemental affinities or something special talent so random classes were generated for us. Which we found to be the weakest classes one could have and are practically useless. I got the "Miner class"...like wtf am I supposed to do with that in an apocalypse?. Though I did get a minor strength booster from it and can confidently fight two unranked beasts.... despite being Rank One, which is quite sad if I say so myself...."

"....Anyway, John here got the "Hawkeye class", like wtf, is he supposed to stare the beasts to death?. And what kind of bullsh*t class is that anyway?. He didn't even get a minor strength boost or anything. Well at least he can see beasts from afar and runaway in advance". Adam explained with a stifled expression and John couldn't help but glare at him because he felt like he was being subtly despised by this leader of theirs. Then Adam was interrupted...

"Hehehe.. hahahaha". Jade couldn't hold it back anymore and laughed. The way Adam was explaining it, it really was hard not to laugh. Even Emily, Hope and Chloe couldn't help back giggle while Layla smiled. Muku being the adult of the group, of course couldn't be so rude...and so he was busy fighting back a smile.

"Cough, what about the leaders at the base?, what classes do they have?". Muku quickly asked trying to get rid of the awkward mood the girls had created by laughing.

"R-right, I haven't talked about them yet. Unlike us, they are true experts, although they both don't have elements, they have minor affinities with physical enhancement. Aleck is a strength type Evolver with a "Strong man class", while Simon is a speed type, his class is [Fast man]... though Aleck had to pester him the whole day before he was willing to expose the name for some reason. Together they can barely fight a Rank One beast. They are the hope for our safe zone, I'm sure they will grow to be strong one day and maybe they will make it to Rank Two like I assume you all have reached. Oh and they are actually brothers so the safe zone hasn't been divided into two factions or something like that.". Adam explained with a proud expression on his face.

He really did think the two brothers were amazing. They had real classes after all. They could fight beasts their rank. While he...was miner in the apocalypse. Even his comrades looked up to the two leaders. Though as for whether it will still be like that when more people awaken, nobody knows. After all, among so many people, there should be quite a few who have more potential than their current leaders. Just that they hadn't awoken yet, or more directly, were too scared to go out and kill beasts.

And apparently he thought Muku and his group were Rank Two, he couldn't fathom a Rank One being as strong as they were after all. Only if he knew that they were still LR1s, he'd probably die on the spot due to an envy induced heart attack.

Jade wanted to laugh and correct him but Muku quickly covered her mouth and glared at her, prompting her silence. He would rather Adam's group think that way as, the stronger they thought they were, the less likely they were to even think of crossing them.

At the same time he and his group realised how fortunate they were to have their peak affinities and classes. They all thanked God in their hearts. The life Adam and his group were living seemed quite tough after all. And thinking of facing the killer dog boss with a "miner class" was.... anyway, they'd be screwed.

And so the group continued their journey in the once glorious but now ruined city.

(A/N: Ungrateful bastards, instead of thanking God, they should be thanking me!...but wait, wouldn't I be him in their case?....well whatever)