

Mana 81

Chapter 81 - The Fall of a Hegemony

The Draconic Kingdom that was situated at the center of the Beast World was the kingdom that commanded the most power. With the mythical race of dragons at the forefront, the kingdom prospered and took the lead in erecting a stronghold that withstood the test of time for multiple millenia.

In the kingdom, there were multiple floating cities where powerful dragons resided, ruling over the masses of the common beasts below them. Their power boasted such unshakable belief, that the day they fell became the most shocking thing for the beings of the Beast World to hear.

The invasion of demons began abruptly, with multiple Demon Kings descending down in areas not too far from the Draconic Kingdom. They were somehow equipped with all the knowledge of the Beast World as they began waging war right away, causing the battalions of Black Dragons that protected the kingdom to move against them.

The Demon Kings that led hordes of demonic forces had terrible power, using Abyss Magic and Unique Skills that stood toe to toe against the strength of dragons. The war was brutal, causing the other mythical kingdoms of beasts to activate their forces and prepare to reinforce the Draconic Kingdom.

This was when a huge change occurred. The daughter of the Dragon King that was fighting in the front lines was defeated and captured. This humiliation caused the Dragon King to go mad as he prepared for a war of mutual destruction with the demons. But the demons began pulling their forces out of the kingdom at this instant, calling for a momentary truce.

They called upon the Dragon King to stop the war that was causing both sides to lose many of their forces and leveraged the life of his daughter to call for an assembly of discussion of how both sides could coexist. The Dragon King naturally knew this wasn't possible, but his dear daughter's life obscured his judgment. His love for her was so deep that he ignored all the wisdom and logic he had and called upon his forces to attend this assembly.

Even with love blinding him, he still didn't act rashly and moved together with the powerful regiments of black dragons as his protection. The Assembly was set on on a grassy plain where the two forces faced one another and the leaders moved to discuss.

Of course, the only thing they faced was betrayal.

But this was the wickedness of the demons. As the Dragon King was approaching the tent placed in the middle of the opposing forces, he was presented with the sight of his daughter being humiliated, and then watched as she was beheaded right after.

The Demon King doing this was one that hadn't appeared in the battles previously. He had newly descended down into the ranks of Demon Kings that were present in the Beast World. He was ranked 32nd, the Demon of L.u.s.t, one of the Seven Deadly Sins, Demon King Asmodeus. With an Ultimate Skill that granted him glimpses of the future, he fought against the maddened Dragon King...and brought him down.

The ruthlessness of demons was seen firsthand as they played with emotions and sought destruction. After the fall of the Dragon King, the rest of the forces went down like dominoes, and the demon forces claimed the Draconic Kingdom.

There was one thing that remained a secret from the outcome of this war though. Whether through means of illusion or Abyss Magic, nobles from other kingdoms were able to see the daughter of the Dragon King alive and well. Spies observed a figure that looked just like her standing besides Asmodeus as he led his forces to take over the Draconic Kingdom.

The figure held the same face of the Dragon Princess, but it was dressed lasciviously with two horns growing a top its head. The forces believed that a betrayal had taken place and was the ultimate cause of the downfall of the Draconic Kingdom.

This increased the Mythical Beasts' apprehension of the terrible magic that the demons wielded, and they chose to prepare on all fronts for the war that would undoubtedly break out after the demon forces power consolidated around the Draconic Kingdom.

They didn't want the same mind games that the demons played before to occur. They didn't want to see their loved ones humiliated or turned to betrayers. Forces began to be bolstered by powerful mercenaries that moved across the kingdoms in these uncertain times, as the demons waited to start an all out war.

"The true terror of the Demons isn't their hordes of demonic soldiers that fight relentlessly. It is the mysterious Unique and Ultimate skills that they possess. Skills that show extreme effectiveness even when matched by the most powerful beings in this world."

Princess Adelaide took a sip of a red drink as she finished her story. More than hour had passed as the drinks and food on the table were emptied, with the man standing opposite her listening with rapt attention while devouring the meals around him.

His eyes seemed to be blazing with fire as a few words escaped his lips.

"Unique and Ultimate skills..."

There was a sense of excitement on Noah's face as he pondered what he just heard. He focused on Princess Adelaide and said,

"What are the movements of demons against the Frozen Kingdom currently?"

"The demons are moving their forces and dividing them across all kingdoms, slowing down their advances quite a bit. From the information I have collected so far, only a single Demon King has been leading his forces towards this kingdom."

Hesitation appeared on the princess' face as she continued with her next words.

"I am also keeping watch of suspicious movements in the kingdom. This isn't based on any conclusive information, but from the use of my skill that tells me who to look out for."

A silence pervaded the room as both people were absorbed in their own thoughts. A clear voice rang out from Noah's side.

"Okay. Let's say we have this cooperation between the two of us. You believe I hold the key to your successful future, and I...well, I have my own aims. What will be the first move of this mutual cooperation?"

A small smile came on as opposed to the normally icy expression on Princess Adelaide's face as a relieved reply came,

"We have to give you a starting position to stand on that would allow you to be next to me with no questions. How do you feel about taking the command position of my Royal Guards?"

It was the calm before the storm as many beings moved their forces around and prepared for the incoming collisions.

On the neglected kingdom that had a single Demon King making its way towards it, a single event had occurred that would have tremendous consequences. Schemes continued to be created as battles of wits and of strength continued to be carried out. But in the face of ultimate power, who would come out on top?

Chapter 82 - Wanting to move in the shadows

"No."

It was a simple small word that carried a lot of meaning. I observed the surprise of the princess in front of me as her lips formed a round o and I further clarified.

"I've learnt a few things these past weeks that made me realize being on the spot light isn't necessarily a good thing. Our cooperation can definitely be established, but I'll be supporting you behind the shadows."

Calmness returned on her face as she heard this, and I thought about all the things we discussed today. There were many ways I could go about this new development.

"Well, you may be right. I was going to see if you would join the competition that decides who will be replacing a retiring guard, but to create an identity for you covertly would be even easier."

I recalled the veiled in black woman that called herself Night as the ideas I had came into place. I asked her about the positions of all her different forces and found out that she had a secret division of people protecting her called Shadow Guards.

Instead of publicly joining her and becoming her guard captain, I chose to act as one of the figures of her hidden department. I heard her cold voice that held a tinge of allure in it ring out after deciding this.

"Working as one of the Shadow Guards would mean you would be staying very close to me in the castle, perhaps just separated by a thin wall for you to act whenever the need arises"

My eyes shrunk into thin slits as I heard this, and the discussion continued. One of her golden rings shone again as a black material appeared on the table. I ended up receiving a black suit that tightly hugged my body, visibly showing the steeled muscles all over once I wore it.

The black suit was a rank S item that had the innate trait of blending into the shadows, being great for assassinations and the like. As soon as you filled it with energy, your figure would quickly disappear. With the addition of the few hiding skills I could activate at all times, I was skeptical whether someone of EPIC rank would be able to notice me if I didn't want them to.

For the latter half of the Night, I told the Princess that I had to think about everything as she excused herself into another room of the White Courtyard, telling me to call out if I needed anything.

After talking in the presence of this person for so long, I let out a relaxing breath while going over the entire meeting. I was just met with one of the best possible scenarios by quickly getting in contact with someone of high standard, and it was an extremely high standard as things stood right now.

All she wanted and expected of me was my presence, that I would be the person to protect her against threats she is confident are approaching through the use of her unique skill. When I thought about the idea of Unique Skills and the demon's Ultimate Skills she had mentioned, I couldn't help but feel excited at the possibility of getting them for myself.

I would take it slow though, and focus on the immediate goals I have currently. Firstly, it was matching and taking down the EPIC ranked beast I ran from at the Skyspeak Nest. To do this, I had to continue raising the proficiency of rank S skills, as well as carry out combinations of skills that have met the requirements.

On top of the few rank S skills I was able to obtain from my recent trip, I was able to take down even more rank A BOSSes that gave me many rank A items and skills. Putting together the rank A skills I received before leaving the Empire, I had a few additions that were already being used: [Healing Light],[Lion's Roar],[Water Barrier],[Pierce],[Executor's Speed],[Sense Heat Source], and [Silent Communication].

All the ones I learnt were active skills that would become passive through the use of my nearly endless mana. For the offensive skills, I was putting more focus in raising the ones that were currently at rank S, while still bringing up the remaining offensive rank A skills that neared 100 proficiency. It felt like I was already spreading my focus on too many things, and I had to be sure I was going in the right direction as time passed.

As for skills rank B or lower, there were too many to count, and I would only choose a few that I saw were compatible with rank B skills like [Eagle Eyes] and a few others that I still actively used so that I could raise their ranks later.

I was setting my sights on higher places as my rank S skills continued to increase and deserved even more attention with how destructive they were. Currently, I was sitting alone in the room absorbing the rank S cores so that I could max my attributes to 350. With how many cores I currently had in hand, reaching it should not be a problem.

Testing **[Skill Combination]**, I was able to produce a few more rank B+ skills that didn't need mentioning the way they currently were, and would only show some effectiveness after I combine them later to produce some decent rank A hiding, defensive, and support skills. This process would only repeat itself and produce bulks of rank A+ skills that I will be able to make into rank S as time passed.

Since I had some time and didn't want to play with death testing the EPIC ranked beast that I wasn't sure if it had gone back to the inner parts of Skypeak Nest or still patrolling in the perimeter, I can use the time I have waiting for the skill proficiency to rise while getting to know this Frozen Kingdom I had plans for.

I'll start with the Princess whose face always seemed cold, but the voice betrayed the expectation and excitement when she talked to me. The night passed with me monitoring the many skills I was activating, while also spamming skills like [Saint's Phantom] that didn't shine with outrageous effects to continuously increase proficiency.

It would be a sleepless night, but my body that continued to grow stronger through absorbing essence and the multitude of skills would not be burdened in any way.

When morning came, the princess showed herself in a new veil that was light blue. The black clothed Night was besides her as she told me today would be the day of the competition amongst a few rank S mercenaries and adventures to decide who would be joining as one of her new guards.

We stepped out of the building called the White Courtyard as the figures of Night and I became transparent. Night was one of the few Shadow Guards that would keep close proximity with the Princess, with a few other ones similar to her stationed all over the Snowy Peak ready to reinforce the guards that escorted her around if anything were to happen.

I wasn't sure if this could be considered paranoia on the Princess's side as she was being this careful even on her own peak that she controlled, but maybe I could learn a thing or two about going to extremes to stay safe. I would observe the ways of this kingdom and its people before I cement myself into an unshakable position to lead them against the demons that were on their way.

Chapter 83 - The Crown Prince

A grand occasion was taking place on the Snowy Peak of the Frozen Kingdom. A new Royal Guard was about to be appointed, and the selection would take place in the form of combat!

All of those that deemed themselves worthy and had sufficient status climbed the long bridge into the luxurious world atop the Snowy Peak. Grandiose establishments were left behind as many nobles, adventures, and mercenaries found themselves congregating in a large square field that had tiered seats in their surroundings

At the forefront, an elevated seating was present where the Ice Princess herself would be observing the match. Lower seating was present on the sides for merchants, adventures, mercenaries, and anyone else with sufficient status to attend. Nobles would be seated on the opposite side of the Princess observing the matches as well

An occasion like this would not normally draw such huge crowds, but it was the presence of the Princess that forever wore a cold expression that people were waiting to see. When the new Royal Guard would be sworn in, there was a tradition of the veil that covered the entirety of Princess Adelaide's face to be gone for an instant. Many came just to be graced by this sight

I could see many figures congregating as I remained hidden in the far corners of the high seats that the princess was looking down from. My figure was fully transparent with the rank S equipment I recently received as well as the many hiding skills that nearly erased my existence from people's eyes

I could see the figure of Captain Ryner standing valiantly on the side of the people that would be competing, with his face showing an expression of confidence. Various types of foods and refreshments were being passed around by a collection of expertly dressed maids

I turned my attention from the sights of people into the surroundings as I enjoyed the peacefully rustling white colored trees that symmetrically lined up this entire venue.

One of the things that continued to surprise me in this kingdom was the different types of beauty you could see with their architecture and simple layouts of the various snowy and colorful trees. It continued to remind me just how different the world I was currently living in.

Figures continued to fill in as discussions rose to their peak, before Princess Adelaide rose with her hand glistening in the air, bringing an abrupt silence. I had half of my attention placed on watching the skills that continued to rise in proficiency and combining the ones I could, with the other half of my attention on the events playing out in front of me

The rising of her hand signalled the beginning of the affair, as the people coordinating the event moved around to start the first match. At this point in time though, rough winds blew out as something majestically appeared in the skies

The beast that just appeared perfectly fit the description of a Gryphon, with large outspread wings and a sharp beak that glistened in the light. Atop this mighty looking beast was a dashing handsome man accompanied by a woman that was letting out a crazy level of power

My focus fully shifted onto them as I felt the feeling of an EPIC ranked individual once again.

"My dear sister, you would hold such an event without inviting your loving brother?"

In a playfully berating tone, the voice rang out from the figure as the Gryphon slowly landed near the elevated seats where we sat. Looking at the figure drifting up to the princess and matching it with the information I held, this would be the powerful Crown Prince that was currently set to become the next ruler of the Frozen Kingdom

He truly did have the strength to prance around as he did, with the only guard he brought along being EPIC ranked. The terrifying guard's eyes observed everything in the surrounding, the gaze landing on Princess Adelaide's rank S aides that stood around her.

The seemingly loving brother ascended the platform and came face to face with the Princess, his arrival bringing with it a level of tension in the recently calm surroundings. His hand moved out and landed on the shoulders of the veiled princess with a light pat, and I observed a slight tremble occur on her figure

"That is no way to welcome your older brother. Come on, let's see if we can get a few words out of you today. How about 'Brother, it's nice to see you!?' Hmm, no? Haha, oh well!"

The Crown Prince talked this way as the veiled princess remaining still, her covered face only blankly staring back at him. He smiled brightly at this response as if he had won something and turned around to the mass of people around us

"Today is an auspicious day where our favorite Princess will add another guard to her collection. Let us enjoy ourselves, and watch the great matches unfold!"

Exclamations rose out as people matched the Crown Prince's enthusiasm, and two figures stepped into the square arena to start the first match. The dangerous EPIC ranked woman stood behind a chair that was right beside the Princess, where her old brother took his seat when the match started

Not a single word was traded between the siblings after this, as the platform we were standing on became filled with an uncomfortable air.

I looked at this newly appeared Crown Prince and recalled the things Princess Adelaide mentioned the night before. Among the many things she brought up after we agreed on a mutual cooperation, the name of her older brother occupied much of the discussion

Crown Prince Aeneas, the royalty that controlled Summit Peak, as well as the Frozen Paradise that the youngest Prince Theodred occupied. The biggest thing she told me to keep in mind was to be careful of the rapidly changing face of this Crown Prince.

The berating persona of an older brother was not in any way how the person was in the dark. He was a shrewd individual who had taken control of two Peaks, with the Princess losing the battle against him when it came to the Frozen Paradise that their younger brother occupied.

The Crown Prince's hands had dug down deep and now controlled a majority of the businesses and commerce there, elevating his status even further and giving him increased wealth. She told me that if there was anyone to cause us trouble in the future, it would be him. She was much more guarded against him than even the demons that would eventually wage war on these lands

His figure let out peak rank S strength, similar to the Princess, but the main worry was his EPIC ranked woman that was guarding him with a fierce expression. My body remained veiled in the dark as I watched this Crown Prince and the ongoing matches below.

Chapter 84 - A wolf in sheep's clothing

The hunger that was rising deep within me was quickly pushed down as I sat near my little sister.

My dear little Adelaide. How much longer do you think you will scurry around from my grasp? My face couldn't help but change when I recalled the cute fight you put up for the control of Frozen Paradise

You thought you had control over our little brother and could rope him to stand with you against me? Haha, naive, naive, naive!

The exhilaration I felt while looking at that face that was normally frozen be filled with anger that day kept me up at night!

Yes. That face. I want to see that same f.u.c.k.i.n.g face again.

Furious emotions erupted out and occupied my mind. My fondness of this bitch was quickly replaced with hatred. She was the only one standing against me. Did she not know the things I was doing to keep the people of this kingdom safe?

What gave her the courage to put up defenses against me? Even someone as powerful as an EPIC ranked adventurer heeled under me. I looked to the dark haired woman that was releasing a powerful aura as the anger receded within me.

The matches happening below us were inconsequential to me as my eyes kept trying to pierce the veiled figure of my pitiful little sister. No matter how many guards you add. No matter how smart you think you are. Under absolute power, what can you do but falter?

Just like this EPIC ranked adventurer behind me. Just like the many that have kneeled before me. So will you. When that time comes...I will see just how much longer that frozen expression can remain on your face.

I retained my calm as I thought about the brand new strength I would be gaining with the possible deals being made in closed doors. People feared the advent of demons in this world, but I see it as an opportunity.

There were too many fools with rigid thinking running around, and this would cause the death of all of us. Things that were never possible could now be seen before me. Grand aspirations of domination would not just be fleeting dreams. As for those that stood in the way of my dreams? Hmph.

I sensed the uncomfortable figure besides me as a smile returned on my face. Keep on squirming, little lamb. For I will have you in my grasp soon enough.

The fights were spectacular to look at, but it wasn't the thing that grabbed most of my attention. It was the demeanor of the prince that stood near the princess. The facial movements were imperceptible, but I continued to see him shift from glee, to happiness, to anger all in a span of a few minutes

My guard was fully up against this new figure as I continued to observe the matches. The strength of the combatants going head to head was great to look at, and it made me admire the way adventurers and mercenaries rose their strength in this world

The adventurers of this world began at rank F like many of the hunters in my world, and gradually increased their strength overtime. You had adventurers who were blessed with powerful and unique skills early on, with some that would most likely rise to become exceptional adventurers that could even earn the title of Hero.

The strength of the beings in this world rose at a much slower rate than the awakened in my world, but they honed their strength through constant accumulation and experience. A low ranking hunter would start their adventuring in small dungeons and spend months in there obtaining cores and increasing their strength

The skills they had would grow with them as they spent years using and learning them. The damage of an adventurer's C ranked skill could be trained to be powerful enough to the level above if they continued to get stronger.

This wasn't even mentioning the beasts that were the majority of beings in this world. There were many different bloodlines of beasts, and depending on your birth, you could quickly become strong or remain weak.

An example was the race of Mythical Dragons that had control of and used to reside in the center of the continent. A newly born dragon had much more mana than many other beings, and as they aged they received innate skills of their species while also learning how to utilize essence to form other destructive skills.

They were geniuses when it came to mana, and exceeded many other species in strength. This was also why their downfall shocked so many lesser races and made them treat the threat of demons as a possible world ending calamity. But the dragons weren't the only mythical races in this world.

Another source of their strength was the dungeons that lay all over the world. They were established for a long time with some new ones rarely appearing over time. One of the amazing things I found out about the dungeons in this world is that they granted a random skill to those that cleared it for the first time. So adventurers spent their lives travelling all over the world to amass more strength by clearing different types of dungeons to gain more skills on top of the ones they innately have and train themselves

Higher ranked dungeons rarely granted skills of the same rank though, where a very low percentage existed of a party clearing an EPIC ranked dungeon to actually get an EPIC ranked skill. The established norm after hundreds of years was that the more people you delved into a dungeon with, it caused the reward to be split across everyone. So powerful Heroes who could take on dungeons alone would be the ones to find themselves getting powerful skills of the same rank of dungeons they were clearing

But how could someone of rank S clear an equivalent dungeon alone? Even the most powerful EPIC ranked figures could rarely pull off taking down an EPIC ranked dungeon by themselves, and those that tried spent days to barely make it out with their lives. Thus, figures that could do this were very rare in history.

A few matches went by as the people around the elevated platforms ate and drank, with the platform where the two siblings were sitting continuing to be an uncomfortable area of palpable tension and silence

I watched as Captain Ryner advanced forward valiantly, defeating two opponents without breaking a sweat. He wasn't joking when he said he was a peak rank S power house. I was probably looking at the future guard that would be following the princess around in the future

I continued to combine skills while the matches were going, gaining new additions of rank A skills, and could even foresee the appearance of the first rank S+ skill. After spamming [Saint's Phantom] consecutively every single second for the entire past night, the skill neared 100 proficiency, and I wanted to combine it with [All Element Resistance] that had also been repetitively spammed and nearly reached 100 proficiency, both turning out to be compatible. These skills were relatively easy to raise as they didn't come with world shattering effects when casted.

Aside from this possible rank S+ skill, covert skills of lower rank like [Dark Assassin] were combined together to produce 3 new covert rank A skills, [Shadow Escape], [Illusory], and [Chameleon's Skin].

These skills were also quickly activated, giving me increased confidence of even those at the EPIC rank not noticing me.

The process of combination was only becoming faster and faster as I chose more skills that I could passively activate which were compatible with one another. My dream of overlapping myself with multiple powerful defensive skills was slowly coming to fruition as multiple rank B+ skills were combined. This provided me with new rank A defensive and support skills that were [Steeled Muscles],[Hardened Bones],[Wind Armor], [Metal Scales], [Tanzanite Skin], [Yeti's Fur], and finally [Frigid Armament]

Almost all of the rank B skills I collected the week that I spent in the Empire before coming here and ones gained from the Skyepeak Nest were spent to produce this many compatible defense and support skills. There were so many that even I had trouble keeping track of all of them, and just continued to keep them active so that I could continue creating combinations of the next rank.

Obtaining an EPIC ranked skill through [Skill Combination] might happen faster than I thought with how efficient I was when I put my nearly endless mana to full use with constant activation of skills.

The only other skills that didn't really fit into a category but I had plans for nonetheless were [Regal Archer's Eyes] which rose from [Eagle Eyes] and a previously learnt rank B skill called [Enhanced Acuity].

I was enhancing my skills in such a systematic way that it almost seemed foreign to me, with this type of progress even giving me an excited scare. I wanted to grind my active offensive skills similar to the defense, covert, and support skills that I will just refer to as passive skills from now on since they act that way with my nearly endless mana.

The memory of me grinding [Fireball] in a dungeon as I watched the proficiency numbers go up passed through my mind, and I shifted the plans to visit the dungeons of this world as my next plan of action. I could see an EPIC ranked skill being born in this pathway in at most two weeks, and it would be much less dangerous than battling an EPIC ranked beast while not fully prepared.

Chapter 85 - Dungeon diving in another world

The matches were quickly wrapped up as we were given a show of exciting battles between peak rank S powers. At the end of all of it, the valiant mercenary I knew as Captain Ryner took the title. He stood on the empty arena as cheers erupted all around for the new guard of Princess Adelaide.

The Crown Prince rose up with a smiling face as he clapped, and turned towards his sister, as if he couldn't wait for the final part of the event to go underway. Two guards led the about to be initiated Ryner over to the elevated platform as he went to his knees and bowed down right before Princess Adelaide.

A golden sword appeared on the hands of the Princess as she rose up and her veil disappeared, her stunningly frozen face becoming visible for everyone to see. It was tradition to give at least this much respect to a newly initiated Royal Guard.

The disappearing of the veil caused the awes of many of the people clustered in this exquisite square field, with l.u.s.tful eyes being extremely clear on the faces of the nobles sitting opposite to us that I

watched using [Regal Archer's Eyes]. But none of their eyes had as much emotion as I observed on Crown Prince Aeneas's eyes. They shone with a dangerous glint as he looked towards his sister.

The golden sword in the hands of the Princess lightly tapped the shoulders of Ryner, and he then lifted his hands up to accept the sword. Thus, a new Royal Guard had appeared. Cheers broke out as a veil covered the Princess once more, and a fervent expression appeared on the new Royal Guard as he rose.

"Haha! Yet another pet in your collection little sister. I can't wait to see how you make use of all of them."

The Crown Prince made these his last words as his figure disappeared and reappeared atop his Gryphon, his EPIC ranked guard following right after. Throughout the entire exchange and the few hours that passed during this guard selection, not even once had any words come out of Princess Adelaide's mouth.

She looked to the retreating figure in the sky as I felt heavy emotions of rage almost spill out of her veiled figure.

With the finishing of the event, we didn't stay with the celebrating mercenaries and nobles, the princess making her way to the carriage that was surrounded by many Royal Guards as we made our way to another location

I heard the familiar voice of the princess ring in my ears as I followed the procession in the skies.

"We'll visit the castle where I can show you around for a bit."

Her voice was much colder than the one I had been hearing all this time. I placed the Crown Prince high on my caution list after this as we moved to the center of Snowy Peak, where a luxurious castle manor laid itself out.

Past the wide gates of the castle was a small garden of flowers and a water fountain in the center. It was a peacefully colorful sight as chirps of birds could be heard as they flew about.

The carriage stopped in front of the manor entrance as the princess stepped out. The Royal Guards spread out to the surroundings as they took their positions around the manor, with one guard walking and talking closely with the newly initiated Captain Ryner that was looking enviously at the two guards that had access to enter the manor as their doors closed.

With the covert rank S item and many hiding skills I had, I passed through the doors the same as the princess without any issues. The view inside the castle was even grander, with an enormous chandelier hanging in the ceiling as two sets of stairs sn.a.k.e.d to the second floor.

The two guards that entered stayed at the bottom of each staircase as the princess made her way up, passing through a door that led to a large hallway. The door closed with a thud and Night revealed herself standing near the princess, with me deactivating some of the hiding skills and the veiled suit I had on

With a nod from the princess, Night moved forward and left the two of us walking across the hall.

"I know it may not seem like it, but my skill has confirmed it multiple times. My biggest enemy is my own older brother."

I thought of the EPIC ranked guard that was with him as I listened to this and asked

"I saw the powerful guard that stood at the entrance of Snowy Peak, is the guard he came with the one protecting Summit Peak?"

"Sadly no, and this is a point where I fell behind. There is an EPIC ranked guard protecting each of the four peaks. The guard he was bringing around was an adventure he found himself some time ago. His power continued to exceed mine after the addition of this one person"

We walked through the halls of the manor as the princess told me more information about the four peaks of the Frozen Kingdom and the surrounding lands, not questioning for a second why I seemed to ask so many questions. I wanted to put my plans into place as I waited for my skills to continue rising in proficiency, as well as quickly rise the proficiency of my offensive rank S skills by delving into dungeons where secrecy would not be an issue

"I want to go visit some of the dungeons in the surrounding areas to raise my strength a bit more after seeing the people you're up against."

The princess turned to me with that same beautiful frozen face as I said this, and a barely visible smile appeared as she said.

"Dungeons are a great way to go, and with how confident I am in my unique skill, I'm sure you aren't showing us your full power now. How about this, it's stifling to stay cooped up in this peak all this time, and I can't even recall the last time I went out of the kingdom. I don't know which part of the continent you hail from, but let me show you around the surrounding lands as you become more familiar with the dungeons and the people around here. With your strength, we shouldn't have anything to worry about."

The girl continued to place complete confidence in her skill that apparently told her nothing would go wrong with me around. I thought about the idea and went along with it, thinking it would be nice to learn more about this world while getting to know the person who wanted my corporation so much

My 'passive' skills continued to accumulate proficiency even now, so passing the time with a gorgeous lady while getting stronger by combining skills as the requirements were met was also not bad. I would also get the chance to enter the dungeons where I can spam the offensive rank S skills multiple times to raise their proficiency too, and for this I would go into the dungeon alone.

"Give me a few hours to send out some messages and put a few things together. We can leave early tomorrow morning while I gather the intelligence on the traits of surrounding dungeons you can go to."

I nodded as the princess continued to show me around her castle manor. She seemed to gradually be getting back that cheerful voice that still didn't match her face that didn't show much emotion the more she talked as the memory of the older brother from today faded.

The rest of the day was spent walking around the manor and being introduced to where I'd be staying. She didn't lie with her words from before, she really did show me a grand room right next to an even larger one where she'd be staying, where Night seemed to have prepared everything after she separated from us earlier.

The first ever S+ ranked skill also showed itself at this time with the addition of [Saint's Phantom] and [All Element Resistance] that reached the requirements. The new rank S+ skill was [Saint's Return- A

long forgotten saint's shadow stands behind you and your allies, constantly healing and providing heavy resistance against your enemies]. The appearance of the first ever S+ skill made me feel a great achievement, while also reminding me of my rate of progress.

The scary rate of progress confirmed that I would definitely be able to combine an EPIC ranked skill some time soon. It was a much safer and possibly faster way to strengthen myself, making me think **[Skill Combination]** was just an extremely killer addition to my nearly endless mana that continued to make my speed even faster as time passed. The day ended like this, it was one of those peaceful days I hadn't had in a while as I enjoyed the company of new people and became stronger through combining skills.

Chapter 86 - Dungeon diving in another world II

The next morning, I found myself in a wide carriage that had the most comfortable seats that the cars in my world could not even compare. The princess was sitting opposite me in her veil as she looked out to the procession outside of the carriage.

The carriage had a see through function where the people inside could see the outside as it was a clear window, but those outside only saw the luxuriously made materials of the ride that was now attached to a magnificent horse. We were just a few steps away from the bottom of the bridge leading to the Snowy Peak as the carriage we were in was followed by many others like it, heading towards the large fortress wall in the distance

The Princess seemed to have planned for many things as I could see various merchants and mercenaries coming along with us, as well as the Royal Guards that were valiantly defending from threats atop their horses. I could see the figure of Ryner that made me chuckle, as he seemed to have transformed into the most perfect Princess Knight that continued to gaze at the carriage we were in frequently.

"There are a few counties and dukedoms in our surroundings that face harsher winters with less food, but each of them have their own specialties that we can trade with. I can already see that you plan to go delve into the dungeons alone, so I'll be keeping myself busy while you do that."

I felt like I could see a smile behind that veil as the princess spoke without worry, the barriers surrounding this carriage making it so that no sounds came out. She wore a thick white dress with glistening fur on her shoulders, clothing that was commonly seen on the people in this kingdom that always lived in cold winters. I liked how the girl quickly caught on as we began the journey outside the Frozen Kingdom.

The procession of carriages quickly made their way out of the large gates as they paved their way across snowy roads. I was comfortably sitting in the carriage with the Princess that continued to describe the things we were seeing even without me asking

"What? My little sister is making a trading trip?"

A surprising move had occurred from the little rat that continued to evade my traps. Making a trip to surrounding counties at this time? Don't you know that dangerous things can happen in the outside world where many bad people move around?

A gleeful smile broke out of my face as I thought of this opportunity that would never have presented itself before. What had happened to cause you to do something this reckless huh? Did the number of pitiful rank S guards around you really make you think you were fully protected?

Lets see what is giving you this newfound courage to prance around without worry!

The first place the procession of carriages stopped at was a place called Valen County. It took a few hours to get to this place as I learned more about the surrounding places near the Frozen Kingdom

Valen County was famous for its textiles and exquisite clothing, so the merchants in this procession would start doing business here first. The county had a few dungeons in its surroundings, with the highest one being the rank A dungeon, **[Floating Pentagons]**.

The Princess was planning to provide assistance and talk with the leader of this county as she tried to expand her influence. I would dive into this brand new dungeon for the first time and see just how different they were compared to the ones I have been used to.

Before I left the carriage, Princess Adelaide handed me a small twinkling piece of metal.

"This works as a way to communicate if something ever pops up. If it blinks orange, then something serious that could endanger us might be occurring. If it glows red...well hopefully it never comes to red."

I accepted the piece of metal and told her not to worry too much, I would only spend a few hours in the dungeon. I could most likely clear it in under 20 minutes if it was anywhere near the dungeons I have been used to, but the goal was to enter this secret area where I would be alone to spam and raise my offensive rank S skills, so spending a few hours would be required

I let the princess leave the carriage first and activated my many hiding skills and added mana to activate the rank S veiled suit before stepping out myself. She was received by a plump man who began talking to her fervently while I went toward the dungeon she mentioned.

The monolith of this dungeon was much bigger than the rank A ones I knew. There were dark doorways instead of squares to place your hands on, and I walked into one of these dark doorways, entering the first dungeon in this world.

[Floating Pentagons] was just as its name suggested. I was transported into a wide pentagon that was floating in the skies with complete darkness all around me. The only other points of light were four other pentagons similar to this one floating not too far away.

Monsters began materializing on all the four pentagons but the one I was on, where four humanoid rhinos came to life and went towards the center of the pentagon that held a runic circle.

The moment they stepped on this runic circle, they disappeared from their pentagon and all four monsters appeared in the middle of the pentagon I was in. I smiled at this new environment as I began by summoning my Virulent Abomination and started casting multiple offensive rank S skills

Thunder and molten flames roiled about, as well as flaming spears and blasts of cold that froze everything. The goal was to nonsensically spam every single skill continuously for the time to come until they reached 100 proficiency.

I made sure to keep the bodies of monsters that continued to materialize from the four other pentagons and were transferred to the one I was standing in so that I could raise up and use [Profane Eruption] too.

From the first four humanoid rhinos, there came 8 more in a few minutes, then 16 more after that, and then 32. They kept on doubling as time passed, until 64 monsters kept on appearing every 10 minutes. If your hunting party couldn't handle the old ones fast enough, you would soon be overwhelmed and find yourself dead.

I cleared them way before the new ones even came and continued to spam my skills as I watched the proficiency numbers rise in real time. [Profane Eruption] was truly deadly, as the bodies of dead monsters exploded in a shower of poisonous gore that blasted anything near, creating even more corpses. I made sure to target the skill to activate on a single corpse each time and not explode all the corpses at once so that I could activate it multiple times.

I had completely gone into an insane mode of constant spamming that I lost track of time, completely not realizing when a huge 10 meter tall colorful humanoid Rhino that was most likely the BOSS become blasted as soon as it appeared by the surrounding skills

A large green crystal rose in the floating pentagon I was in while I felt a flow of information enter my brain. This was...the random skill adventures received after clearing a dungeon for the first time in this world?

The information entered my mind and instructed me on how to manipulate essence into an applicable form to cast the skill [**Cook**- As long as it is activated, any dish you make will turn out delectable]. I felt a ringing as this new skill appeared on my attribute panel as a rank A skill, but it was such a different skill from what I was usually used to that I laughed. But the purpose of me entering this dungeon wasn't for the clear skill I would receive for the first clear. Although the skill did seem interesting, and I would try it when the chance came. For now, I would spend the next few hours in this dungeon raising proficiencies and combining skills.

Chapter 87 - Dungeon diving in another world III

As destructive skills continued to be cast all around me, new ones that met requirements were combined.

The addition of [Spear of Destiny] and [Combusting Spears] gave the A+ ranked [**Relegator's Spear**]. [Pain Resistance] and [Ultra Regeneration] produced the A+ ranked [**Immutable Regeneration**] that provided even faster regeneration while boosting my tolerance to pain.

The new skill made me excited to try out. I also wanted to see just how great the healing effects of the S+ ranked [Saint's Return] was when applied to summons like the Virulent Abomination that always continued to be injured. If the resistance buff and healing was high enough, the summon might even be able to withstand attacks of that EPIC ranked beast while dealing its poisonous damage before being completely destroyed.

I watched as the numbers rose for many of the skills, as well as another two particular S rank offensive skills that were just a few digits away from being combined. Another skill that was rising slowly while active was [Summon Virulent Abomination], but I made sure to make full use of the deadly explosion

that occurred when I casted it while it was already on the field to also raise the skill even faster with continuous casting.

It seemed like it would be compatible with [Profane Eruption], so that was one thing I was also actively rising. A few hours passed like this, until I felt mentally drained from continuing to multitask and repeat this process so much. I looked around the messy floating pentagons as well the blank darkness below in this dungeon that would be terrifying for anyone who didn't have the ability to fly.

Hundreds of monsters had died, but not even their bodies remained with the constant use of [Profane Eruption]. I went out of the dungeon to find the procession of wagons fully ready to go, with Princess Adelaide being kept company by the same plump man that received her.

I used [Silent Communication] to let her know I was done, and she said a few words to the plump Count who nodded with vigor, with her heading towards the carriage right after.

While remaining fully hidden from prying eyes, I was back in the carriage with the princess that seemed to have become exhausted after moving around these past four hours.

"You took your time, Sir Osmont. Are you sure you're good to go to the next location right now?"

From what she told me earlier, the next location would be the Shadow Dukedom with an S rank dungeon nearby. It would take a few hours to get there, so I told her we were good to start the journey now.

It neared evening, and I was able to serenely relax in the comfortable carriage after spending the last few hours incessantly casting skills. As we left behind the Valen County, we were surrounded by a scene of white as snow fell down even harder along the unpaved road.

The white horses that were a tad bigger than ones I was normally used to did not seem bothered by the cold even one bit as they pulled the wagons and carriages forward. The Royal Guards occasionally became statues of snow as they continued to surround our carriage, with a few more protecting the wagons in the back

We hadn't come across anything so far, but the Princess exercised great caution as usual. I was curious about her unique skill she mentioned before and asked her about it.

"The Unique Skill I hold is a special skill that can be passed down to those of your blood. My mother used the skill to become a powerful woman that commanded a great number of forces. Half the reason that my father was so successful as a king was due to her. She passed the unique skill down to me before she passed away years ago."

A semblance of sorrow could be felt from her voice when she mentioned this. It seemed the possibility of skills being passed down occurred very rarely with strict conditions. She talked about the effects of the skill, and how she made many of her plans based on it. . I praised this girl's ability to get where she was at now depending on this one skill.

I also didn't want to overinflate my ego, but it also allowed her to find someone like me. If her skill is to continue to be trusted, it means I will be making big moves in the future. To protect her from someone that was meant to become the next ruler of the Frozen Kingdom as well as the calamity of demons she continues to mention.

If her skill gave her confidence in passing through these events by keeping me close, then...I smiled at the thought of the people I would be facing and the impact that would come from defeating them. I had to take things as they came though, and not play too much when I have yet to obtain an EPIC ranked skill. I found the pressure of the possibility of my death weighing heavily on my shoulders the moment I thought about its impacts.

This was why I had searched for and learned so many defensive skills, as keeping my life was the first and foremost important goal. The many rank A defensive skills were rising very well, and I would most likely be able to make them A+ in another few days.

The tone in the carriage was light as the Princess talked about the areas we were passing and the places surrounding the kingdom. The Valen County that we just passed was one of them, and we were heading towards the Shadow Dukedom right now.

These places depended on the protection of the Kingdom's forces, and there was much tension right now as the forces of demons neared the cold lands. People from Valen County and the Shadow Dukedom that were worried enough even made their way towards the Frozen Kingdom with all of their life savings to settle down there.

"In this dukedom, they have a specialty of different types of food that are unique to their location. I think you'll find it fun to spend the night there."

The Princess seemed to have caught on to how much I enjoyed the food here, and made it so that we would spend the night enjoying the delicacies of this new location. We arrived half an hour later to the dukedom that was lined by huge walls. The procession of carriages and wagons were welcomed with enthusiasm as they saw the banner on the carriage we were in.

I could already see a huge monolith rising up in the Dukedom with [Regal Archer's Eyes], and it was more than twice as huge as the rank A dungeons I had normally seen. This was the rank S dungeon, **[Waterworks]** that I would dive into tomorrow. Both this one and the rank A [Floating Pentagons] had the same black color on their monoliths, not adopting any of the usual blue, orange, or red I've been used to

It was a hectic night as the merchants and guards moved around to unload a few things, and the princess was led to a manor where she would spend the night. We came to an enclosed area in the Dukedom where a small castle stood.

After the introductions with a valiant knight that had a red mohawk who was the Duke of this place, among the few words that the Princess let out, food was one of them. The Duke was surprised when he heard the request of the princess to provide her with even more different types of delicacies than the ones they had prepared, and he agreed nonetheless.

He knew the Princess preferred to spend her time alone so he didn't intrude too much, leaving after sucking up to her as much as he could. Guards were placed where they were needed as the doors to the small manor closed, and I finally lifted the effects of a few skills as well as the rank S veiled suit.

"Please help yourself, I know you must be tired from delving into the dungeon and listening to me talk the entire day."

The Princess said this as Night flashed by not too far away and took her position outside the door of the room we were in. I was courteous and allowed the Princess to sit down on the extravagant seats first before we enjoyed the delicacies of the Shadow Dukedom. It would be a nice ending to this eventful day as I waited to combine a large number of skills tomorrow.

Chapter 88 - Schemes

My morning began with abrupt knocks waking me up from the comfortable bed I was in. I didn't necessarily need sleep with my maxed rank S attributes and many skills that now became passive, but I always felt rejuvenated whenever I had a decent sleep. I groggily said come in while rising up from the bed where the silk sheets drifted down.

The door opened to a blue haired girl who seemed to have a semblance of worry on her eyes. She came to a stop as she saw my n.a.k.e.d upper half on the bed and turned away as I became surprised at this type of reaction I never would have expected from someone like her.

I equipped my body armor and asked,

"What happened?"

There shouldn't have been anything that went wrong with just a few hours passing. I was even patiently waiting to combine more skills this morning before diving in the dungeon here.

"Something that I didn't completely expect has occurred."

She turned back and spoke in a serious tone as she faced me once more.

"Before we left, I made a few Shadow Guards stay behind to monitor the forces of the Crown Prince in the case of any suspicious movements. I thought there was a possibility he might try something fishy once news of me traveling to the surrounding counties and dukedoms reached him, but I never expected him to make such a bold move."

I was up with full attention as she said this and I asked her, "What exactly did you find out?"

"The Shadow Guards followed a collection of mercenaries working under the Crown Prince as they left the Kingdom. Only the two of them followed to see if this would lead to something while others remained in the kingdom to continue monitoring. The two Shadow Guards that followed those mercenaries closely found them heading in the same direction we are."

This doesn't seem too bad? I waited for her to continue as it seemed she liked holding the best things for last.

"Among the mercenaries they observed was the figure of the woman that was with the Crown Prince a few days ago."

Now, with these words I finally became serious. An EPIC ranked individual was involved? "What's their plan here? Surely your own brother isn't sending people to take your life."

"Hah" A light laugh escaped from her lips for the first time since I met her, and she said, "It's not my life that he wants. I've seen the way he's looked at me my entire life while I grew up. He's got a twisted mind, and I don't know what plans he's created from it."

I thought about this possible new threat and my own level of power currently. Between beasts and humans, beasts of the same rank were always more powerful. Would this be applicable to the adventure that supposedly was heading towards us?

I then looked through the many skills I had brought up recently, as well as the ones ready for combination after this past night, and a smile broke out in my face.

"They won't be making a move while we're in this dukedom will they?"

"No, they will most likely put up an ambush in the snowy roads with low visibility when we leave this place."

The plan in my mind fully formed as this was confirmed. "Great. We'll head out in a few days to clash with these people. For now, let's continue to enjoy the time in this dukedom."

A few days would be enough for me to get much stronger through combinations and loot. After all of this was completed, I even had a chance to gain another EPIC ranked skill from someone that wished me harm? Haha, I couldn't wait!

The calm returned on the face of the Princess as she saw my own face that had no worry, and nodded her affirmation. "You plan to head to the dungeon now?"

"As soon as we grab some food, it's going to be a grueling few days of grinding for me."

"Grinding?"

The term threw her off and I told her not to worry as we stepped out. The plan would be simple for the next few days. Constantly grind and combine skills while gaining new ones from this rank S dungeon, **[Waterworks]**.

This would actually be the first S rank dungeon I dive in, as all the ones I came across previously had dungeon breaks right after. After grabbing some food, I covertly made my way over to the dark monolith. The hazy doorways were striking, the blackness inviting and drawing you in. Without wasting a minute, I entered my first rank S dungeon in this world.

[Waterworks] was a particularly interesting dungeon, as the first floor I appeared in had a few patches of land, with water surrounding the floor for more than 2 times. My [Regal Archer's Eyes] that could see triple the distance that [Eagle's Eye] could observed many movements on the water below.

ZOOM!

Without a second passing, monsters flew out of the water with sparkling sharp teeth spread wide open to take a bite out of my figure standing on the small path of land. The beasts looked completely the same as sharks, just four meters large, but with the addition of wide wings on its sides.

These were the famous monsters in this dungeon called **[Winged Shark]**. They could stay in the water as well as the air, and terrorized any adventures that were not prepared.

I had the goal of focusing on raising my rank S offensive skills as well as the rank of my one and only summon currently, so I began with those skills. With the shining of the circular rune, the ugly Abomination came out with a loud scream as always.

The [Winged Shark]s in the air found their small wings ripped apart as something much larger than them began to move. [Saint's Return] was casted next as the figure of a golden saint with white hair appeared behind me. The hazy figure had a stern look on his face as white rays of light shot down towards me and the Virulent Abomination.

The light brought about an invigorating feeling to my body as I felt energized and like nothing could possibly hurt me. The summon that had begun battling with the flying sharks found many parts of its body that were injured closing up quickly as it moved even faster.

The next skills I began casting were [Volcanic Eruption] and [Rage of the Thunder Monarch], I was excited to cast these even more as they would be reaching 100 proficiency in an hour or so.

The first floor of this dungeon was cleared like this. The sharks were very aggressive and always dashed out of the water to attack. Even if they didn't though, the constant thunder that rained down in the water as well as the molten flames and gaseous heat made it easy to take all of them down.

The moment any of them died, [Profane Eruption] came to play to cause even more mayhem. The [Waterworks] dungeon had 50 total floors, with the first 25 holding countless variations of [Winged Shark]s and the latter 25 holding the last boss room as well as another species of monsters.

The fact that there were so many floors that provided a ton of monsters made the usage of [Profane Eruption] shoot through the roof and cause the proficiency to visibly rise over time. Hours passed by like this as I enjoyed the rising of numbers and combining of skills while terrorizing new species of monsters.

Chapter 89 - Fast paced power ups

Halfway through the 10th floor of [Waterworks], [Volcanic Eruption] and [Rage of the Thunder Monarch] finally hit 100, and I was able to put the two skills in the [Skill Combination] tab that shone blue.

The product of these two was the rank S+ skill, [**Devastation**- The sky cracks as destructive lightning and flames from the depths of an unknown dimension search for your enemies.]

The first trial of this skill was particularly eye opening. The moment it was casted, it seemed like the sky was unzipped as roiling thick ropes of purple lightning and red flames spread out to every single [Winged Shark] in the air, as well as the ones hidden below in the water.

The destructive combination of lightning and heavy flames seemed as if they had their own consciousness as they searched for and blasted apart any beast they pierced into. 10 seconds, that was how long the skill lasted, but also the amount of time that cleared out the entirety of [Winged Shark]s in our surroundings, leaving the Virulent Summon standing blankly in the air looking for more enemies.

The advent of [Devastation] made my attacks overcome the efficiency of the fast moving summon for the first time since it appeared, increasing the rate we progressed through the dungeon.

On the 25th floor, the rank A skills that had been active all this time finally reached the requirements and were combined.

[Steeled Muscles] and [Hardened Bones] went together to provide [**Man of Steel**]. [Wind Armor] and [Frigid Armament] produced the colorful [**Dual Element Armor**]. [Metal Scales] and [Yeti's Fur]

produced **[Beastial Hide]**. [Tanzanite Skin] and [Earth Armor] went ahead to produce **[Protection of the Earth]**.

This gave me four new rank A+ defensive skills that had their power nearing rank S, giving me even more confidence of having a sturdy enough defense to withstand attacks of someone of the EPIC rank. I would still continue to over prepare though, as nothing wrong would come out from that.

After passing through the 25th floor, we came across another type of monster in this dungeon. This time they were the terrifying combination of a humanoid fish, the famous [Siren]s. They had n.a.k.e.d upper bodies where voluptuous masses of flesh were flinging around as their lower bodies were made of hard green scales.

They had powerful attacks shooting out from their mouths as deadly soundwaves and poison continued to flyout as they moved across the water. Well, they still didn't stand a chance against the Virulent Abomination that ripped them apart without reservation, as well as [Devastation] that searched out for them even when they dived underwater.

[Profane Eruption] caused them even more problems as the bodies of their friends exploded and left poisonous zones in the water that spread out. As they could not fly into their skies, they became even more pitiful than the [Winged Shark]s from earlier floors.

I continued to bulldoze through the dungeon in this manner, a multiple array of skills continuing to be casted as their proficiencies rose. [Summon Virulent Abomination] had already reached 100 as my fingers itched to combine it with the poisonous and powerful [Profane Eruption] the moment more bodies of dead monsters continued to appear.

I had already profaned more than a few thousand bodies just in this dungeon alone as more than 2 hours had passed while I went down [Waterworks]. The dungeons floors were extremely vast and wide, providing a vast array of monsters that made me very happy.

With a few thousand more bodies to explode until I reached floor 50, I might be able to carry out the combination of the two skills in this dungeon run.

Another two hours passed as I took out the screaming [Siren]s, and I found myself on the 50th floor where the BOSS resided. The floor was a wide expanse of water, without even a patch of land to stand on now. Adventures usually came into this dungeon equipped with information and items that either allowed them to breathe underwater or walk on it, being fully prepared for many different situations before they came in.

I went about it a whole different way by remaining in the air with the [Flight] skill that continued to show extreme usefulness even now. I watched in the air as the ugliest beast I had seen in a while showed itself.

I thought my abomination was ugly to look at, but the monstrosity rising up was something else. The BOSS of this rank S dungeon that was called [Fish Monstrosity] made its appearance. It was as its name suggested, a monstrosity made up from multiple fish that seemed to still be alive and screaming as wails came out of various parts of its body.

It's face was contorted in anger as it howled towards me, multiple water spears forming and making their way over. This beast was one that many adventures had trouble with when looking at its hard defenses and powerful water element abilities. The maxed abomination that was at the height of its power swooped down to smash into the monstrosity as their deadly battle began.

I let the water spears hone in on my position and strike my body, seeing just how effective the attacks of a peak rank S beast that needed multiple rank S adventures to take it down would stand against my many defensive skills as well as [Saint's Return] that continued to heal me and provide me resistance boosts consistently.

The water spears seemed to have struck into a muddy wall as they didn't even get near enough to dent my armor, the many defensive skills that were either layered on top of my skin or in the form of colorful barriers stopping them right in their tracks, where they then dissolved into nothingness.

I nodded in satisfaction while watching this, realizing that even if an EPIC rank were to land their attacks on me, they would at most injure me. But, let's continue accumulating more defenses!

I eagerly looked to the battle between the two ugly beasts as the Virulent Abomination seemed to have the upper hand with the constant healing and buffs from [Saint's Return]. Every single injury it suffered closed in but an instant as the [Fish Monstrosity] continued to be injured with the noxious blasts it was releasing as well as its sharp claws.

I finished the battle as I casted [Devastation] and watched the roiling thunder and flames rush out from the rift in the sky and pierce the body of the beast. Painful screams rung out as the beast withstood extreme heat and lightning, watching its body slowly become burned and destroyed.

When the 10 seconds passed, only a mess of flesh was left behind as the monstrosity screamed pitifully. The summon ended the fight by digging into its body and releasing multiple noxious blasts from within

A similar scene to when I cleared the [Floating Pentagons] for the first time occurred, where a flow of information in the form a skill was placed in my mind, it was quickly absorbed and transformed into a skill that appeared on my panel.

This time it was a rank S skill called [**Budding Farmer**- You can become the best farmer in your region. In exchange for a large amount of mana, the skill allows you to change the essence in a surrounding field to promote the extreme growth of all plants.]

...All the skills that I was receiving by clearing a dungeon for the first time in this world were non combat skills that seemed to have their own special uses. I wasn't complaining as they seemed to be very interesting skills, so I would give the first one I received, [Cook], and this one a try soon.

From the knowledge I collected so far, the perk of gaining a skill when clearing a dungeon for the first time in this world was completely random. It was a completely different system from the dungeons that the demons used to descend to my world. I would see what type of skills I would continue receiving when I clear more dungeons of this world in the future.

I went near the beast to get its loot similar to how I had been doing these past 49 floors as I collected more cores and a skill book into my [Storage Pouch]. I then rose higher and casted [Profane Eruption],

watching the large body of the beast cause a heavy explosion and give the last point from 99 to 100 for the skill.

I excitedly looked at the two skills that were ready for combination as the summon was canceled and I placed [Summon Virulent Abomination] and [Profane Eruption] into the [Skill Combination] tab

The tab shone in a blue light as the process took even longer than when I combined the skills to receive [Saint's Return]. It finished in a few seconds, and the new rank S+ skill produced from this deadly combination was [**Summon Plague Bearer**- An abomination of extreme evil that causes deadly plagues wherever it goes. The skills **Poisonous Breath** and **Defiler** are among its tools.]

My eyes shone with this combination as I itched to restart this dungeon and see just how deadly the summon had become.

Chapter 90 - A Journal Entry

Hello.

This will be Night's #786 entry. A perplexing event has occurred recently that deserves to be recorded.

My gracious Lady gave me a command that allowed her to connect to a man we just recently observed. It was a peculiar man based on the details we collected. He seemed to have popped out from nowhere and landed in our kingdom, showing an average level of power, and yet catching the eye of the Princess.

We were still matching his characteristics with those of beings across the continent. As for why he caught the eyes of the Princess, I have yet to find out.

It is the continued behavior of the Princess towards this man that continued to make me observe them even more though. Not to even mention how close she seems to be getting to him and allowing him to be that frank with her, let's just take a look at the past few days we spent in the Shadow Dukedom.

After another one of my sisters informed her of another plot hatched by the Royal Wanker, the first thing she did was head to inform that man. She didn't discuss with us or with the Royal Guards on our plan of action.

The plot currently afoot could be potentially dangerous for all of us, so I expected the Princess to come up with one of her grand plans that would allow us to outwit the enemies and arrive back to our castle unharmed. But no such thing occurred. She simply went to discuss it with that man and came out, informing us to continue monitoring from a distance and to be sure that they do not catch on, that we will continue to spend our time in this place for a few days.

This wholly surprised me and made me question the power of that man that made the Princess disregard the power of an EPIC ranked individual. It also made me somewhat down. Did the Lady not need us anymore?

The morning after we found out about the news of the impending attack that was waiting for us as soon as we left this Dukedom, the man disappeared from my detection and didn't appear until the end of the day. I was happy to be back to spending time alone with the Lady as she went about her work here, but was also curious about this man who could escape the perception of someone like me that was trained in this art.

When he reappeared in the evening, he seemed to be in a good mood, and even went as far as to ask the Princess to bring him some ingredients for food he wanted to cook. This was something I never expected, but I acted as instructed and brought in a variety of raw meats and vegetables to work with.

He began cooking while seeming like a complete beginner, but the results were something completely unexpected. There was an appetizing smell in the air stemming from the food he made that I've never come across before. I couldn't help but overstep my boundaries when I saw the Lady enjoy the delicacies, and shamefully accepted the offered food.

The conclusion? Maybe this man wasn't too bad after all.

A significant amount of time was still spent with the Lady and the Sir talking. I never knew what the two of them spent so much time discussing, as the Lady had already asked me not to snoop in when she was alone with him.

I still had many questions, but I knew the princess was careful in who she confided in, so I will wait until she can come to me again. On our second and third day in the Shadow Dukedom, the same pattern continued to repeat where he disappeared and reappeared, each time he came back seeming much more calm and confident.

I wasn't dumb, and inferred a possible activity that this man was doing everyday was most likely going down the famous [Waterworks] dungeon by himself. I was shocked when I came to this conclusion, as the only people powerful enough to delve into S ranked dungeons alone were either powerful Heroes with Unique Skills or powerful adventures of the next rank

But maybe this would explain some of the many mysteries surrounding him, as well as the unexplainable savory food he has routinely been making. It was now the evening of the third day, and I can already smell that same aroma from before. I'll see if I can continue to overstep my boundaries and receive some more of those delicacies.

Until then.

A few days had passed while I continued to dive into my now favorite dungeon, [Waterworks]. The abundant amount of monsters and many floors allowed me to go all out testing the new skills that were already rising nicely. Both the newly combined rank S+ skills had reached the 30s in proficiency, and were taking their time even after I constantly spammed them these past 3 days.

Maybe getting an EPIC ranked skill in a few days was too far fetched, and I might need another week or two as higher ranked skills took their time to rise. The one thing that I found to be helpful to my psyche after the constant grind of skills and killing monsters for so many hours was the new hobby I found myself doing.

I count it as a blessing that I began doing this, as I felt like the only words passing through my mind was just this skill or that skill and which ones were next to combine. This new hobby was me using the skill [Cook] to put a few things together. I wasn't doing anything special, only using my barely passable cooking that I had to learn when I was on my own. Yet the results were exceptional. Well, it was basically the skill doing what it described.

I could confidently say that the things I made while [Cook] was active was one of the best foods I had ever eaten. It beat the food I had when I first arrived in this world by a mile. This made me curious to try out the [Budding Farmer] skill too, as it probably holds even greater surprises.

Aside from finding myself respite from the monotonous grinding so that I don't go crazy, I made new additions with [Skill Combination] and received another 6 rank S skills as well as 3 items after continuously clearing the [Waterworks] dungeon.

The new rank S skills were [**Flash**- High speed movement that allows you body to automatically evade enemy attacks], [**Phoenix Arrow**- Your bow momentarily releases inflamed arrows that carry the aura of a phoenix], [**Enfeeble**- A terrible curse strikes your enemy, reducing their speed, damage, defense, and resistance], [**Aura of Belligerence**- An aura of war surrounds you and your allies. +200% damage], [**Shield Slam**- Your shield comes to life, targeting any enemies around you in a flurry of attacks], [**Obfuscation**- Your presence continues to thin out until the best detection skills cannot observe you]

It was a great addition of powerful skills, where even ones that I doubted I would use like [Shield Slam] and [Phoenix Arrow], I still learnt them anyways.

The newly obtained rank S items were [Viridian Boots], [Legion Armor], and [Dulled Trident]. Besides the trident, I could wear everything else. The new [Legion Armor] went on top of the rank S Veiled Suit with no issues, and the [Viridian Boots] vastly increased my speed. All of these new additions and skills made me confident to stand against the power of an EPIC ranked skill without my life being snuffed in the next second. I would give myself another day before going out to clash with the mercenaries still waiting in ambush outside the snowy roads.