

World 39

Chapter 39: Toll Fee

The next morning, they continued on their journey. After yesterday's bonding attempt by Bowler, Fierce Flame no longer walked in a distance. She, however, was still mostly silent throughout the journey. Bowler, on the other hand, was chattering non-stop. Several times he had been warned by Flame to keep his voice down, afraid that he would attract nearby monsters.

Jack, however, was ignoring him. He had his radar which would protect him from being ambushed. Even if there were monsters coming due to Bowler's babble, they would just become experience points for him.

They did meet two groups of monsters in the morning, which the three of them dispatched easily. Although Bowler could be considered weak if compared to Jack and Fierce Flame, his coordination and timing in assist were accurate. Jack reckoned him to be the type that performed much better in a team rather than solo.

When they took a break for lunch, they noticed the light beam was now much larger in perspective. It showed that their destination was closed already, probably several more blocks over. They should be able to reach the place before the end of the day.

Jack had also noticed several blue dots on his radar since they began their journey in the morning. They were all moving in the same direction. Jack didn't bother to go meet with those other players anymore. If he kept on picking up stragglers, he would just wear himself down.

After another two hours of walking. They came across a large river. Beyond the river was a large open field that was the city park. In the middle of the park was an abstract sculpture that served as a monument of the city. At one side of the park was a large building that was the city hall.

A light dome that was formed from the light beam coming down from the sky could be seen encompassing the entire field. It looked like they had finally arrived at their destination, there were two days left from the time limit, so they could relax now.

There were hundreds of people loitering around on the field. Many were still coming from every direction. Jack figured with the rate it is going, there might be over a thousand people by the end of the day. Jack was astonished to find out so many people were around, considering that he had only met a handful of people since the incident that put him in this game world.

The three of them admired the view, although it was a common view to see people gathering at the city park, it had been some time since they had seen a crowd.

They looked for the closest bridge to cross the river and get to the opposite field. There were several bridges along the river, the closest one was at their Southwestern side with less than a hundred meters distance from them. They walked over there.

They could see several people who were also heading to that bridge. One group was being chased by a pack of Goblins, but once they crossed the edge of the light dome which circumference included a few parts of land on this side of the river, the goblins stopped. They just stared and jumped in frustration without going through the wall of light.

Jack realized apart from marking their destination, the light also created a safe zone that prevented the monsters from coming in. No wonder he didn't see any monster roaming in the City Park despite covering a massive area of land.

When they got near to the bridge, they discovered a commotion on it. People were clustering in the middle of the bridge. Jack wondered what was the issue. They approached and found out that several people with weapons drawn were blocking the path, preventing the newly arrived people to cross the bridge.

One of the armed people holding a hatchet said, "I told you already, if you want to cross, then pay 10 copper coins. Otherwise, scram!"

"Are you crazy? I don't even have 5 copper coins, how do I pay?" Said a middle-aged man.

Jack scanned the group using his God-eye monocle. The armed gangster group blocking the bridge were mostly level 9 and 10. The largest man holding a broadsword who looked like the leader of the group was level 11. The opposite group who was being blocked was mostly level 6 to 8. The middle-aged man was even only level 5, no wonder he said he didn't have coins. He might have spent the past days hiding from the roaming monsters instead of fighting them.

"What? How can you not even have 10 copper coins?" The armed man blocking the bridge commented, he then turned to one of his comrades who stood by the side. "What level is this man?"

The man, who was wearing a white magician robe, stared at the middle-aged man for a while before answering, "he is just a trash, level 5."

"What a trash! Get the hell out of here. This is no place for you!" The man with the hatchet bellowed and shoved the middle-aged man away.

"You can't do this. We need to get to the other side as well!" The group protested.

As the outcry continued, a pair of man and woman in well-equipped armor approached. They were similarly confused by the event, as they tried to make their way through the crowd. The gangster leader with the broadsword made a gesture to the Magician, who then observed the pair for a while. Jack reckoned he must be using his Inspect skill. Jack himself used his God-eye monocle on the pair. The man was level 11, while the woman was level 10. The magician whispered something to the leader, who then gave a sign to let the pair passed.

The crowd who saw this immediately protested to the injustice, "why were they allowed passage?"

The man with axe replied with disdain, "if you are strong enough, we will also let you pass. Since you are only a bunch of weaklings, then either pay or go the hell back!"

A young man among the group that was blocked exclaimed with rage, "This is extortion! Why are we allowing them to treat us this way?" He pulled out his short sword and tried to rile up the crowd. "I don't believe we all can't take them down if we work together. We outnumber them by twice their number!"

Many of the people among the blocked group expressed support to the young man, they pulled out their weapon. Suddenly, a blue ball sped by among them and hit the young man squarely on his face. He stumbled backward with critical damage appearing on his head.

The young man was only level 6, and the attack had taken out almost half of the young man's HP bar. The crowd turned and looked, a woman in a black robe standing beside the gangster's leader had cast Magic Bullet onto the young man.

The leader then stepped out, he waved his large broadsword and bellowed, "if you weaklings want a fight, we will be happy to comply! Don't take this world to be the same as the real world where numbers determined strength. Even with twice of you lot, we can easily cut you down and feed you to those Goblins!"

The leader's overbearing tone and demeanor intimidated the group. They looked at each other, hoping that one of them would rise up and led their resistance, but everyone was silent with their head hanged low.

"I don't think so," the leader thrust his sword onto the ground, the tip of the blade went easily into the sturdy floor. "Now stop making a fuss and follow the rule! Either pay up or drag your sorry ass away from here!"

The group was red with anger and felt indignant, but they realized there was nothing they could do. One of them finally proposed to the others, "let's go to the other bridges. There are many along the river. It's better than have these assholes have their way."

The man with the hatchet laughed hysterically, and said, "go ahead! You think we would be so dumb to apply a toll if the other paths are free. There are other gangs holding the other bridges as well. Go ahead and look for yourself if you don't believe me. Oh, right, you can also try swimming. There are some people who did that at first, only to find out there are river monsters inside the water, even though the river was within the safe zone."

The group turned pale after hearing the man's word. They were simply not given a way out. Some were starting to take out their coins, intending to pay the toll fee, when a loud yell was heard.

"You bunch of bullies! I really can't stand you. How could you use this opportunity to extort people? Don't you feel any shame?"

Jack turned to the source of the voice and saw Bowler who was fuming with rage.