

1

Making Magic

The Sweet Life of a
Witch Who Knows an
Infinite MP Loophole

Aloha Zachou
illust. Tetubuta

1

Making Magic

The Sweet Life of a
Witch Who Knows an
Infinite MP Loophole

Aloha Zachou
illust. Tetubuta

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Chapter 0: One Day, About Five Hundred Years into My Witch Life](#)

[Chapter 1: The Day I Was Reincarnated in Another World, I Was Given Creation Magic](#)

[Chapter 2: A Strange Fruit a Day](#)

[Chapter 3: I've Become a Witch. Visually, at Least.](#)

[Chapter 4: Got a Magic Skill. Creation Magic Sure Is Handy!](#)

[Chapter 5: Let's Get Out of This Wasteland!](#)

[Chapter 6: Teto the Clay Golem](#)

[Chapter 7: Dungeons Are Just as Dangerous as They Are Effective at Getting You Wealth and Prestige](#)

[Chapter 8: Dungeon Runs and a Relative of Teto?](#)

[Chapter 9: We Cleared the Dungeon. But...Who Are You?](#)

[Chapter 10: The Witch and Golem Girl's Travels, and Meeting Their First Otherworlders](#)

[Chapter 11: We've Got Some People Coming to Town with Us](#)

[Chapter 12: We Made It to the Adventurer's Guild. They're Nicer There Than I Expected.](#)

[Chapter 13: So It's True You Can Get Rich Quick from Clearing Dungeons!](#)

[Chapter 14: The Witch Diligently Goes to the Guild](#)

[Chapter 15: Turning Extra MP into Power](#)

[Chapter 16: We Finally Got an Adventurer Heckling Us. But Teto...](#)

[Chapter 17: Herb-Gathering Pros Can Get By Just Fine](#)

[Chapter 18: Suddenly! Violent Attacks](#)

[Chapter 19: Jumping Up in Rank Is a Given](#)

[Chapter 20: Teto's New Gear, and Then On to Our Next Stop](#)

[Chapter 21: Our First Carriage Journey](#)

[Chapter 22: Quests in Ottoh](#)

[Chapter 23: Baths Are Laundry for the Heart](#)

[Chapter 24: A Day in a Pioneer Village](#)

[Chapter 25: Learning New Techniques](#)

[Chapter 26: They've Started Calling Us the Goddesses of the Pioneer Village](#)

[Chapter 27: Now That the Village Is Taking Shape, It's Time for Marriage Interviews](#)

[Chapter 28: Defending against a Sudden Monster Rampage and Abusing My Creation Powers](#)

[Chapter 29: By the Way, What Am I Gonna Do with This Thing I Made to Beat the Hydra?](#)

[Chapter 30: We'll Leave All of the Cleanup to Someone Else and Get Ready to Leave](#)

[Chapter 31: We Decided Our Next Destination Based on Where My Staff Fell](#)

[Extra Story: The Pioneer Village, Thirty Years Later](#)

[Afterword](#)

[Color Illustrations](#)

[Bonus Short Stories](#)

[About J-Novel Club](#)

[Copyright](#)

Chapter 0: One Day, About Five Hundred Years into My Witch Life

I had built a manor inside a verdant forest...and that's where I lived.

"Lady Witch! Good morning!"

"Good morning, Teto."

"I'm looking forward to the breakfast Beretta and the others made for us today!"

I headed to the dining hall with Teto, who was smiling and skipping along happily. When we arrived, our food was already laid out on the table as Beretta, my manor's head maid, waited for us.

"Good morning, Beretta, everyone."

"Good morning! I've been looking forward to breakfast!"

"Good morning, Mistress, Lady Teto," Beretta greeted us.

She was a doll attendant I had once found in some old ruins. In those early days after I'd found her, she would eat at the same table with Teto and me. But after many long years and the addition of more doll attendants to assist as her subordinates, dining times were split between groups. Nowadays she usually waited patiently off to the side, save for the rare occasions we all ate together. Though I found it a little sad, more doll maids made the manor livelier, and I accepted it as just another change in life.

After Teto and I were seated, we feasted on our meal and enjoyed a pot of tea Beretta prepared for us.

"Delicious, as always. Thank you for the meal," I said.

"Thank you for making breakfast every day!"

"You are both far too kind, Mistress and Lady Teto."

After our meal we moved to the terrace and I admired the view. The doll

attendants I'd made using Beretta's body as a reference model were doing farmwork, managing the manor, and harvesting food for our meals.

Meanwhile I intended to spend the day reading books, taking naps, and living a self-indulgent life. But I had the right to do so.

"The trees sure have grown a lot, haven't they?"

"Mmmph... Yeah, they have. To think this used to all be wasteland," Teto replied after chowing down her snack. Despite having just eaten breakfast, she was already helping herself to some scones slathered in jam Beretta had made from the strawberries grown in the fields.

One might assume the manor had been built after clearing out a grove of trees, but the splendid forest had grown long after the building was raised. In the beginning, it had been a barren wasteland.

After an ancient magical civilization had gone on a rampage, the land's mana was drained, the leylines ravaged, and the terrain reduced to a desolate void. Teto, the others, and I had spent several hundred years planting trees across barren land the size of a small country. We filled the air with our mana, grew trees to attract living things, and created an ecosystem. We also placed a magical keystone to govern and manage the damaged leylines (which circulated mana all around the world), and to move excess mana elsewhere so as to avoid an overabundance of it in any one area.

"Ah, by the way, Mistress. An envoy from the country that neighbors our forest is scheduled to arrive today."

"What for?"

"I believe there has been a change in kings. The envoy is likely coming to report this, since you have a contract with their country."

"Ah, a change in kings, huh. Then I'll have to prepare some elixirs." I downed the rest of my tea and set my cup aside before standing.

I then headed to the keystone that managed the leylines, and the magic tools that controlled it. Not only did the stone adjust the flow of mana, but it also stored the excess mana that it absorbed from the leylines. Its maximum capacity was 10,000,000 MP.

I utilized a portion of this mana to cast a spell.

“Creation: elixir!” I used the unique skill the goddess had given me as a reincarnation bonus—Creation Magic. This allowed me to use mana to create objects out of nothing. But instead of using my own mana as I normally would, I utilized the leyline mana stored by the keystone, creating three elixirs: crimson all-purpose remedies. It took 1,000,000 mana points to make a single one.

“Whew, it really takes a while to create something in the 1,000,000-MP class...”

“Thank you, Mistress. I will watch over these until it is time to hand them over.”

“Okay, thanks. Hopefully that will be enough to satisfy the delegation, and then they’ll go right back home.”

“Lady Witch, after they leave, I want to go for a walk.”

“A walk? Sure, it’d be nice to go see everyone again, I suppose.”

In the forest where we lived, aside from my manor, there were a number of different settlements. We had hidden villages for persecuted races, and housed mythical and sacred beasts that were on the verge of extinction due to overhunting and environmental shifts caused by humans. We had revived a wasteland the size of a small country into a forest, and now protected rare creatures and those who were chased out of their homes.

This region was once called the Wasteland of Nothingness, but now it was known as the Witch of Creation’s Forest.

This is the story about my reincarnation into another world, and my carefree nomadic life before creating a place for myself. Or, the long, long annals of this alternate world after I created somewhere I belonged.

Chapter 1: The Day I Was Reincarnated in Another World, I Was Given Creation Magic

I died.

Whether it was by illness, accident, overwork, or old age, I couldn't remember. I couldn't even remember if I had been a man or a woman.

"I'd like to invite you to my world," a voice called out.

"Who are you? Why have you called for me?" I asked, memories still fuzzy as I looked towards the beautiful woman before me.

"I am Liriel, goddess of another world. All I ask of you is to live a new, long life. Just doing that will benefit my world."

What a weird offer, I thought. But if it would give a dead person like me another chance at life, I had no reason to refuse.

"Okay. So am I getting reincarnated right now?"

"Not yet. Reincarnators must first choose special skills in order for them to live as long as possible."

I picked up the tablet that appeared in the air before me, and looked over the available skills—abilities with names like "Swordsmanship" and "Possessor of a Sacred Sword."

It seemed that reincarnators could freely choose as many skills as they wanted, so long as they had the skill points for them. So, using all of my allotted skill points, I took the unique skill Creation Magic, which would let me create anything at the cost of an appropriate amount of mana.

"Very well then," the goddess said. "Please enjoy our world."

"I'll just focus on surviving for now."

After I chose my skill, the goddess Liriel saw me off, leaving me in the middle of a wasteland.

I took a couple minutes to find my bearings.

“This is a young girl’s body,” I determined. “Does that mean I was female in my past life?” My memories were vague, but I had a hunch I was right.

I was wearing a normal linen shirt and pants, and had a pouch attached to my belt. The pouch turned out to be a magic bag, with everything I would need for now inside.

Looking around, all I could see was wasteland. To the north were pale, deserted plains with no plant life at all, and in the south there were only a few sparse patches of weeds. It didn’t seem like there were any hostile beings around, at least.

“Okay, I should probably start by checking out my profile. *Status.*”

It seemed that this was a world with levels and status effects, and, having been freshly reincarnated, I had 50 MP. From the basic knowledge the goddess Liriel had given me when I was reborn, I knew it was the average amount for a normal person—and that was way too little for a mage. *If I’d known I’d start out like this, I would’ve picked a skill like Mana Increase or some other magical ability,* I thought regretfully.

I decided I might as well test what I could make with my current mana pool and my Creation Magic skill.

“So, what can Creation Magic do? *Creation:* fireball staff!”

I cast my spell, and a staff with a round red tip appeared in my hands. Something innate told me that it must have taken 40 MP—or eighty percent of my mana—to make, and that it was a disposable item that shot out basic RPG fire magic.

“And done! Now, let’s look for some monsters that even *I* can beat so I can start leveling up.”

Taking my 40-MP fireball staff, I started walking through the wasteland with the sparse weeds. And just as I’d hoped, I eventually found a slime bouncing along the ground.

“*Fireball!*” Though it was a bit embarrassing, I had to raise my staff and say

the incantation aloud for the spell to cast. The ball of fire swiftly hit the slime, evaporating it and leaving nothing but a scorch mark on the ground.

“This weapon will do.”

It wasn't long before I found a couple more slimes and shot them with my magic too. But after casting three total fireballs, the staff stopped working.

“So I guess the spell *Fireball* costs about 10 MP?” The staff itself probably worked out to be 10 MP to create, and then it took 30 MP to charge it with three *Fireball* spells, for a total of 40 MP. It also seemed to be disposable, becoming just a normal staff (or some firewood) once its power was depleted. Creation Magic seemed to be a horrible mana guzzler since it was creating things out of nothing, but I was grateful I was able to at least make myself something to attack with for now.

And so, by creating fireball staffs and defeating slimes, I gradually leveled up. I could feel the sensation of my mana pool increasing, and when I checked on my status, I found it really had increased. But unfortunately, leveling up didn't heal me completely.

“At this point, I should have about half of my mana left after creating a fireball staff, maybe?”

My status screen showed that my mana pool had grown to 100 MP, and since disposable fireball staffs cost 40 MP to make, I'd end up having 60 MP left after creating one. My increase in mana also seemed to raise my natural mana regen rate, meaning I could make more things now with my Creation Magic.

For the time being, I continued walking southward through the sparsely weeded wasteland, using my staffs to defeat monsters—but no matter where I searched, there were no signs of civilization.

I spent three days walking and defeating monsters, and having found stronger creatures than slimes to beat, my level had risen to 5. And not to digress, but partway through all that, I realized it was more efficient to simply clobber slimes with empty fireball staffs than to actually shoot fireballs at them.

Chapter 2: A Strange Fruit a Day

By leveling up, I was able to create various tools other than just fireball staffs. When I wanted a tent, drinkable water, food, a blanket, and a tool to repel monsters with, I was able to make each thing for 100 MP or less. With so little MP, I could only make disposable items. I would've liked some better-quality goods, but I had to make do living survival-style for a few days on the harsh and dusty plains with nothing but my Creation Magic.

And so my level rose to 6, and my total MP hit 300. However...

"Creation! Gyah?!"

I clearly visualized making something higher quality than anything else I'd created so far, but apparently I just didn't have enough mana for it.

"Dang. I get the sense it would've worked though, if I had about three times the mana..."

Even if I wanted to grind my level up, there were hardly any monsters in this wasteland to defeat. Without monsters, I couldn't level up. And without leveling up, I wouldn't be able to increase my mana pool.

"Hmm... At this rate I'm not gonna be able to create much at all. Ah, I know!" I suddenly realized if I could manage creating this one item, I'd be able to solve my MP shortage problem. After waiting for the mana I wasted on my failed Creation Magic spell to regenerate, I tried making something new.

"Please let me be able to make this item... *Creation!*" What I proceeded to spend the entirety of my 300-MP mana pool for was a juicy-looking fruit similar to a pear.

"Uuugh..." Having never used up all of my MP at once before, I flopped down in my tent, weak from the lack of mana in my body.

The thing I'd made was...a strange fruit. Yep, just like that one stat-raising item from a certain popular RPG series.

“Will eating this make me feel any better?” I wondered aloud, before biting into the fruit and feeling the pear-like juiciness spread throughout my mouth. In the games, sometimes the strange fruit raised your max MP by a random amount—and at other times, it was by a set amount. When I checked my status, I saw my max MP had gone up, but unfortunately the fruit didn’t regenerate any of it.

“So it doesn’t restore any mana... At least the refreshing taste took my mind off my suffering for a minute.” There was nothing to do now though but lie down and wait for my MP to regenerate.

“Ahh, that was rough,” I muttered. “But being able to raise my max MP without having to level up should help me avoid running out of mana again.” Once enough of my mana regenerated, I tried making something else. “*Creation*: mana potion! This should restore 100 or so MP.”

Spending another 300 MP to make a mana potion that only restored 100 MP was obviously inefficient, but it would be good to have if I ever ran out of mana again in the future.

I continued to create more of the strange fruit, and after spending a few days researching its effects, I’d learned the following:

I could make as many strange fruits as I wanted, so long as I had enough mana.

I could only benefit from the fruit’s effect once a day, so there was no reason to eat more than one at a time.

The amount that the fruit raised my MP by was random, but it definitely rose every time.

“So if I were to eat one strange fruit a day, 365 days a year for sixty years, I’d gain 21,900 MP at the very least, huh?” It sounded to me like my ability to create strange fruits was an epic loophole for gaining more MP than I could ever know what to do with. Slow and steady wins the race, as they say...

“But honestly...it kinda sucks to have to eat the same thing every day for the rest of your life,” I murmured. “And then there was that goddess’s vague request. She told me to live a long time, but what should I be doing exactly?”

For the time being, all I really *could* do was wander through the wasteland, continually in search of stronger monsters.

I eventually created some paper, a compass, and some writing tools. Using them, I drew myself a map as I carried on with my survival lifestyle.

Chapter 3: I've Become a Witch. Visually, at Least.

It had been a month since I'd arrived in the wasteland. At first I used disposable fireball staffs to defeat slimes and other low-level monsters, but now I was at a level where it was better to just physically club 'em to death instead. And by gaining those levels and eating one strange fruit a day, my maximum MP had risen to 1,200.

But something on my status screen was really bothering me...

NAME: Nameless (Reincarnator)

CLASS: Vagabond

LEVEL: 10

HP: 250/250

MP: 1,200/1,200

SKILL: Mana Regeneration Lv 1

UNIQUE SKILL: Creation Magic

"My name is Nameless? Seriously? And I'm a vagabond? At least call me a villager or village girl or something!" Since my current body was that of a twelve-year-old girl (or thereabouts), I wasn't a big fan of being called a grimy and grungy vagabond.

"I guess I'd have to admit I probably *don't* look that great though." Because I could make various tools with Creation Magic, I'd been keeping my body and clothes clean by using a staff with the *Clean* spell on myself each day. But the great outdoors still took a toll on my clothes, so even if I was keeping things hygienic, the fact that I was living in a tent probably did make me look like a vagabond.

"I've got a bigger mana pool now, so maybe I can make myself some better

equipment that'll change my class to something else. *Creation!*"

The first thing I made was a hooded black robe. It'd be useful for keeping the sun off of me in this stupidly huge wasteland, and perfect for curling up inside on cold nights.

"Creation!"

Next was a beautifully polished oak staff, which would raise my control over magic and the amount of damage I could deal. It was thicker and stronger than the fireball staffs I'd been using so far, and looked like it'd be easy to smack things with.

"This is kinda embarrassing though. I probably look like some kind of edgy middle schooler..." But aesthetics aside, I felt my new gear should work well enough.

And so, my status screen now read...

"Ah, my class changed to witch."

I'd accomplished my goal of getting the word "vagabond" out of my profile—but thinking back to how I'd been living until this point, wielding staffs and casting spells, "witch" was probably the best replacement. However, I'd kinda stopped doing all that and was mostly just whacking things with the staffs instead.

"I've been using Creation Magic, but I haven't really cast any other spells on my own yet, huh." Since I'd only been activating the magic that the items I'd created were already enchanted with, I'd never done any proper mage-like magic.

"Let's see, how to use regular ol' magic..." Focusing on the sensation and flow of mana the same way I did whenever I used Creation Magic, I gathered mana in my palm.

"Ooooooh! Fireball!"

Poof. A tiny flame flared up a short distance off of my palm, then promptly disappeared. Since it cost 10 MP to do just that, it would be absolutely useless in a real fight.

“Guess I’ll have to practice casting magic until I can do it right, before I attempt to use it in battle. Thinking of it that way, fireball staffs sure are handy, since you can use them without any training at all.”

But still, it wouldn’t do for me to rely on such tools forever. I’d need to be able to cast magic on my own, if I wanted to become a true witch befitting my new character class.

Chapter 4: Got a Magic Skill. Creation Magic Sure Is Handy!

Honestly, even though I'd been practicing every day to learn a proper magic spell, only having fireball staffs to defend myself with in the meantime had made me a bit uneasy. I decided to come up with a better way to fight, using a special item that cost me 300 MP to make.

"Creation: Staff Martial Arts skill orb!"

Before I was reincarnated in this world, there was a whole list of skills I could have chosen from. One could learn most of these skills through training, but I could skip all the busy work by using Creation Magic to make an item that simply granted me the skills.

However, it seemed that Creation Magic had its limits. I couldn't make orbs for unique skills, and the amount of MP I needed to create skill orbs in general could vary dramatically. For example, it took 300 MP to make a standard skill at the weakest level. If I wanted to make any rarer skills, or just one with a higher skill level, I'd need to spend even more MP. Exponentially more.

If I wanted a standard level 2 skill, it'd be 300 MP to the second power: 90,000 MP. A level 3 skill would be 300 MP to the third power: 27,000,000 MP. If I wanted to make a max level 10 skill orb, the mana cost would be astronomical.

With all that in mind, the realistic option was to use skill orbs as a starting point to get level 1 skills and just steadily train them up to get stronger.

"All right, I've used that orb. So have I got the Staff Martial Arts skill now?" Swinging my oak staff up and down, I felt like I was able to move faster and with more power than before. "I'll hit harder, but if I was looking for a new way to attack, I probably should've gone with a magic skill first."

If smacking things with my staff changed my class from witch to martial artist... Well, that wouldn't be very cute now, would it? Plus, Staff Martial Arts

was primarily a defensive skill, so my first choice for a skill orb really should've been a Fire Magic one. I had been practicing fire spells after all, and now that I thought about it, it would have been much more efficient to do all that training *after* I'd gained the relevant skill from an orb.

"Okay then... *Creation*: Fire Magic skill orb!"

And so I gained the Fire Magic skill, and after some experimentation with the *Fireball* spell, I learned the differences between a fireball shot from a disposable staff, and one I cast on my own.

"So I can customize the ones I cast myself..."

For example, if I put a lot more mana into the spell, I could improve the fireball's range or damage—but there was also a danger that the spell would fail or get weaker if my mind wasn't in the right place. The fireball staffs, meanwhile, always gave the same damage output.

"Looks like this is goodbye then, fireball staffs. I wouldn't have survived without you." But since they still had some shots left, I carefully put them inside my magic bag for safekeeping. I then proceeded to cast *Fireball* on my own, launching the fiery projectiles into the wasteland until the sun went down.

Not content with relying solely on Fire Magic, I spent the next few days acquiring the three other classical elemental magic skills—Wind Magic, Water Magic, and Earth Magic—as well as Light Magic and Dark Magic...only for all six skills to combine into one.

"Um... Origin Magic?"

Since I was only at level 1 for this skill, I couldn't cast anything really strong—but it felt nicer to work with a single skill rather than a jumble of them on my menu.

More significantly, the greatest benefit I gained from Origin Magic was the ability to use various spells derived from the six magical elements. In particular, *Earth Manipulation* and *Plant Manipulation* cost a lot of MP to use, but they were a big help for making the site of my temporary base more comfortable to live in.

Chapter 5: Let's Get Out of This Wasteland!

“Mmkay, let's give this a shot... *Fly!*”

In order to test the limits of my newfound Origin Magic skill, I was trying out a variety of spells. Just now I thought of using flight magic to soar into the sky and search for civilization that way—but I couldn't fly very high or very fast.

“I guess normally you'd get the spell at a much higher level and be able to fly around freely...” But I at least managed to reach a high enough altitude to find a thriving green forest in the distance. The end of the wasteland was finally in sight!

And with that destination decided upon, I promptly returned to the ground. It would be quicker for me to just walk the rest of the way.

For the past month or so, I'd been defeating the monsters of the wasteland as I headed south. There was no water, nor any animals that I could eat. If it weren't for my Creation Magic, I would've kicked the bucket real quick. My unique skill allowed me to use my mana to make things I knew about or had a clear vision of, such as convenience store bentos, bottled drinks, a tent, and a sleeping bag. But even for fantasy items I'd never seen before or only vaguely understood, such as the staff, robe, skill orbs, and strange fruits, I could simply use more mana to fill in for my lack of knowledge.

After putting all of my camp gear away in my magic bag, I started walking towards the forest I'd spotted while flying—or floating, more accurately.

“Hah, haaah... I'm exhausted...”

Though I'd been leveling up, it was still tough trekking long distances with a twelve-year-old girl's body. But even so, after beating up every monster I came across along the way, I made it to the forest's entrance and found a good spot to set up camp. I figured I could venture into the forest proper the next morning.

“It's weird. The border between the wasteland and the forest is really

distinct.” The humidity coming out of the forest hadn’t moistened the adjacent ground and changed any of it into grass. The lush timberland just suddenly turned straight into arid fields...

The next day, I began my exploration of the forest.

“Whew, I hope I don’t run into any strong monsters,” I murmured to myself...immediately before encountering a goblin. Green skin, thin limbs, and a big head. And as soon as it saw I was a girl, something sprung to life under its straw skirt. Quite honestly, I couldn’t feel anything but revulsion.

Not wanting to cause any forest fires, I used the new pebble staff I’d made to cast *Stone Bullet* and stun the goblin, and then cast my Wind Magic spell *Wind Cutter* to swiftly slice it into bits.

“Bleurgh...” Honestly, knowing I was responsible for such a ghastly sight didn’t feel too good. Up until then, I’d only been slaying slimes and small animal monsters. It felt much more uncomfortable to kill a humanoid creature.

“Well, wild animals should eat it up if I leave it.” The only thing I could imagine eating the goblin’s stinking corpse though was a slime... Hoping one of those slimes would clean it up, I pulled back to the forest’s entrance.

“I’ll need to be more careful from here on out. It wouldn’t be hard for a goblin to sneak up on me in the forest.” I could put a barrier around myself with Origin Magic, but because my skill level was so low, it would be quite thin and weak. Ideally though, a monster shouldn’t be getting that close to me in the first place, as that surprise goblin had.

“I’m a back-row witch. Normally in games, back-row party members would never fight alone.”

It was thanks to the vanguard that mages in the back could rest easy. If mages *had* to go solo, they’d always need to get the first hit in and thoroughly demolish their foes. But no matter how quick the mages might be, it would only be a matter of time before they’d finally lose their composure in an ambush.

In my case, I’d probably lose a lot more than just my composure. I’d lose my life.

“So I just need a good vanguard, huh.”

I decided to create a golem to be my tank.

“The knowledge I’ve gained from Creation Magic tells me that a golem’s abilities are affected by its core—namely the material the core is made out of, and the mana you pour into it.”

For example, if the magic stone you used for its core was weak, the golem’s intellect and skill levels would be low. Meanwhile, the primary material the golem was composed of—earth, rock, or iron—would determine the golem’s class and capabilities. Finally, the mana you poured into the core would be the energy the golem uses to move. The bigger the magic stone core, the more mana it would take for the golem to move, and in turn the greater its output and uptime.

“Let’s do it. *Creation*: golem core!”

Using all of the mana I had at my disposal, I made a beautiful blue magic stone. It felt nice and cold in my hand, but I felt like crap from running out of mana. So after burning some of my monster repellent, I went right to sleep.

The next morning, I charged the golem core with my mana.

“*Charge*. I can put in about half the amount of mana it took to create it, so about 600 MP’s worth.”

After putting all the mana I wanted to inside the core, I thought about what to actually make the golem out of, and figured earth would be best. I couldn’t remake its core, but as long as I had the materials, I could remake its body. So for the time being, I decided to make it out of something simple.

“Okay, so earth will... Huh, it’s raining?”

With golem core in tow, I ran back inside my tent and waited for the rain to subside. To pass the time, I used my leftover MP to make convenience store candies I enjoyed in my past life. The cheap chocolates I could create for 100 MP a pop were captivating treats in my life of survival.

About half the day passed before the rain let up, at which point I was eager to resume my golem-building efforts. There was going to be a problem with that though.

“Ah... The ground’s all sticky.” The wasteland with its sparse patches of weeds had sucked up the rainwater and turned the ground into viscous clay.

“Hmm... But maybe this’ll still work?” Rather than just a rough mass of dirt, the plasticity of clay might prove advantageous for a golem’s frame, giving it greater impact resistance thanks to its absorbing power. And rather than simply lobbing hunks of earth, moist clay projectiles could be used to suffocate or immobilize enemies.

“Sounds good. *Golem Maker!*” I poured plenty of mana into the ground and shoved the golem core into the clay that would become the golem’s body.

“Oh... Oooh?”

The wasteland’s clay slowly rose up and molded into a golem. What I hadn’t expected was for the top half of its body to look vaguely humanoid, and the bottom half to just be an amorphous clump of clay to shuffle along with. Its eyes were just about as high as mine were.

I’d imagined golems to be a lot tougher-looking than this.

Chapter 6: Teto the Clay Golem

“Okay, so for now, your name is Teto,” I decided. “Nice to meet you, Teto!” I held out my right hand, and the golem understood to give me a handshake. Despite its slapdash appearance, the golem seemed to be unexpectedly intelligent. And to my pleasant surprise, I didn’t get any lumpy clay stuck all over my hand. The moistness actually felt refreshingly cool.

“I’m gonna be exploring this forest today. You get to be vanguard.”

Teto silently saluted, then started looking around for something. It eventually picked up a wooden stick from the forest, which it swung around with its full golem strength. The wood must’ve rotted from the rain though, because it snapped limply in half. Teto looked down at it despondently.

“Um, you want a weapon?”

Teto nodded its head with great enthusiasm.

“Uh, okay then. *Creation*: sword!”

Using my Creation Magic, I made an iron sword. The thick short sword wasn’t very sharp, but Teto looked pleased all the same. The golem swung the sword at a nearby tree to test it out, and despite the weapon’s bluntness, the golem’s strength forced the blade deep within the trunk. It was much less a slash than a smash, but it was a powerful attack regardless.

“That should work. Let’s go!” I said to Teto, getting another nod back.

Not far into the forest, we encountered a goblin, just like the one I’d stumbled upon the day before.

“Teto, attack!”

At my order, Teto’s sword exchanged blows with the goblin’s club, using brute force to beat the monster down. Once the goblin was knocked out, I calmly used *Wind Cutter* to finish it off.

“That worked *much* better.”

Just as I was thinking about how much safer I'd be under this new arrangement, Teto violently dug its blunt sword into the dead goblin's heart. It wasn't a pretty sight in the least, but it seemed that the golem had found something.

"Teto, is that a magic stone?"

Teto plodded its way over and tried handing me a magic stone the size of my pinkie's tip. No way was I going to take it though—not when it was covered in blood and bits of flesh.

"Eugh... Do whatever you want with it," I said, and Teto stuffed the rock into what looked like its mouth. "Huh? You can eat it?"

Teto responded to my worried question with a thumbs-up. It wouldn't be until later that I would learn how beings like golems and automatons could take the magic stones of monsters they defeated and absorb them into their cores, developing their intellect and abilities. But since those rocks were the most valuable things you could get while exterminating monsters, typical golemancers wouldn't allow their golems to have them.

More than anything else, the number of stones needed to fully develop a golem core was massive. And if it somehow ended up damaged and no longer able to function, all the stones you'd gotten the golem to absorb into said core would amount to nothing. It would take another massive number of magic stones to fix the damaged core, and the more developed the core, the higher the cost to repair it.

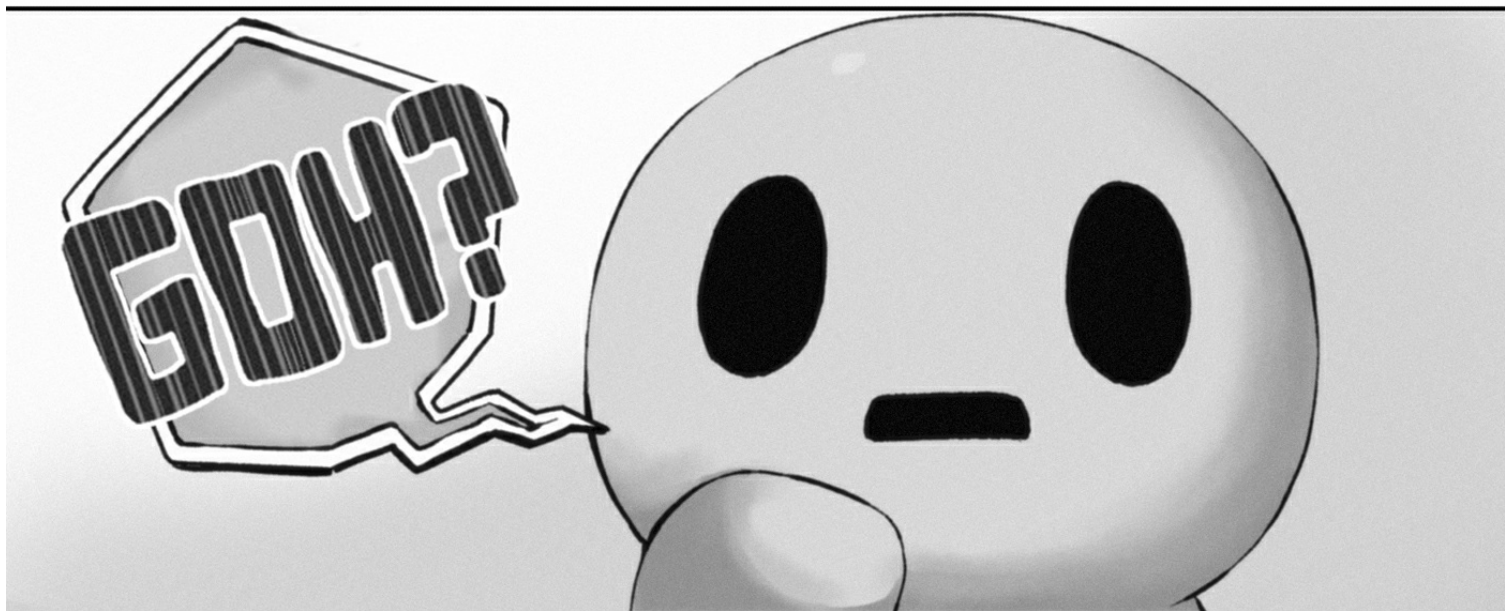
Given these difficulties, it was understandable why golemancers rarely permitted their golems to develop. However...

"I can make magic stones with my Creation Magic, so if you want more, I can give them to you."

"Goh?!"

"Wait, Teto, did you just talk? Ah, ha ha ha! You can talk now!"

Teto made short *goh* sounds in response, and it was so ridiculous, I couldn't help but laugh. But at the same time, it had been so long since I'd spoken to another being that I began to cry.



I might have been a lot lonelier than I thought I was, out in the middle of a wasteland all alone.

Once I calmed down, I realized something. “Teto, it must’ve been difficult for you to dig that magic stone out with such a dull sword. Let me make you something better. *Creation*: knife!”

The image I had in my head was a fairly sharp knife that could be used for dissection. After Teto carefully accepted it from me, it sunk into the golem’s body. Teto could store the knife inside itself, apparently. And with that matter settled, we resumed our journey deeper into the forest.

Chapter 7: Dungeons Are Just as Dangerous as They Are Effective at Getting You Wealth and Prestige

Inside the forest, my golem Teto handled most of the enemies that occasionally attacked us. In cases with multiple enemies, I'd cast magic from a safe distance—but Teto still did most of the slaying, meaning I was leveling up a lot more easily than I had been before. Even better, Teto was absorbing all the magic stones from the monsters we defeated, so its abilities as a golem were increasing bit by bit, making our journey all the more straightforward.

The cost of operating a golem turned out to be much lower than I'd expected. From time to time, I'd use my Creation Magic to make a bottle of mineral water to pour on the golem to keep its clay from drying out. I would also have Teto supplement its reddish wasteland-clay body with some of the forest's soft black chernozem soil, gradually turning the golem darker. As for its mana, I was regularly using *Charge* to give it a boost, so it was never in danger of running out of energy. It was also handy that Teto could guard me overnight without needing to sleep itself.

As the two of us explored deeper into the forest, we eventually discovered a weird cave.

"Hey, Teto. What do you think that is?" I asked the misshapen golem beside me.

"Goh?"

"No matter how you look at it, that has to be a dungeon."

The interior space of the cave was clearly off. The hill was small, but the cave went far deeper than should have been possible. Within those depths, I could make out an entrance. And most notably, the texture of the rocks on the hill appeared very different from the rocks inside the cave.

"Hmm... What do you wanna do, Teto?"

"Goh!" The golem swung its sword up and down energetically.

“Go? Okay, we can go.”

With that decided, I used my Creation Magic to make the things we’d need to clear the dungeon: paper, pens, a compass to tell us which way we were going, and a lantern for a light source. But not long after we entered and I began mapping our route, we ran into our first pack of enemies.

“Three goblins...”

But the goblins were beaten to death by Teto’s sword before I could even blink.

“Teto, you’ve gotten pretty strong, huh?”

“Goh!”

While Teto was triumphantly raising its sword above its head, the defeated goblins disappeared in a puff of white smoke, leaving behind some equipment and magic stones in their place.

“Things are getting even more gamelike. Teto, feel free to take those stones.”

“Goh!” Once Teto finished absorbing them, the golem led the way deeper into the dungeon.

Clank. Fwoo!

“Goh?”

“Ah. Tetoooooooo!”

Since Teto slid and crawled as a blobby mass along the ground, it covered a much wider surface area than a person walking on two legs. Thanks to that, it stepped on a trap switch, and arrows that shot out of the wall pierced directly into Teto’s head.

But the golem just kept going, as if nothing had happened.

“Teto, are you okay? Your head! Your head!”

“Goh?”

Clunk. Shrnk!

The next trap shot out a line of spears, skewering Teto’s body.

“Tetoooooooo!”

“Goh?!” This time sounding more appropriately startled, Teto...noticed the arrows in its head and pulled them out.

Wait, now it notices the arrows? And not the spears? Talk about thick-headed. Is my Teto a dummy?

Once the projectile-firing traps returned inside the walls, I checked to make sure Teto wasn't truly injured.

“Teto, are you all right? You aren't hurt?”

“Gooh!♪”

Since it was a clay golem, it regenerated its wounded body with some dirt and water, leaving it unscathed. And since it could move its core at will within its body, it was able to keep the precious stone from taking any damage. Plus, when Teto stepped on another switch and a trap that released sleeping gas was activated...

“Goooh!”

“Ah, you're not a living creature, so that doesn't work on you, does it?” I noted from a safe distance.

Teto was nigh invincible against all manner of lethal traps designed for living creatures.

And that's how my golem soloed the first level of the dungeon.

Chapter 8: Dungeon Runs and a Relative of Teto?

In the dungeon, the monsters got stronger with each descending level, but we didn't have much trouble dealing with them. Teto and I made sure to level up enough to give ourselves a safe margin between us and the next floor's enemies before proceeding, so while the going was slow, it was steady. Thanks to my Creation Magic, I didn't have to worry about running out of food. And thanks to my ever-vigilant clay golem, I didn't have to worry about getting hurt in a sneak attack. Fortunately each level had a safe zone in it, where Teto would guard me while I slept.

The only real trouble we faced was on the third level, where we were attacked by a group of orcs. As soon as we arrived, an orc wizard cut Teto right in half with its magic.

"Tetoooooooo!"

"Goh, go-goh..."

The monster's spell damaged Teto's core enough to disable it. With no time to lose, I remembered just how much extra MP I'd gained from the strange fruits I'd been eating, and shot off a supercharged *Wind Cutter* to slice all the orcs into pieces.

With the threat neutralized, I dug Teto's core from the pile of broken clay shards and used the magic stones I just retrieved from the orcs to repair it. It was then I learned that if a magic stone makes contact with a golem core, the stone liquifies, filling in the core's cracks. I was also shocked to learn that the golem core I'd created to hold around 600 MP had increased to over 6,000 MP, dwarfing my own total mana pool. The core itself had become denser, and was about twice the size it had been when I created it.

After overcoming the temporary loss of Teto—my biggest crisis yet—I made sure to specifically target magic-type monsters first from then on. And so we soon found ourselves on the fifth floor, the deepest level of this dungeon.

“A lot has happened since we started, huh, Teto?”

“Goh!”

“Both of us got new equipment.”

“Goh!”

Treasure chests spawned inside the dungeon, and you could gain various items by opening them. There were jewels, weapons, armor made from precious metals, and even some magical tools. The most useful thing we found was a monocle that could appraise items and display how to use them.

We also found another magic bag—one I wouldn’t have been able to make with my current mana pool. This one had enough space to fit a whole truck inside. The pouch I’d received upon reincarnation couldn’t fit nearly as much, but it did have a unique perk: time was frozen inside of it. It would be nice if I could combine the capabilities of both magic bags somehow...

For Teto, we found a sword that was much better than the one I’d made for it, as well as a shield with high magical defense. So long as Teto had this shield, I’d never have to worry about it receiving another fatal blow with magic. I also used some skill orbs in the dungeon’s safe zones to teach the golem Swordsmanship and Shield Proficiency in preparation for the boss fight. The advancement of Teto’s combat prowess was immediately noticeable, but in order for it to get used to its new skills, we spent a few more days hunting regular monsters before proceeding.

“We’ve gotten strong, haven’t we?”

“Goh.”

“I’m starting to miss the light of day, so let’s beat this boss and get out of here.”

“Goh!”

Teto and I finally entered the boss room, and inside we found a huge golem made of boulders. It was at least three times our size, and probably weighed over a ton.

“A relative of yours?” I asked Teto, only for my golem to shake its head

violently.

“GOHHHHHH!” the stone golem roared.

“Protect me, Teto! *Fireball!*”

The boss room was as big as I’d hoped it would be, so I could unleash high-powered Fire Magic spells without fear of hurting myself. And thanks to all the effort Teto and I had put into this dungeon raid, my level had increased, my magic stats had gone up, and my Origin Magic skill had strengthened... To me, Teto was a companion—a member of my party—but to this world, the golem was merely my tool, and so I alone had gained all the experience we’d earned.

“At my level now, I can do this!”

The white-blue fireball I had cast was only about half the size of a normal red one, but it burned at a much higher temperature. The fireball hit the golem’s arm, but rather than breaking off a chunk, it melted straight through the boulder and flew out the other side.

“Teto!”

“Goh!”

The stone golem lifted its remaining arm, then brought the heavy stones it was made of back down upon Teto, who used both its arms to block with its shield. The shield dispersed the blow, and my golem’s clay body transferred the shock into the ground. Though the blow smooshed it a bit, Teto was no worse for wear.

“Second shot. *Fireball!*”

My second white-blue fireball pierced the golem’s leg, destroying it. Losing its balance, the stone golem fell to the floor...and then writhed, using its remaining arm and leg to crawl towards us.

“Get back, Teto. Third shot. *Fireball!* Fourth shot. *Fireball!*”

With a wave of my staff, I melted off both of the boss’s remaining limbs, stopping it from getting any closer. But our enemy was still a golem. As long as it had mana and the substance its body was made out of, it could regenerate.

“Teto, do you know where its core is?”

“Goh.” Teto drew a stick figure on the ground and pointed to its throat, or perhaps upper chest.

“I see. Then I should slice off every bit but that area. *Wind Cutter!*”

Bringing high-pressure blades of wind down on it like a guillotine, I sliced away at the golem’s body. Because wind did quite a bit less damage than fire magic, I could only chip away at it slowly—but the flurry of magic made possible by my boundless MP allowed me to chop off its head, its regenerating shoulder, and its hips.

“Okay, Teto. You’re good to go!”

“Goh!”

Teto switched from its newer sharp sword to its original blunt one, then dashed to the boss’s torso, where it smashed away at the enemy’s motionless stone body. There was little the stone golem could do, as its core was likely using its stock of mana to focus solely on regenerating itself. Without the help of another being though, such a task would probably take at least a month or two.

Before that could happen, Teto used its sword to smash and destroy the stone golem’s core. The moment it did, the boss golem’s body disappeared, leaving behind only the broken shards of its magic stone.

“Goh!”

“Go ahead and eat it, Teto.”

Since it was a boss, the stone golem’s core was quite large. Teto gathered the pieces together before eating them one at a time like candies, looking quite elated all the while.

“Our dungeon run is finished. Next is—”

A large, round magic stone appeared on a pedestal in the middle of the room. It was probably a prize for defeating the boss—an item known as a “dungeon core.”

“Gohhhh!” Upon seeing such a huge magic stone, Teto frantically devoured the rest of the stone golem’s core before tugging at my clothing.

“Do you want it, Teto?”

“Goh, goh...”

I smirked at Teto’s eagerness. “Yeah, it’d probably be best for you to just absorb it. There’s no telling how people would react, if I were to bring a dungeon core with me to whatever human settlement we end up finding. So go ahead and take it.”

Teto reached out for the dungeon core, but didn’t eat it. Instead, mud oozed out of Teto’s body, surrounding the hefty magic stone as it sank into the golem.

“Huh... Didn’t expect *that*.”

The moment the dungeon core was fully absorbed, magic circles appeared glowing at our feet.

I panicked. “D-Didn’t expect to get force-teleported out either! Wait—”

The shock of the sudden teleport knocked me completely unconscious.

Chapter 9: We Cleared the Dungeon. But...Who Are You?

When I woke up, I was lying down in the sun. I slowly sat up and found myself on the aluminum camping mat I normally used when setting up my tent. I turned around to look for the dungeon Teto and I had cleared, and just as I expected, the entrance had disappeared completely from the hill we'd entered in.

"I wonder if Teto carried me here?" I guessed that much since I was lying down with a blanket over me, but the golem in question was nowhere to be seen. "It's probably just patrolling the area. More importantly, I should drink something. I'm parched."

I pulled out some tea I'd made with my Creation Magic in advance from my magic bag. (It was milk tea from that famous Afternoon tea series, by the way.) But just as soon as I started to relax a little, I sensed something approaching. I reflexively grabbed my staff, ready to cast a spell.

A naked girl appeared. And she was running right for me, smiling widely.

"Ah, you're awake, Lady Witch!"

With tan skin, brown hair, and amber eyes, the girl looked to be about seventeen years old physically...but seemed younger emotionally. She quickly closed in on me, her ample bosom jiggling as she moved.



“Whoa, naked! You’re naked! And who are you, anyway?!”

“Huh? You don’t know who I am?”

I was baffled when the lovely, very healthy girl’s eyes teared up—but then I recognized the weapon she was holding. It was the solid and heavy sword I had created for my golem. The dull blade was coated in blood, as if it had just been used to beat something to death.

“Wait a second... Are you Teto?!”

“Yes, I am! I knew you’d recognize me!”

After tossing aside her sword, Teto gave me a full-body hug. She was supposed to be a clay golem, but I could feel slight warmth from the soft breasts pressed against me. I felt somewhat healed from the sensation before regaining my senses.

“C-clothes! We need to get you clothes. *Creation!*” I made Teto some basic clothes for now: underwear, a shirt, and pants.

“Lady Witch, what are these?”

“Clothes. Absolutely no nakedness allowed! You need to wear these.”

“Huuuh? But I was fine without them before.”

“Lumpy clay golem bodies and proper human forms are different! Please!”

Once I’d ordered and begged her enough times, she reluctantly got dressed, though she had a hard time of it since this was a first for her. When I bent down to help her get her panties on, I saw...

No hair?!

And then once I got the panties on her and lifted my gaze, her bouncy bazongas were right before my eyes. An innocently stupid pretty girl with a baby face and huge tits—she was definitely hitting all sorts of types.

I gripped at my chest and grimaced. “It’s okay. I’m gonna grow. I’m still growing.”

Now fully dressed, Teto gave me a confused look. “Hm? What’s wrong, Lady Witch? Does your chest hurt?”

“Don’t worry about it. So, uh, Teto... What’s with the new body?”

“After we beat the stone golem, I ate the dungeon’s magic stone. Inside of it was a spirit, and when we combined, I ended up like this.”

“A dungeon core spirit...” Perhaps the dungeon had been run on mana extracted from a captured spirit. “Okay, so what happened to the spirit you absorbed then? Is your consciousness from the clay golem or the spirit?”

“Hmm... The spirit had no self, since it was always getting its mana sucked out inside the dungeon’s magic stone. And Teto is Teto!” She stated all this with the broadest of smiles and without a care in the world.

This answer wasn’t quite enough to satisfy me, however. “You absorbed a spirit who’d lost its sense of self? I wonder if that means the spirit’s form had an effect on your own. Teto, I want to check something. Is that okay?”

“Of course, Lady Witch!”

I used the appraising monocle we’d found inside the dungeon to see what it had to say about Teto.

NAME: Teto (Earthnoid)

GOLEM CORE MP: 6,590/12,000

SKILLS: Swordsmanship Lv 2, Shield Proficiency Lv 2, Earth Magic Lv 3, Monstrous Strength Lv 1, Mana Regeneration Lv 1, Subordinate Strengthening Lv 1

Teto still had her golem core, and her core MP probably acted as her HP in reality too. She seemed to have gained Mana Regeneration from the spirit, along with a number of other new skills that strengthened her.

“You’ve got a new race. You went from being a golem to an earthnoid.”

“I seeeeee...” Teto replied, not looking like she understood at all.

I couldn’t help but smile. “Come here, Teto. You did a great job against that stone golem. You deserve some more mana.”

“Yay! I love Lady Witch’s mana!”

As I wondered what liking or disliking a specific person’s mana entailed exactly, I pressed my hand against Teto’s back and allowed my mana to flow into her. She sighed in pleasure, just as if she’d settled into a hot spring. Once I finished replenishing her mana and backed away, she was raring to go.

“Now that I think of it... Teto, where’s your newer sharp sword and that shield I gave to you?”

“Hm? They’re right here!” Teto said, pulling them out of her body in much the same way she did when she was a clay golem. Part of her humanoid body turned into the consistency of mud, expanding out and ripping her clothing—and allowing her bountiful boobies freedom.

“Okay, I understand that they’re inside your body now. But try not to rip your clothes, okay?”

I slid my robe off my shoulders and placed it over Teto’s. She sure looked pleased to be wearing the same robe I always wore. But I couldn’t help but wonder if it smelled. I *had* been using the cleansing water of the magic spell *Clean* on myself regularly, but still... I *really* wanted to take an actual bath, and the sooner the better.

Chapter 10: The Witch and Golem Girl's Travels, and Meeting Their First Otherworlders

After leveling out the ground in front of what used to be the dungeon, I created a new set of underwear, clothing, and equipment for the now-earthnoid Teto, and took some time to go over my own gear and skills.

By the way, after clearing that dungeon, this was what my profile looked like:

NAME: Witch (Reincarnator)

CLASS: Witch

LEVEL: 37

HP: 420/420

MP: 2,810/2,810

SKILLS: Staff Martial Arts Lv 1, Origin Magic Lv 3, Mana Regeneration Lv 4, various others...

UNIQUE SKILL: Creation Magic

The skills displayed on my status screen were the ones I usually used. But along with those, I'd gained skills like Cartography by mapping the dungeon, Vigilance by watching for enemies, and Perception by noticing traps.

As for my name on the profile, it had probably changed from "Nameless" to "Witch" due to how Teto had been addressing me. And when I looked at myself with the appraisal monocle, the bit about me being a reincarnator didn't show up. That was a relief, because I could only imagine how people might react if they saw that I wasn't from this world. Now that I was thinking about it though, what *should* I name myself?

"Teto, please continue taking the lead."

“Got it, Lady Witch!”

And with that, Teto and I resumed our search for civilization. Taking the vanguard, Teto sliced through the thicket to make us a path. And since she’d fused with an earth spirit, she was able to check out the state of the ground simply by putting her palm against it.

“Lady Witch, Lady Witch! There’s water over in that direction!”

“Thank you for telling me. If it’s a river, we can follow it downstream and hopefully find a village or something.”

The two of us headed towards the source of the moisture. And as we got closer to the water, we found more herbivorous animals, and in turn more monsters who ate them—including orcs.

“So there are orcs outside of dungeons too. *Wind Cutter!*”

“Fwehhhh! Lady Witch, the orcs are so gross! They’re leering at me!”

When Teto was still a clay golem, goblins and orcs only had me to leer at. But since Teto had become an earthnoid girl, she had a humanlike form with a gorgeous baby face and huge tits. It was no surprise the monstrous orcs would ogle her now, when they did most of their thinking with their lower halves. Teto was my companion though, so I used my wind blade magic to behead the orcs, severing that link between their brains and their groins. The stench of the orcs’ blood promptly spread throughout the forest.

“Okay, Teto. Help yourself to those orcs’ magic stones.”

“Sure thing, Lady Witch!”

We kept advancing little by little like that, until we reached the riverside just before sunset.

“Let’s rest here. I’m feeling like curry tonight.”

“Yaaay! Curry is that stuff you put in bread, right? I love curry!”

Since Teto had taken a liking to the curry bread I’d make with my Creation Magic, I decided to treat her to some curry-in-a-pouch for a slight change of pace. Before Teto gained a humanoid form and a sense of taste, I’d always have to eat alone. But now, the two of us could eat together. Meals tasted better

when enjoyed with company, I felt. It was also fun seeing Teto's expression change as she tried new things—she had never eaten anything other than magic stones before.

As an aside, everything Teto ate would decompose and break down into soil inside of her, becoming part of her body.

“All right then, let's get a barrier set up and eat dinner.”

After putting up a barrier to shield us from sneak attacks, I had Teto use her earth magic to help me level some of the riverside so we could put up our tent and get supper ready. Today, I used a camping cooking kit to prepare some rice, and then boiled some water to heat up the curry-in-a-pouch. I also used the heated water to make instant soup, and created some fresh veggie salad and milk to round out our nutritional intake.

“Okay, let's eat.”

“Yaaay! It's curry! Curry over little bits of rice!” Since Teto wasn't human, she could eat as much as she wanted without getting full. But since all she wanted was the satisfaction of tasting the food, she ate a bit less than I did.

Not that I'm much of a big eater myself, I thought, staring down at my plate of food intently. *Maybe if I eat more, my flat chest will one day grow to around the size of Teto's...*

“Hm? What's wrong, Lady Witch?”

“Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Let's eat.”

But before we could properly dig in, we heard the sound of rustling branches. Teto and I went on guard just in time to face three figures making a beeline out of the dark forest.

“What—a little girl's here?! You two need to run!”

The ones who appeared before us were humans: a man and a woman hauling an injured man on their shoulders. Their leather armor and weapons were smeared with blood and caked with dirt, and there were ten pig-faced orcs chasing after them. I figured the dark orc that was more muscle than fat was the leader of this band of monsters—but I was more concerned about the orc

wizard I spotted among their ranks.

“Go, Teto!”

“Roger, Lady Witch!” Teto immediately grabbed her weapon and started off. Taking full advantage of her heightened physical abilities, she leaped right over the fleeing humans and split open the dark orc’s head with one fell swoop.

“*Wind Cutter!*” Meanwhile, I went straight to beheading the orc wizard with a blade of wind, then took out an additional three orcs with my magic. The headless orcs sluggishly collapsed backwards, spurting blood from their necks. Thankfully the grisly scene was difficult to make out in the dim shadows of the forest. Though I’d gotten used to the stench of blood and entrails that came after defeating monsters, it definitely took my appetite away whenever I smelled it during a meal.

After Teto beat another orc to death, the remaining fiends finally wised up and fled.

“Lady Witch, Teto beat up that monster!”

“Good girl, Teto. Now go get their magic stones and come back to me.”

“Roger!”

The three humans just stared at us, dumbfounded. They clearly didn’t expect to see two random young girls take out a gang of orcs so effortlessly, and then follow up with such a carefree conversation.

“Can’t thank you enough for saving us. I’m Lyle, an adventurer.”

Though he introduced himself amiably enough, I decided to stay silent and keep my distance from these strangers until Teto got back. Adventurers in my world’s fantasy stories did things like exterminate monsters, but that didn’t mean they were always good people. These three probably weren’t too bad, considering how they warned us of the ambushing orcs—but even the kindest people might turn on a dime if they discovered I could create things not of this world.

So I fixed my gaze upon the trio, intent to never let my guard down for even a moment.

“H-hey, don’t be so nervous, kid,” Lyle said. “We just need to rest up a bit. Those monsters really gave us the runaround.” The injured man he and the woman were still carrying let out a weak groan.

“Very well... Go ahead and lay him down.”

It seemed the adventurer trio had cast aside all but their most essential gear when the chase began, so Lyle and the woman used their coats as a makeshift bed for their injured companion.

A bloodstained Teto returned shortly thereafter with a handful of magic stones—also drenched in orc blood. “Lady Witch, I got ’em!”

“Thank you, Teto. Let me just... *Clean*. There, now you’re all freshened up.” I used my magic to wash off both Teto and the magic stones, which Teto happily slipped into a pouch she carried.

Once everything had settled down somewhat, Lyle—who I took to be the group’s leader—and the female adventurer came over to talk.

“Sorry for making the two of you fight those damn orcs,” Lyle said. “I...know this is an impertinent thing to ask, but I can tell you’re a mage... So please, could you use your magic to heal my brother’s wounds? If you can’t use healing magic, then please give us a healing potion. I’ll gladly pay you!”

Both the adventurer named Lyle and the female adventurer beside him looked down at me with pleading eyes.

“I know about healing magic, but I’ve never attempted it before. Are you okay with me trying a spell on your brother?”

“Please, you’re the only one we can ask!”

I had Lyle and the woman step back, and asked Teto to keep watch while I used my appraising monocle on the injured man.

His injuries aren’t as deep as they look, and he isn’t bleeding too much. But it seems the orcs’ weapons might’ve been poisoned. Though the man was covered in blood, it was mostly from the orcs. He was probably strong enough to beat a few of them in battle, but was overwhelmed when faced against ten or more.

I set my thoughts aside so I could focus on my magic. “*Heal!*” First, I closed his

wounds. “*Antidote!*” Then, I cured him of his poison. And finally... “*Clean.*” Best not to leave him filthy with all that blood and grime. The man looked much better now, save for his pale, sickly face.

“I’m done. But he’s lost some blood, so he should remain lying down for a while. And you...don’t look like you’ve got any food.”

“Sorry, we had to ditch everything when the orcs started chasing us,” Lyle explained. “We were planning to pass through the river to throw them off our scent.”

“I see. Wait just a moment.” I returned to my tent to make some food with my Creation Magic: French baguettes with hard crusts, and sausages that were delicious either boiled or fried. I proceeded to cut the sausages up and arrange them in a frying pan, then placed the bread on top.

Once I brought out the food, I asked Teto to make a simple table.

“Got it. Mu-mu-muuu... Ta-dah!”

A stone table shot up from the ground. After covering the tabletop with a cloth, I set down the frying pan full of sausages and baguettes. Then, when I noticed the previously injured man was shivering, I handed Lyle my own spare blanket.

“Here is some food and bedding. I’m going to sleep now, so I’ll leave the rest to you.”

Walking through the forest for so long in a twelve-year-old body had really worn me out. I had been concerned about sleeping in the vicinity of potentially dangerous strangers, but they *did* have to flee from those orcs Teto and I handled readily. If the adventurers tried attacking while I slept, Teto should be able to defeat them in a flash.

Adventurer Trio’s Side

“U-urgh... Where am I...”

“Oh, John, you’re awake!”

“Bro... What?”

My younger brother, John, had finally awoken. He still looked under the weather, but he was at least able to move around a bit. He began feeling all over his body, searching for his lost wounds.

“Could have sworn I got slashed by the orcs...”

“We happened to run into a little mage girl, and she saved you,” said Anna, our party’s archer. She was toasting up some bread over the campfire and moving the frying pan around to keep the sausages from burning.

“A little mage girl?” John repeated in bewilderment. He looked confused by the high-quality blanket draped over him, and confused further still by the high-quality tent Anna pointed towards.

In front of the tent sat the young swordswoman named Teto, her arms wrapped around her knees. It didn’t look like she intended to go to sleep anytime soon.

“That girl there?” John asked.

“Nope, an even younger-looking girl, sleeping inside the tent. She routed the orcs that were chasing us, healed you, and gave us some food and that blanket.”

“But why would a little girl be way out here? And she was strong enough to make those orcs run away?”

It was understandable that John would be doubtful. It was unusual for two young girls to be out traveling by themselves, just in general. But for them to be in the middle of a forest crawling with monsters? Something was up, and I was beginning to work out a story that could explain it all.

First-rate tools, fine bread, spiced sausages... A seemingly refined little mage girl with a swordswoman guarding her? Perhaps...

“You guys’ve heard about the coup in the Mubad Empire, right?”

Anna nodded, then handed John some fried bread and sausage. “They’re getting a new emperor over there, right?”

On the other side of the mountains, past our border town Darryl, was the Mubad Empire. There, the Crown Prince Faction and the Emperor’s Brother

Faction had been fighting each other. In the end, the previous emperor's brother took the throne, and there were rumors that he was purging the remnants of the enemy faction.

"Our little mage ally is probably a noble girl who crossed the mountains to run away from the coup."

"That...sounds plausible," Anna said. "That'd give her a reason for being on such a reckless journey. Plus, the nobility in the empire believe in magical supremacy and raise their kids with magic. So we really might have run into a noble girl and her female knight servant..."

Since the young mage seemed to have plenty of food, she might've taken a rare magic bag with her. And if she was kind and careless enough to give food from that magic bag to adventurers she'd never met before, she was probably raised in a life of safety and luxury.

Thinking about it that way, the fact that we had to plead for aid from a little girl who had been driven from her homeland and was likely out in the dangerous world for the first time in her life... I couldn't help but feel ashamed.

"Bro, what did she say about the price for healing me...and for the food?"

"She didn't say anything. But don't worry, I'll definitely pay her."

More important than all of that though was the mission we were currently undertaking.

The monsters that the girls had defeated included an orc warrior and an orc wizard. But before they started chasing us, we'd managed to take down an even higher-ranked orc knight. On our scouting mission, we had found their settlement, which included a number of orc knights, orc warriors, orc wizards...and an orc king.

What we needed to do now was bring this intel back to Darryl Town as soon as possible in order to put together a subjugation party. That was the duty of my C-ranked party, the Wind-Riding Falcons.

*

And so the adventurers, misinterpreting their rescuers' situation in a positive

way, followed the witch's lead and went to sleep to regain their energy.

Chapter 11: We've Got Some People Coming to Town with Us

I fell into my regular routine when I awoke the next morning. I stretched, used the *Clean* spell to freshen myself up, pulled my robe's hood over my head, grabbed my staff, and stepped out to face the day.

I found Teto just outside my tent. "Good morning, Lady Witch!"

"Good morning, Teto."

"Oh, you're up, miss? Morning." The adventurers we'd saved yesterday were up already.

"Good morning." I took some breakfast foods out of the magic bag on my hip and placed them on the stone table. "You still don't have any food, right? I can spare a bit more, I suppose."

"You're really saving our hides here," the adventurer named Lyle said. "Now, about what I owe you..."

I'd forgotten how he said he'd pay me for healing his wounded party member, and for the food I gave them yesterday. And here I was, offering them another meal.

How much is healing worth here? And what kinds of food do they eat in this world?

I'd heard that the stuff in the vending machines at Mount Fuji's peak could cost three to five times what it normally would elsewhere. The challenging situation of this adventurer trio felt just as particular, so I could probably charge them three to five times the regular healing cost, with food included.

"Right, how much does healing usually cost?"

"Hmm. A typical healing starts at one silver piece at the cheapest. But what you did for my brother is probably worth at least ten silvers."

That little bit of healing was worth ten silvers? That sounded like way too much! Especially considering how the healing and food didn't actually cost me anything, since it all came right out of my mana pool. And it was my first attempt at healing someone too—I could've messed up. With all that in mind, I decided to just take the base cost of one silver and multiply it by four, going by my "Mount Fuji" pricing.

"I'll take four silvers for the healing and the food."

"What?!" the man exclaimed.

"You don't have to pay right now. You can do it when we get to town," I replied lightly.

"No, that's fine! I'll pay right now." Lyle pulled some silver pieces from his armor and the sole of his boot. The woman adventurer, Anna, handed the remainder needed for Lyle to offer me the total four silvers. "Is this okay?"

I frowned at the handful of strong-smelling coins for a few seconds before accepting them. "Y-yes. Thanks." I used my *Clean* spell to disinfect the money right away.

Chances were the adventurer hid money in his boot as emergency funds or something. Plus, I recalled that old wives' tale of how the metal ions from coins could ward off athlete's foot...so maybe I shouldn't look down on the practice too much.

Next order of business then. "Can I ask you something?"

"Of course!" Lyle said.

"Is there a human village downriver from here?"

"Yeah, the border town we live in—Darryl. How about you come back with us?"

I'd already figured they would be interested in having us tag along with them. The wounds Lyle's brother carried might've been healed, but he wasn't back in top form yet. It'd perhaps be quicker for Lyle and Anna to simply carry him home by themselves, but it'd be safer to have me and Teto accompany them, since we could fend off any potential orc ambushes. I was fine with such an

arrangement, as it'd be a good opportunity for me to obtain some information on this new world.

"That'd be good. You're okay with it, right, Teto?"

"I'll go along with whatever you want, Lady Witch."

Lyle looked relieved by our response.

"Okay then. We'll set off after we eat breakfast." I kept the meal for me and Teto the same as what I gave the adventurers, save for a strange fruit I sneaked in for myself. I was lucky today—my mana pool went up by 5 MP.

Once we finished eating, I took a look over at John, the adventurer who'd been injured. "Are you going to be up for traveling?" I asked. I didn't want to rush him if he was still in pain.

"Sorry. Just gimme a bit longer..."

Perhaps a pick-me-up would help him get back on his feet. I pulled out a couple foods from my magic bag: prune jam (full of iron) and some plain yogurt. I mixed the two ingredients in a bowl before handing it over to him. "Eat this. It'll make you feel better, I'm willing to bet."

"Thanks." John gulped down a spoonful. "Yum, it's sweet and sour!"

After watching his little brother take a couple more bites, Lyle turned to me. "Thanks once again. What kinda medicine is that?"

"It isn't medicine. I mixed jam made from a fruit called a prune with some yogurt...a food made from fermented milk. Prunes are good for recovery, and can even help with a lady's time of the month."

"Really?!" Anna exclaimed. "Hey, gimme some of that!"

"No! She gave it to *me*!"

Prunes and yogurt must have existed in this world too, since Lyle nodded in understanding. Meanwhile, the lady Anna continued to try stealing a bite of John's prune yogurt, despite his indisposed condition. Since she was a woman adventurer, her period schedule must've been out of whack from all the field work and battle stress.

And finally, behind me was...

“Lady Wiiiitch, that looks yummyyy.”

“Oh, fine,” I said with a sigh. “I’ll make some for you too, Teto. And you too, Anna, so calm down.”

In the end, all of the sugary prune jam and yogurt I’d been stocking up on with my Creation Magic vanished. Teto and Anna were thrilled to be eating something sweet, while Lyle was simply grateful for the kind gesture. I had to wonder if sugar and sweets were uncommon and pricey in this world.

“Once you’re all finished eating, we should clean up and head for the village. Lyle, please lead the way.”

“Ah, sure.”

Though I was a bit worried about a kid like me messing up an adult’s proper pace, we set off.

“We should be able to see town sometime around noon.”

“Nah, we’ll probably get there a bit later.”

John might’ve had a good dose of iron from the prune yogurt, but since he wasn’t instantly back up to snuff, we needed to make sure he didn’t push himself too hard for this march. So in the end, my slow walking pace didn’t actually hinder the adventurers any. We probably wouldn’t reach the town until closer to dusk, but seeing Teto trotting along happily at the front of our group somehow alleviated all my concerns.

Not that our journey would be *entirely* free from incident...

“Aaaw. Lady Wiiiitch!”

Teto was now clinging to me in tears after slipping off the rocks and falling into the river. I’d been a little worried she’d dissolve, since she was technically a clay golem made from dirt...but she seemed fine. I’d *really* prefer she not cling to me while she was drenched though.

“Okay, okay. *Breeze.*” I dried her clothes in an instant after I cast a wind spell. Teto gave me an amazed look before smiling, and I softened my own expression in return.

“Oh yeah, we never properly introduced ourselves, did we? We’re the Wind-Riding Falcons, but townspeople often just call us the Wind Falcons. I’m Lyle, the leader. I’m a C-rank adventurer, and I handle the front lines as a swordsman.”

“I’m John, his younger brother—also C-ranked. I’m a scout that does reconnaissance and disarms traps.”

“I’m Anna. C-rank archer.”

“Teto is Teto! And this is Lady Witch!”

“*Hey, Teto!*”

Teto went ahead and just introduced me as *Lady Witch*, as if that were my name. The truth was I had no name at all—but with all these questioning eyes fixed on me, it looked like I’d have to decide on one right here and now.

“My name is Chise. Chise the witch.” Though I’d chosen the name on a whim, it seemed to fit me somehow.

“Okay, Chise and Teto, huh? Nice to meet you.”

“Yes, nice to meet you too.”

As the saying goes, even a chance meeting can lead to a deep bond. We all felt a bit friendlier having introduced ourselves, and the Wind Falcons decided to tell us more about their situation.

“We were actually hired to investigate this forest,” Lyle explained.

“Investigate it?”

“Yeah. There’ve been a ton of orc sightings. We came to check if trouble was brewing.”

Apparently, not far from where we’d first met the Wind Falcons, there was an orc settlement. And inside that settlement, dark-skinned orc warriors and magic-wielding orc wizards were being born, with an orc king leading them. All of them high-ranked.

“In that case, shouldn’t you be gathering lots of knights or adventurers to go exterminate them?”

“That’s exactly why we’re returning to town to report. If you two hadn’t saved us back there, we might’ve died without being able to warn everyone. So thank you for coming to our aid, Chise. All of Darryl Town owes you a debt of gratitude.”

It was a little embarrassing hearing him say that, so I tugged my hood down to hide my face.



It seemed that monsters didn't frequent the riverside, so we were able to head towards town without much trouble, taking a few breaks along the way. We followed the river until we exited the forest, found a path on the plains, and finally reached town before the gates were shut at dusk.

"There are gates on both the east and west sides of town," Lyle said. "The forest we just left was to the north. Which direction did you girls come from?"

"We came from the other side of the forest."

"You mean you took a detour around that mountain to the west? That's right on the border between us and the empire. That whole area's liable to turn into a battlefield."

"West? Not east?" I asked for clarification, since it seemed we were thinking of different places.

But Lyle and company gave us confused looks back.

"They say that the region east of the mountain is protected by a barrier the gods put up in ancient times. No one can get in there."

I thought over his words a bit before responding. "I see. I must have been mistaken." If gods really did raise a barrier there, perhaps the goddess who called herself Liriel had something to do with it.

While I tilted my head and pondered the possibilities, Lyle went on about the local geography. If we traveled northwest, we'd hit a country called the Mubad Empire. Our current location was the border town of Darryl, in the northern part of the Kingdom of Ischea. This was all southwest of the wasteland I had been dropped into when I first appeared in this world.

"Let's all get in the adventurers' line," Lyle said.

"Shouldn't Teto and I wait in the line for travelers?"

"Nah, you kids saved our lives. I'll get the gatekeeper to let you in with us."

At the gate were three lines: one for merchants, one for travelers, and one for adventurers. We all queued up in the third. It wasn't long before the gatekeeper who greeted returning adventurers spotted Lyle and his companions.

“Hey Lyle, how—” The gatekeeper stopped short, eyes wide in shock. “Whoa, what happened to you three? All the gear you hauled out a couple days ago is gone. And John’s clothes and armor are sure in a sorry state!”

“We ran into some trouble during the quest. This traveling girl and her friend saved our hides.”

“Huh... I don’t quite follow, but I’m glad you’re all okay. If you say they helped, the girls are fine to pass through with you.”

After answering a few basic questions, we had to pay a toll. I was able to cover the cost for me and Teto with one of the silver pieces Lyle had given me.

“The toll is nonrefundable, but if you get an ID card from the adventurer’s guild, you won’t have to pay next time. Here’s your change: eight large coppers.”

“Large coppers?” I repeated, curious.

“First time seeing them, eh? Lesson time! Ten coppers are worth one large copper, and ten large coppers make one silver.”

Above that, ten silvers would make a small gold, and even further up were large golds. There were apparently even coins made of magic metals for the especially large transactions handled by national governments. The gatekeeper went on to give a few examples of costs, such as a meal at an inn or dining hall typically costing around five coppers, and bread from a bakery normally running you two coppers.

“I see. Thank you for teaching me.”

Once I slipped the change into my pouch, we all passed through the gate. We proceeded to look over some of the shop stalls along the main street, where I learned the costs of some more basic things—and soon we arrived at a building with a sign featuring two crossed swords.

Lyle motioned towards it. “Welcome to our adventurer’s guild.”

Chapter 12: We Made It to the Adventurer's Guild. They're Nicer There Than I Expected.

I followed Lyle inside the adventurer's guild, which was filled with adventurers who had completed their quests. Everyone started buzzing when they saw Lyle and his companions without the gear they'd left with, and with John's stuff in disarray.

"Welcome back, Lyle," the guild's receptionist said. "Been down on your luck, from the look of things. What happened? And who are these two ladies?" She was probably around eighteen, with a cute face and big, round, squirrel-like eyes.

"These girls got us out of a real jam. We can fill you in on all the quest details in our report."

"Understood. We'll hear the results in another room. As for the ladies..."

I nodded. "We'd like to join the adventurer's guild and get identification. We'd also like to sell some of the loot we've gotten."

"Sounds good. I'll have you join up in the room over there then."

Teto and I separated from Lyle's group as we entered different rooms. The people running this guild were prioritizing adventurers who'd finished their quests, so it looked like it was going to take a while for them to get to us. Twilight turned into evening, and with each passing minute I wanted more and more to sprint to the nearest inn and dive straight into bed.

Too fidgety to sit still, Teto eventually draped her body over me while we waited. Normally I'd find such a display of neediness off-putting, but the feeling of her soft breasts against my back and the nice smell she gave off had a healing, calming effect on me. In the end, the couch we were sitting on was just too comfy...so I fell asleep, leaning against Teto.

"Huh? Lady Witch, you're sleeping here? Okay! Teto will protect you."

Adventurer Trio's Side

"So you've confirmed the existence of an orc king."

"Yes. During that scouting expedition, we defeated an orc knight. But in our second enemy encounter, John was heavily injured. We were only able to return because Miss Chise and her friend saved us."

Our client, the fierce-looking guildmaster, listened to our report with a look of careful consideration. "Killing an orc king is a B-rank quest. And you say there are two hundred other orcs in the settlement, many of them powerful? I'll put out a request for a main force of B-rank adventurers, with support from C-rank and D-rank parties. I'll make sure you three work your asses off too. Rest up and get all your equipment in order until then."

John, Anna, and I all nodded in confirmation of our upcoming orc-exterminating mission.

I went on to recount the other important details of our eventful quest, to which the guildmaster sighed in consternation.

"What's with those girls who saved you? You said there was a mage who used water magic to heal John, and wind magic to defeat an orc wizard. And then there's the swordswoman who smashed an orc warrior's head in one hit and could use earth magic. Alone, either of them would be as strong as an entire D-rank team. Perhaps even a C-rank one."

The fact that they'd understood the importance of immediately targeting the orc wizard meant they must have had experience battling such foes in the past. They also had a rare magic bag. It was becoming more and more obvious that these two girls would be of considerable use to the adventurer's guild.

"Our guess is that Chise the mage is probably a noble girl who escaped the political upheaval in the Mubad Empire," I explained. "And Teto is, uh... Well, she doesn't exactly seem like a knight, or a maid. But she's not a bad girl."

"They seem ignorant when it comes to basic things like money though," John added. "Chise's a great mage, but she didn't even know what a large copper was. She was nice enough to heal me and give us complete strangers some food, and then charged us only four silvers for it all. A normal priest would've

asked for ten silvers, at minimum.”

“They’re kind girls, even when they’re in a tough situation themselves.”

The guildmaster mulled over our account of the girls for a bit before responding. “If they ran from political upheaval, they’re no longer nobles and are gonna be treated as lowly commoners from here on out. They may be powerful in some respects, but they’re still young girls. I’ll make sure they get a fair price for anything they sell from home—so long as the goods weren’t stolen, of course—and suggest a secure inn for them.”

“Thanks, Guildmaster. We owe you one,” I said, bowing my head.

He just snorted in response. The guildmaster might’ve looked scary, but he was a softy when it came to kids and ladies.

Witch’s Side

“Lady Wiiiitch, wake up. Lady Wiiiitch!”

“Urgh... Teto, just gimme five more minutes.”

“I think this man wants to talk to you though...”

I begrudgingly rubbed my sleepy eyes, then looked up to find the man Teto must have been referring to. It took a second for my weary mind to work out he was probably a guild employee.

He smiled gently. “Hello. I heard you’d like to join the adventurer’s guild...but are you okay?”

I gave a drowsy nod back. “Uh, yes. Please.” I pulled my hood back and bowed my head.

The man looked surprised for a moment before reverting back to his calm smile. “Okay. I’ll explain a few things about the guild then.”

He first made clear that adventurers were essentially jacks-of-all-trades. The ranks they were designated went from S at the top to G at the bottom. You’d have to vow to never murder, assault, scam, extort, or commit any of society’s other typical crimes. And if you *did* break the law, you’d be found out via the

guild's crime-judging jewel. Those were the basics.

"First, we'll need you to fill out this form."

"Sure."

It essentially just asked for our names and what we were good at. Even though this was the first time I was seeing this world's language, I could somehow read and write it just fine. Teto, on the other hand, was frozen in place, her pen hanging limply above her form. Though she'd gained the ability to speak from the spirit she absorbed from the dungeon core, she apparently didn't know letters.

"I'll fill out Teto's form for her... Oh, guess I better ask. Are there any races that can't join the guild?"

"Hmm... Humans, beastmen, elves, dwarves, dragonkin—races like those can all join. Just enemy demon races can't, obviously. I suppose there is the occasional individualist of one demonic race or another that can live with humans and obey all the laws, but that's the exception to the rule. This girl isn't a demon, is she?"

"I'd say she's more something related to spirits."

I wasn't sure if I should bring up Teto's race being something her profile called *earthnoid*, or if I should bother registering her with the guild at all.

But the guild employee just smiled. "She's probably fine then. They say elves are descended from water, wind, and light spirits, and dwarves from fire and earth ones. Dragonkin meanwhile were originally born from dragons and humans who loved each other. So we won't mind if she's some rare race descended from spirits or a half-spirit or anything like that."

That was a relief for me, but the employee suddenly took on a more serious expression and spoke in a hushed voice.

"I'd perhaps keep that on the down-low though, at least while you're out and about. Best to steer clear of trouble with those I'd call...*human supremacists*."

"I see... We'll be careful then," I replied quietly before returning our registration forms.

“Wonderful. Once you pay the registration fee—three silvers each—I’ll give you your guild cards.”

“Three silvers each... I’m sorry, but we don’t have enough money right now.” I currently only had three silvers and eight large coppers. That’d only be enough for one of us to register.

“I heard you’ve got some things you want to sell. I can register you first and then deduct the fee from what we pay you. If that still isn’t enough to register with, you can just owe us the remainder.”

“Thanks, that’d be great.”

“Then I’ll go ahead and see if either of you have committed any significant crimes, and if you’re clear, I’ll give you your guild cards. All you’ll have to do at that point is pour a bit of your mana into the cards, and that’ll conclude your registration.”

Once prompted, Teto and I took turns putting our hands on the guild’s crime-judging jewel. Since we hadn’t done anything illegal, it gave us the blue result for *innocent*. Then as instructed, we poured mana into the cards we were given, which proceeded to show our profiles.

NAME: Chise (Reincarnator)

CLASS: Witch

LEVEL: 37

HP: 420/420

MP: 2,815/2,815

SKILLS: Staff Martial Arts Lv 1, Origin Magic Lv 3, various others...

UNIQUE SKILL: Creation Magic

It was all simple stuff like that. There were a few details I wanted to keep secret on these cards though, so I tried rubbing my finger over them and commanding them to hide. And sure enough, the words vanished. On my card, I

erased the words “Reincarnator” and “Creation Magic.” As for Teto, since her golem core’s MP acted as her HP too, I decided to erase everything on her card save for her name and simple skills like Swordsmanship.

And with that, it was finally official. Teto and I were adventurers now.

Chapter 13: So It's True You Can Get Rich Quick from Clearing Dungeons!

"You're now registered with the guild! One last question: Have you decided where you'll stay tonight?"

I shook my head. "I was going to worry about that after selling our loot."

"Let's get that settled then. Do you have the goods with you?"

Teto and I started setting out all the treasures we'd retrieved in the dungeon. Really, it should've been strange to see two girls pulling so many jewels out of a magic bag, but the employee didn't pry. Instead he went straight to work, putting on some white gloves and inspecting the lot.

"This is... Ah, I see."

I wasn't sure what it was he saw exactly, but he wrote down the values of everything he appraised on a piece of paper. Once everything was examined, he let out a deep breath.

"I'll need to make sure the guild has enough reward money set aside for the adventurers who exterminate the orc king, but we should have enough funds to buy everything here."

I had to assume the guild was only willing to buy everything because they would eventually earn a profit by selling to all the right places. "Would it be all right for me to see the appraisal list?" I was still learning about how things were priced in this world.

"Of course, be my guest."

I took the paper and looked it over. The treasures were judged based on the price of the metals they were made from, the practicality of their designs, the size of the gems embedded in them, and other factors all added together. Silver trinkets went for around five silvers in cash, and golden curios generally went for twenty to thirty silvers.

My eyes lingered on the total amount at the bottom of the sheet. “Fifteen large golds...” I whispered in astonishment. The currency’s worth came out to something like a hundred yen for a copper, a thousand yen for a large copper, and ten thousand yen for a silver piece. A small gold would then be about one hundred thousand yen, and a large gold piece about one million yen. So the fifteen large golds I was about to receive would equal around fifteen million yen in my previous world.

From what I could tell, Teto and I would be able to live quite comfortably for a while with the profits of even just a fraction of our dungeon treasures.

I pulled out a few more items to show the guild worker. “What would this magic bag, this appraising monocle, and these staves that shoot fireballs and rocks sell for?”

“Wah?! Y-you wish to sell these magic goods to us?”

“No, I’m just curious to know what they’d go for.”

“Oh. Right, of course,” the man said with a sob, shoulders drooping. “We wouldn’t have enough money to pay for them all anyways...”

Once the guild worker regained his composure, he gave his general estimates: “The price of a magic bag depends on how much it can hold, and whether or not time is stopped within it. They generally go for at least five large golds, but the sky’s the limit. An appraising monocle would go for five to fifty small golds, depending on what level it can appraise to. Consumable magic staves sell for three silvers at market price, at minimum.”

So basically, my magic bag that could fit a large transport truck could net me somewhere from a few thousand to a hundred million yen. If I thought about how useful it could be for a nation’s military, or for an adventurer clearing a dungeon, I could understand the value. And while the appraisal monocle might have looked no different from a regular monocle, it was worth more than all the dungeon treasures I had brought combined. Meanwhile, the fireball staves I could make with my creation magic for 40 MP apiece went for three silvers, so even just selling those for a living would be more than enough to keep me fed. It looked like magic tools were really worth a lot.

“Thanks. I’d like to go ahead and sell all the treasures you appraised earlier

then.”

“Splendid. After deducting the six silvers you owe for guild registration, your total earnings come to fourteen large gold pieces and ninety-four silvers.”

The dungeon we had cleared was a smaller one at only five floors, and yet we made that much money off of it. If I were to sell the dungeon core that Teto had absorbed, that would have gotten me even more... It wasn't hard to imagine that many adventurers would get stuck on the dungeons-to-riches dream.

“It would be dangerous to carry around that many large golds,” the guild worker said. “Would you like to store them on your card? That way you could withdraw them at any guild.”

“Good idea. Please put half of the fourteen large golds on my card and half on Teto's. We'll use the ninety-four silvers for our living costs.”

Teto tugged at my sleeve from her seat beside me. “Don't worry about Teto, Lady Witch. I want you to have all the money.”

“But you worked hard too, Teto. You deserve your fair share. If there's anything you want to buy, use the money you earned on your guild card.”

“Oooh... But...”

“You could use that money to buy yourself a bunch of sweets, you know.”

“S-sweets?” Teto's eyes sparkled...and she started to drool.

Yup, I'll definitely have to be the one who manages our living expenses. I still wanted Teto to have some of her own spending money though. It might've been common practice here for the possessions of golems to belong to the mage who created them, but I thought of Teto as a person—not a tool.

The guild worker spoke up again. “Sorry, that all took a bit longer than I expected. This is my last job tonight, so I can escort you to a good, safe inn. Only one silver per night, and the food there is delicious!”

“Sounds great, thank you.”

“I'm looking forward to trying food made by other people!”

With everything finished for our cards, we took the ninety-four silvers and

followed the guild employee to the inn.

“This is our town’s most recommended inn: Autumn Wheat Hall!”

Once inside, I found a girl who was busy bringing food to some customers.
Looks like it’s already dinnertime.

“I’m home! Brought some special guests with me.”

“Ah, welcome home, bro!” The girl turned the other way and yelled,
“Mooooooooom! We’ve got guests!”

A man referred to as “bro,” and an inn that’s run by other family members...
When the stout female innkeeper appeared and looked at us, I grabbed the edge of my hood and hid my face. I needn’t have worried though.

“Oh, my. Welcome, welcome! It’s rare for you to bring guests here, son.”

“It was a request from the guildmaster and Lyle. They wanted a safe inn for these two girls, who just became adventurers,” the guild employee-slash-innkeeper’s son explained.

“I see. What kind of rooms would you girls like?”

“A double room for the both of us,” I said. “Two people for one week, food included.”

“If you’d just write your names in the ledger, please. It’ll be fourteen silvers for you both, and if you need to leave early, I’ll refund you for the remaining days.”

I nodded, handing fourteen silver pieces over.

“Will you get right to eating?” the innkeeper asked.

“We’d like to eat in our room, if that’s all right. Can you bring it up?”

“No problem. Here’s your room key. You’ll be on the second floor.”

After we were told how to exchange bedding, what to do with our laundry, and rules for our stay, we headed up to our room.

I quickly found that there were lamps, but no fuel for them. “So we’d have to buy lantern oil ourselves, huh? No thanks. *Light.*”

After using light magic to brighten up the room, I gathered all our clothes together and cleaned everything in one go with the *Clean* spell. Then, I sat down on my bed and heaved a weary sigh.

“It’s so fluffy! Will Teto be resting here tonight?”

“Yes, you will. And now that I think about it, you’ve been doing night watch all this time without a word of complaint, haven’t you? Thank you, Teto. I’m sorry for burdening you.”

“Eh heh heh, you haven’t burdened Teto in the slightest! But I’m happy I’ve been of use to you, Lady Witch.” She rolled back and forth on her bed a few times before suddenly freezing. “Lady Witch, will you need me to keep watch tonight?”

“No. This is a safe inn, they say.”

“Then Teto wants to sleep with Lady Witch tonight!”

“The bed looks big enough, so that should be fine.” Seeing Teto so carefree brought a smile to my face, and I could feel the mental strain I’d suffered on my long journey to find human civilization slowly begin to fade.

The food that was brought to our room consisted of hard bread, delicious stew, and salad. I definitely could have made softer bread with my Creation Magic—but for some reason, food made with human hands felt warmer and tasted richer. It was enough to nearly bring tears to my eyes.

Once I finally got into bed—Teto clinging to my weary body all the while—I felt at ease for the first time since I’d been reincarnated. *Ah, I get it.* My mental age might’ve been based on my past life, but my physical body was still just that of a twelve-year-old. No matter how much I tried to hide it, my heart was exhausted.

I’ve been pushing myself too hard, I thought hazily. So at least for tonight...I’ll rest easy.

Chapter 14: The Witch Diligently Goes to the Guild

The next morning, I awoke to find my face buried in Teto's bosom, her arms holding me in place securely. *Oh, right. We shared the same bed.* I slowly looked up, and saw Teto was grinning in her sleep.

"Fweh heh heh... Lady Witch, let me eat some more of that black soooiiil!"

"I wonder what kind of dream she's having." With an awkward smile, I slipped out of Teto's grasp, gently stroked her hair a couple times, and eased myself out of bed so I wouldn't wake her.

"Okay, what should I do today?" As a reincarnator, I had only been alive in this world for a few weeks. Meanwhile Teto, as a golem-turned-earthnoid, had existed as a sentient being for an even shorter time. There was a long list of things we were both completely ignorant about, to put it bluntly. "I guess for now I should gather lots of different information. I'll start with this world's cultures, customs, and skills."

I began with some people-watching from my room's window. I had a good view of the main street, so I observed the ways people moved about, the sorts of clothing they wore, and so on. By the time the town bell rang eight times, I felt I could safely say I was in what would have been called a *medieval fantasy* in my previous world.

"Mmmmph... Lady Witch, please cover the red clay buns with saaauuuce!"

"Now what is she dreaming about? Come on, Teto. Time to wake up."

"Yes, Lady Witch! Teto is up!" She followed my request so quickly that I wondered if she had actually been asleep at all—but it was probably just her being forced awake by some lingering order function from when she was a golem. Whatever the case, she was up now.

"Let's get dressed and go down for breakfast."

"Okaaay! Food, food!" Once Teto got herself changed, we headed down to the dining hall.

“Good morning,” the innkeeper’s daughter greeted us. “Did you sleep well last night?”

“Yes, we did, thank you. Can we get breakfast?”

We soon received bread, thick bacon, fresh veggie salad, and soup. A very nutritionally balanced meal. Teto and I each put our hands together before eating. “Thank you for the food,” we said simultaneously.

As we ate, I casually observed how the other guests and dining hall customers had their own similar rituals before eating. *I wonder if it’s more of a religious thing for them though, like a prayer.*

From what I could tell, there were very few adventurers here this morning, unlike the previous night. Mostly just merchants and local residents, I’d assume—but perhaps a couple of them were adventurers taking the day off?

“Hey, can I ask you something?” I called to the innkeeper’s daughter as she passed nearby.

“Sure. What do you need?”

“Why are there so few adventurers here?”

“They usually finish eating and head out to get their requests around the sixth bell.”

“I see. Quite the devoted lot, huh?” Reminded me of Lyle and his pals—at least, they *seemed* the diligent type.

“Nah, the sixth bell is just when new missions go up on the quest board, so they all hurry over to wrestle over the best ones.”

“Oh.”

“Adventurers risk death out there, especially when they’re just starting to gain some experience. My brother says most of the quests are difficult and don’t pay well.”

“Your brother was the guild employee who brought me here, right?”

“Yep. He’s the one who puts up the morning requests.”

“Both adventurers and the guild’s employees have it rough then, having to

get up so early. Thank you for the useful info.” When the girl gave me an expectant look, I placed a large copper piece in her apron pocket. “Uh, there you go. I’ll keep you in mind if I need more info.”

“Okay!”

I made a mental note that I should tip someone whenever they give me useful information from now on. “All right, Teto. Let’s get to the guild.”

“Understood, Lady Witch. What will we do today? Are we going to beat up orcs again?”

I shook my head. “I’d like to spend the week researching a few things with whatever materials the guild has.”

“Got it!”

When we reached the guild, it seemed that all the good requests had indeed been taken, and the crowd had already dispersed. I headed to the board and checked out the missions Teto and I could take on as G-rank adventurers.

“Helping out in town and gathering medicinal herbs, huh...” Using paper and a pen that I’d made with my Creation Magic, I jotted down the requests and their rewards for future reference. I also noticed that among the higher-ranking quests, there were still a few orc-related ones available.

“Securing the orcs’ edible meat and orc extermination, hm?” Though the payouts varied in amount, the fact that they were still on the board at this hour probably meant they were the worst quests of the lot.

After completing my bulletin board notes, I went up to the receptionist at the counter. “Excuse me, but does this guild have any books?”

“Anyone may browse the reference room on the second floor. We don’t lend out books, but you are free to write your own copies.”

“Understood. Thank you very much.”

I headed up there with Teto, and after agreeing to the rules of usage that the librarian went over with me, I began going to the reference room every day.

Day One: Since it caught my eye, I skimmed through a bible released by a church of this world. It was too hard for me to understand though, and Teto got

bored very quickly.

Day Two: I learned the Speed-Reading and Parallel Thinking skills from skill orbs I made with Creation Magic, so I got through some books at a good pace.

The most interesting book I found in the room was about the origins of demons. It said that vampires (a subclass of demons) originated from a conjurer who made his lover's corpse into a familiar. The corpse was brought back to life, and the children she had with the conjurer would become the first vampires.

"It's a bit like Teto." I suspected the conjurer used his lover's corpse to make a flesh golem. Perhaps the corpse and golem core mixed, took in lots of magic stones, and evolved by absorbing a spirit.

Demons were defined in this world as humanoid races with magic stones in their bodies—so in that respect I probably *could* call Teto a golem demon. In Teto's case though, I provided her with the mana she needed, while vampires needed to suck blood to replenish theirs.

And speaking of the former golem...

"Hyah!"

"Gwaah!"

She'd gotten bored with sitting around in the reference room, so I'd given her permission to go play on the guild's training grounds. Once there, she ended up in a series of practice matches with some other adventurers—and with the toughness and super strength that belied her appearance, she mowed them all down. Since her opponents were humans, I'd ordered her to hold back so she wouldn't hurt anyone. I figured this would be a good way for her to learn how to disable human opponents without injuring them, however crudely she went about it.

"This is probably a good stopping point." Once I put away all my books, I went down to the training grounds to pick Teto up. What I found was a heap of beat-up adventurers just past the golem girl, who hadn't even broken a sweat.

"Good work. Thank you all for playing with Teto. *Area Heal. Area Clean.*" I healed the adventurers' scratches and bruises as thanks for training with Teto.

This routine of adventurers sparring with Teto while I researched in the reference room would continue in the days that followed, and I'd always make sure to heal and clean up the combatants afterwards.

Day Three: I researched medicinal herbs and monsters.

Day Four: I found a list of skills and jotted down all the ones that sounded handy. In our room at the inn that night, I used my Creation Magic to make the befitting skill orbs I needed to strengthen myself.

Day Five: I decided to go out shopping with Teto. I really needed a break from that reference room.

"Ah..." Having come in search of some daily necessities and a change of clothes, I found myself drawn to a particular dress displayed on a wooden mannequin in a clothing store.

"Are you interested in that dress, miss?" asked an old man.

I nodded, unable to take my eyes off the dress. It was a white one with blue fabric under the chest, and it had a slightly short skirt with frills. I found it both cute and subdued.

"That dress is one of a kind, carefully tailored with high-quality silk from magical silkworms. A mage then enchanted it with *Increased Endurance*, *Wrinkle and Dirt Prevention*, and *Size Adjustment*."

"That's amaaazing," Teto replied to the shopkeeper's sales pitch. "It would look wonderful on you, Lady Witch!"

But I was curious why such a nice dress was in a remote border town shop, and why it hadn't already found a buyer.

Noticing my questioning gaze, the shopkeeper sighed. "Missy, I get why you're suspicious, but this is the real deal. This dress just...kinda has some special circumstances around it."

"What do you mean?"

The elderly shopkeeper proceeded to tell me the tale of the dress's creation. Apparently it was originally made as casual outdoor wear for a noble girl, but it wasn't in line with the latest, flashier trends. If that had been the only issue,

another noble girl who liked the muted coloring would have bought it by now. But the skirt was too short for chaste noblewomen, who weren't supposed to be showing off their legs. As for trying to sell it to commoners—well, even the richer ones couldn't afford it.

“And so it ended up all the way out here as dead stock,” I said.

“Yep. I took it, thinking that an adventurer might want it, what with all its nifty enchantments. But maybe the true reason it hasn't sold yet is because it was meant for you!”

“Hmm...” I reached out to touch the dress's fabric. It was the softest thing I'd ever felt in this world. *But the price...* “I can't spend an entire large gold on one dress.” Though I had more than enough money for it thanks to all the dungeon treasure I'd sold, spending the equivalent of one million yen on a single luxury item felt irresponsible when I didn't know what the future held for me.

“I'm sorry, but it's just not fated to be,” I said. It would probably cost an astronomical amount of mana to make a dress that soft with Creation Magic. But just as I was walking away from the dress...

“Teto will buy it then!”

“What, Teto?!”

“Lady Witch gave me money to spend on whatever I want. I'll buy it and give it to Lady Witch as a present!”

It was too hard to tell Teto not to when she was smiling so enthusiastically. “Hah, fine. But I'll pay half.” I turned to the shopkeeper and added, “And since I'm buying dead stock, I'll be getting some extras, right?”

The old man nodded with a big smile of his own. “Sure! If you buy that dress, I'll throw in a nice bonus.”

“Okay. We'll just go get our money from the guild first.”

“See you in a bit.”

After withdrawing money from our guild cards, we returned to the clothing shop. There we paid one large gold for the dress—and as a bonus we got a new shirt and pair of pants for Teto, since she was always getting her clothes dirty at

the guild. With our shopping trip completed, we went back to the inn.

“Lady Witch, put on the cute dress. I want to see!”

“In a bit.” With the exception of the dress, I didn’t find any clothing I liked on our shopping trip, so I decided to put my Creation Magic to good use.

“*Creation!*” I started by making myself some tights to go along with the white-and-blue dress I’d bought.

“What did you make, Lady Witch? A monster’s cast-off skin?”

“They’re tights. You wear them over your legs. It’d be cold going around with bare legs.”

Teto held them up, examining the tights closely. “Teto wants some too, the same as Lady Witch’s.”

I didn’t think tights would really fit her style though. “How about I make you some knee socks? Ones that go up past the knee would look good on you.”

“If you think they’d look good, then I want to try them!”

“While I’m at it, I’ll make you a full outfit that suits you better. *Creation!*”

And so, the two of us tried on our new clothes.



My outfit consisted of the white-and-blue dress, some black tights, and my hooded robe. Teto's outfit was more swordswoman-like, with durable hot pants and a shirt that emphasized easy movement. The knee socks over her shapely legs did more to accent her thighs than anything else.

"You look so cute, Lady Witch! And this feels really good to touch," Teto said, hugging me from behind and brushing her fingers across the dress fabric at my sides.

I winced from the ticklish sensation. "Teto, stop, that tickles!"

"Ah, I'm sorry!"

I had to smile a little bitterly at how she immediately stopped moving her hands, but apparently had no intention of letting me go. I decided to shift the conversation to her. "How do *your* new clothes feel, Teto?"

"They feel super good. Thank you so much, Lady Witch!"

"I'm just glad that you're happy."

I spent the rest of that fifth day making things like underwear and little accessories with my Creation Magic.

Day Six: Since I couldn't find any spellbooks in the guild's library, I instead researched magic crystals that allowed mages to store their mana and use it when needed—as well as a magical skill known as Body Strengthening, which utilized a person's mana in intriguing ways. At that point, I finally ran out of things I wanted to research in the reference room.

Day Seven...

Chapter 15: Turning Extra MP into Power

Having run out of things to look up in the reference room, I went with Teto to the training grounds.

“Lady Witch, you’re coming with Teto today?”

“I’ll just be meditating over there in the corner. Feel free to do your normal thing.”

“All right!”

And so Teto fought mock battle after mock battle with the adventurers who challenged her. Thanks to all her sparring matches over the past week, she had learned how to better deal with each common weapon type.

Meanwhile, I was off in the back corner of the grounds, looking over the text I’d copied from the Body Strengthening manual. My hope for the day was to get a good feel for that magical technique.

“‘First, feel the mana inside your body’... I can do that.” I had been using magic for a while now, after all. Normally I would simply use whatever amount of mana was required for the magic I cast, but this time I focused on how the mana actually flowed within me.

“Ah, I’m leaking mana.” *Or perhaps I should refer to it as natural mana loss.* I was emitting a very small amount of mana though, and I could sense it evaporating into the air around me. I continued to move the mana inside me while looking over my notes. “It sounds like mages meditate by guiding this leaking mana back into their bodies and speeding up their recharge rate.”

Focusing on the mana leaving your body and forcing it back in was no simple trick, but the Parallel Thinking skill I’d gained the other day turned out to be a big help. With a little practice, I soon managed to contain the mana within me by simultaneously observing its movements and gathering it all together, raising my natural mana regen rate.

“So this is meditating. And the process of continually keeping myself in this

state while moving is Mana Interception, huh.” Cutting off the flow of mana from your body and keeping it all inside of you was apparently a way to hide yourself from monsters that could sense mana. “It’s surprisingly exhausting to do though.” I quickly got the hang of meditating, but to pull it off while moving around and doing other things required nerves of steel.

“Okay, let’s move on to Body Strengthening.” I canceled my meditation, then slowly increased the amount of mana my body emitted. Once I could feel sufficient mana converging within my hand, I picked up a nearby pebble.

“Looks like... Yeah, it worked.” I was able to crush the pebble between my fingertips with just a little squeeze. “So this is basic Body Strengthening. By doing this from specific parts of my body, I can raise their power.”

If I concentrated mana into my arms, I could pick up a heavy sword with no difficulty. If I forced enough mana into my legs, I’d be able to run faster. And by covering my whole body in mana, I could raise my defense against both physical and magic attacks. This was something normal adventurers would do unconsciously after experiencing enough battles.

Temporarily stopping the mana from leaving my body, I instead drew the flow of it into my eyes. I looked over at Teto fighting the other adventurers.

“Damn, Teto is amazing. So that’s how she fights...” The skill I used now was Mana Perception, which allowed me to see other people’s mana. Through my mana-strengthened eyes, I could see Teto was emitting mana from her entire body—she was constantly using Body Strengthening.

“So *that’s* why Teto is so strong, and why she needs me to top up her MP each day.” In comparison, the opposing adventurers’ mana pools must have been overwhelmingly smaller. But they were unconsciously using those piddling mana pools to strengthen parts of their bodies and their weapons in an attempt to overcome Teto’s bolstered defenses.

“I don’t know anything about fighting on the front lines, but it’s fun just watching everyone’s mana shift with each attack, guard, and parry.” Teto’s mana covered her entire body like armor, so it was hard to tell—but she was swiftly directing her mana to each point her opponents struck.

Generally, if you gathered enough mana to a single spot, you could block

attacks there. This meant that conversely, mustering insufficient mana would leave your defenses easily breached. So even if you managed to physically block an attack, the impact would still damage your body.

“But the size of your mana pool isn’t everything. There’s also your physique and muscle strength to keep in mind.” If an opponent was larger than you, then even a little bit of mana on their part would likely push their attacks past your defenses—regardless of how much mana you used. In much the same way, they could block your attacks with only a little mana.

“So basically, they multiply their physical strength with their Body Strengthening? That means larger people have the advantage.” But still, if you had an overwhelming amount of mana, you could cover for any differences in physical size.

“I should try letting my mana out like that too... Ugh, never mind, I can’t let out any more than this.”

By eating a strange fruit every day, my mana pool had grown to over 2,800 MP. It was more than the average D-rank adventurer had in the guild, but even if I tried to release all of it at once and use Body Strengthening... Well, I could only manage to get out a portion of my mana, it seemed.

“Body Strengthening has its limits, huh. But if this is the best I can do, I’ll have to make up for it with mana density.”

Apparently a few adventurers sensed something unusual during the short time I was letting out as much mana as I could. They spoke in hushed tones to each other, clearly on edge.

“That little girl is giving off some seriously dangerous vibes. Who is she?”

“That’s Teto’s mistress, Chise. I sensed some kind of crazy power from her too. What the hell was that?”

“It was like the air of intimidation that high-ranking demons can let off. Is that really something a kid can do?”

“Teto’s strength is probably C-rank, right? It only stands to reason that her leader would be even stronger. Chise might look like she’s just enjoying the sun, but maybe she’s actually doing some kind of intense mage training?”

As they went on gossiping about me, I closed my eyes and started meditating in order to recover all the mana I'd let off.

Chapter 16: We Finally Got an Adventurer Heckling Us. But Teto...

While I was meditating and observing everyone, a few more adventurers burst onto the training grounds.

“Hey, we heard some tan chick named Teto was here. Where the hell is she?!” a man yelled in a rough voice.

“New challengers? Okay! Come at me one by one, however you’d like!” Teto said, readying her wooden sword.

“We ain’t here to spar, dumbass! Seems she’s just as stupid as we heard.” The boorish adventurer spoke unevenly—perhaps he’d had a drink too many.

Teto tilted her head in confusion.

“Looks like you did some training on your own before joining the guild! Come join our party. We’ll give you ten percent of the loot, and you’ll climb the ranks in no time.”

It sounded like they had come to recruit Teto. But their sudden appearance and arbitrary demands made the other adventurers around us start buzzing.

Teto meanwhile only looked more confused. “Hmmmm? I don’t know, I’d have to ask Lady Witch.”

I suppressed the irked grimace I’d normally react with when faced with an uncomfortable situation. For better or worse though, the other guild members began to shout precisely how they felt about the unruly adventurers.

“Get out of here, Zance, you damn crook of an adventurer!”

“No one invited you!”

“Why don’tcha go back to your usual pub?”

“And if you ran outta money again, go out and kill a few orcs!”

“You bastards give our guild a bad reputation. When are you going to finally

quit?”

It was obvious the delinquent adventurers weren't well-liked by the rest of the guild. Though they might have been skilled fighters, they must have brought trouble wherever they went. I really wanted to just leave, but Teto was already caught in the thick of things.

“I'm Chise, the witch,” I said, moving to Teto's side. “Teto and I already have our own party, so we'll have to decline your invitation.”

“Don't butt in, brat! We're here for the tan chick. Go back home to your mommy!”

I sure didn't like their tone of voice, or the crass way they kept referring to Teto.

Another of the delinquents piped up. “Hey, tan chick! You want a brat like that pushing you around? Join our crew and you'll learn how to live a little!”

“Huh? Teto loves Lady Witch. All Teto wants is to be with Lady Witch!”

“Come on, listen to us! We're sayin' we can get your rank raised!” one of the men yelled threateningly.

After gathering mana in my eyes, I noticed that the hoodlums were momentarily lacing their voices with mana to try overpowering us subconsciously. They could probably force novice adventurers to do what they wanted that way, and they likely figured Teto and I were withering under their threats like everyone else they'd bullied before.

The leader of these louts turned towards me. “Now that I'm gettin' a good look at *you* though, you've got a pretty face on ya, brat. How 'bout we let you join us along with the tan chick? You'll be splitting that ten percent of the loot between ya though! You'll also have to do your fair share of the jobs we save for newbies, but you're not gonna complain, riiight?”

The dirty-minded way they were all making eyes at my body and Teto's chest disgusted me.

“We refuse.”

“Hah? Do you even get the situation you're in, brat?! Or do you really think

two chicks on their own could make it out there as adventurers? You must be as dense as the tan chick!”

And with that, the hoodlums pulled out their swords. Just as I was considering using them as test subjects for the Body Strengthening I’d learned, Teto charged forward and punched the punk leader in the face.

“Don’t you dare insult Lady Witch!”

Her mana-enchanted fist broke right through the weapons they’d all drawn to intimidate us, and the force of her single punch completely floored the entire gang.



Teto immediately gave the collapsed leader Zance an extra helping, kicking him while he was down. “Take those insults against Lady Witch back! Take them back!”

“Teto, stop! I’m fine, and he’s already out cold. No hitting a downed enemy!”

Once I managed to pull her away, Teto teared up...then started to violently sob. “Waaaaaah! But, but, they called Lady Witch dumb!”

“Aw, there, there. It’s okay, it’s all okay.”

Perhaps because she had only existed a short length of time, Teto was quite young emotionally. Though she didn’t pick up on any of the hostility directed towards her, she seemed super sensitive when it came to me. There might have been some lingering golem instincts to protect her master still within her.

While I tried calming Teto down as best I could, I noticed some of the other adventurers glancing uncertainly between us and the downed delinquents. They probably wanted to know what to do with the miscreants, who all had swollen faces and possibly a concussion or two. There was also a chance Teto had kicked the leader hard enough to break a few of his ribs.

“Um, I should probably heal them, I guess... Whoa, Teto?”

Teto had grabbed my clothes, stopping me in my tracks. Once she stopped crying, she shook her lowered head, clearly not wanting me to help out the people who’d belittled me.

“Okay,” I said with a sigh. I turned back to the other adventurers and asked, “So, uh, what should I do about this?” But they only gave me troubled looks back, until one of them at last spoke up.

“Zance and his boys are always kill-stealing during quests and starting fights at the pub. So while it’s nice to finally see their asses beat... Well, that was *wild*. That Teto girl destroyed all of them in an instant!”

“Right... But what usually happens after a fight between adventurers?”

“Hm. The guild can mediate, but since Zance and his party were trying to get you to work for a measly ten percent of the loot, I doubt they’ll get much sympathy.”

I had to imagine the fact that Zance's gang were renowned troublemakers, and the fact that Teto and I had saved the Wind-Riding Falcons—a C-rank party—would also be points in our favor. But still...

"I'm not sure we'd get much sympathy either. We've only just registered with the guild."

"It's all about how beneficial you are. And don't worry, we'll all be backing you kids up too!" After he said that, the others around him started nodding their heads and offering their own words of support.

I had to admit, it was a bit of a touching moment.

"Heeey! I got the guildmaster!"

"What in the world... What happened here?"

A thin, grim-looking man—apparently the guildmaster—appeared on the training grounds. His gaze softened after a couple adventurers briefly explained what had happened.

"Chise and Teto, were you? It sounds like you fought in self-defense, but I'd like to hear it in your own words." He spoke to us in a polite way that didn't fit his appearance at all, perhaps because we were girls in a troubling situation.

While I went over the entire series of events, Teto held me tight, only calming down after burying her face in my chest.

"I see," the guildmaster said. "So they tried to coerce you two into their party, only offering you ten percent of the loot. Then, when they didn't get the answer they wanted, they drew their swords and threatened you."

"Is it really okay for you to accept our story, no questions asked? We haven't even taken on any quests as adventurers yet..." I only now realized how bad it must have looked for us to join a guild, and then not do any work our entire first week.

The stern guildmaster's expression softened again. "Don't worry about that. It's not so unusual for adventurers to take a week off from time to time, and you two girls just finished a long journey through the woods all on your own. Of course you'd need some time to recover before you start taking jobs."

“Thanks, hearing you say that makes me feel a lot better,” I said, tension draining from my shoulders. “Since I’ve finished with all my research, I was thinking the two of us could start taking quests from tomorrow onward.”

“It’s wonderful to see such an industrious adventurer. But be careful when you’re out in the wilds. You may already know, but there’s an orc king about.” His expression stiffened once more as he gave this warning. “You should go back to your inn for now. Leave the cleanup here to the adults.”

“Thank you. Ah, but before I forget... *Area Heal. Area Clean.*”

The adventurers who sparred with Teto earlier still needed their usual healing and cleaning afterwards. Once that was settled, I gave everyone a nod and took my leave.

The Guildmaster’s Side

“Those girls truly don’t know their own strength. That’s worrying.”

After seeing off Chise the witch and her guardian swordswoman Teto, I thought over what to do with Zance and his crooked crew. Once I worked that out, my thoughts turned back to the two girls, and everything they’d been up to the past week.

The duo had been gathering information from the reference room and holding mock battles with other adventurers. That was all well and good, but what really stood out to me was what Chise had done at the very end there, just before leaving: the free healing.

The adventurers who gathered on the training grounds each day were ones who were wounded and unable to work, yet didn’t want their skills to get rusty. By healing them, the adventurers who’d been waiting for their injuries to heal in order to fight the orc king were able to get back on their feet more quickly and prepare for the battles ahead. Some of those healed adventurers had begun to secretly refer to the girl as a saint—or even a goddess of luck—for allowing them to take part in the latest quests. These assignments were not only in the town’s security interests, but in their personal financial interests as well.

It was also worth noting that since Teto was stronger than orcs, the D-rank adventurers who sparred with her regularly had improved to the point where they could safely take down a single orc on their own. If nothing else, learning how to deal with an opponent with great physical strength had given each of them the confidence they needed to defend against an orc and survive, even if they couldn't win.

The two girls were long gone, but still I spoke out to them under my breath. "Chise, Teto. The two of you have already greatly contributed to the guild."

Chapter 17: Herb-Gathering Pros Can Get By Just Fine

After causing all that trouble, Teto and I quickly left the guildhall and headed out into town. Though the guildmaster had requested we return to our room at the inn, I didn't feel like holing up inside for the rest of the day.

"Come on, Teto. I'll buy you some candy, so cheer up!"

Teto was plodding along sluggishly behind me, so I took her hand and guided her to the stalls for some snacks. As I expected, the candies did the trick—she was all smiles again, and ready to hear my plans for the future.

"From tomorrow on, let's do some quests outside of town."

"From tomorrow on?"

"Yeah. We can take things gradually and work our way up to becoming D-rank adventurers." I didn't have any real goals in this world, but we needed to be at least D-rank to enter any of the dungeons that the adventurer's guild managed. Once we earned enough prestige, we'd be able to go wherever we wished—and I could see myself wanting to pick up special dungeon-specific magical items in the future.

I also wanted to ensure Teto could live freely. "Raising your rank would be good for you in particular, Teto. Since your earthnoid race is something new and unfamiliar to people here, building a good reputation will go a long way."

"What about you, Lady Witch?"

"Hm. For the time being, I just want to focus on working as an adventurer, earning money, and getting stronger. If we clear enough dungeons and defeat enough strong monsters, we should find ourselves sufficiently safe and secure. But I haven't really thought of what we'd do after that."

It was difficult to pin down more concrete long-term goals when I didn't even know things like how long Teto's earthnoid life span would be. There was also

the distinct possibility Teto would one day be despised and shunned as some kind of demon... I didn't have a plan yet for what I'd do then. "If worse ever comes to worst though, we'll just have to find ourselves somewhere safe to live."

"I'll be happy so long as we're together!" Teto cheered innocently, and I couldn't help but smile back.

How long would it take to find such a place though? Ten years? Twenty? If things didn't work out in this town, I decided my new goal in life would be to find a place where Teto and I could live peacefully.

"Lady Witch, if we keep adventuring, will I be able to eat another dungeon core? It was super yummy!"

"So you've developed a taste for dungeon cores, huh? I think what we *should* do is bring a dungeon core to the guild. Not only will we get even richer, but we'll also gain a reputation as capable dungeon explorers." And if Teto became a brand-new race after eating just one dungeon core, there was no telling what might happen if she ate a second or third.

We eventually returned to the inn and ate our dinner as usual. Then when it was time to sleep, Teto and I shared the same bed. That was originally meant to be a onetime thing, but each evening I found myself falling asleep in her arms.

The next morning, we paid another week's worth of inn fees and headed to the guild. We decided to take on a quest to gather thirty medicinal herbs used for potions, then headed off to the plains north of town to do so. The reward was a mere two large coppers, but I figured the upcoming battle with the orc king would lead to a greater demand for health potions.

While out on the plains, I considered completing our quest the easy way. "Hmm... It seems it'd take 20 MP to make a single medicinal herb with Creation Magic." The mana-to-money ratio was pretty awful, so I didn't want to bother with it. And besides...

"Lady Witch, I found some more over here!"

"Good work, Teto! Let's get them bundled up."

Teto was surprisingly good at finding things on the ground. We quickly fell

into a rhythm: she would use her knife to carefully harvest the herbs, and I'd place them securely in my magic bag. Since it had a time-stopping effect inside, we'd be able to bring the herbs back as fresh as possible.

While Teto continued her search for more herbs, I focused mana in my eyes and scanned the plains.

"There's one with lots of mana in it." Thanks to my Mana Perception, I was able to spot the herbs needed for making mana potions. I carefully harvested these herbs and tied them in bundles of ten with some string before putting them inside my magic bag. There was always demand for mana potions, and ten herbs for those sold for five large coppers. "But that demand comes from how few mages there are." Since the herbs for mana potions sometimes got mixed up with the herbs for the health potions, the guild also bought them individually.

By the way, despite how much of a pain these herb-gathering quests were, they were only F-ranked.

"Okay, Teto. How many healing herbs did you gather?"

"Ninety-four! How many mana herbs did you find, Lady Witch?"

"Forty. Altogether, we've got enough to complete seven quests." You needed to do a minimum of thirty G-rank or F-rank quests to move up from G-rank to F-rank, so for the two of us together, we needed to complete sixty quests total. It was generally expected that newbie adventurers would be finishing one quest a day.

"If we keep going at this rate, we'll be F-rank within ten days."

"But Lady Witch, won't we be causing problems for other people if we harvest too much?"

"Don't worry. So long as you leave the roots, these herbs grow back in about three days." And besides, since they'd learned that orcs were appearing to the north of town, the F-rank and G-rank adventurers who typically gathered herbs were either taking on safer quests within town, or going to the southern plains instead—far away from the forest. Not many people would brave the lands north of town just for some herbs.

“Let’s head back.”

Teto and I returned to the guild and handed over our pickings. Though herb-collection quests didn’t pay much, my time-stopping magic bag kept the herbs fresh—and more valuable. And since potions were in high demand at the moment thanks to the orc battles, what would usually come out to be twenty-six large coppers went for thirty large coppers (or three silvers) instead. If I thought about it in terms of my previous world’s money, making fifteen thousand yen a day was pretty good. My Mana Perception skill and Teto’s earth affinity definitely made such work a lot more feasible though.

“Okay, let’s go back to the inn. There’s something I want to experiment with.”

“Experiment?”

“Yep. I want to see if I can increase my usable MP.”

Once back at the inn, I meditated on the bed to recharge my mana. Thanks to the strange fruit I ate every morning, my mana pool was slowly growing, even when I wasn’t leveling up. I currently had around 2,800 MP total.

“Here goes nothing. *Creation*: mana crystal!” Mages used mana potions to restore their MP, but there was another method available: a special mineral called a mana crystal.

“Whew, I did it...but it’s empty.” This made sense though, since the crystal was just a container for holding mana. Creating one took about 2,000 MP, and when I tried pouring my remaining mana inside of it, I found I could store about 1,000 MP. Perhaps that simply meant the capacity of a mana crystal was half the amount it took to make one.

“Lady Witch, why are you making this crystal when you can just use mana potions?”

“Drinking too many mana potions would give me a tubby tummy. It’ll be more efficient to cast magic using mana I store in crystals.”

Teto tilted her head in confusion, not understanding the sensation of a bloated belly or how handy it would be to access the mana inside crystals. A dry smile crept up on my lips despite myself.

“Anyways, I’m getting tired, so I’m gonna wrap this up and then rest for a bit.”

“Okay!”

And so, I went back to meditating to restore my mana. “If I make four mana crystals a day and store all my leftover mana inside them, I’ll be able to use them for all sorts of spells later on. I could even use the mana to make new things with my Creation Magic!” The possibilities were endless when it came to Creation Magic, of course. But if nothing particularly useful ever came to mind, I could always just sell the mana crystals themselves for money.

Once I finished my crystal-crafting experiment, Teto and I ate dinner and went to bed.

Chapter 18: Suddenly! Violent Attacks

For the next two weeks, Teto and I focused on collecting herbs. Once we became F-rank adventurers, we were able to take on E-rank quests.

I continued to just wear my dress and robe, but Teto gained a leather chest piece, making her look more like a proper swordswoman. Meanwhile, I spent my leftover MP each day making more mana crystals, and soon enough I built myself an exterior mana pool of 50,000 MP.

But despite our rise in the rankings, we still couldn't take on any hunting quests. "There's a forest full of monsters right in front of us, and yet we're not allowed in. We might just have to move somewhere else."

For the time being, Darryl Town had declared the northern forest off-limits to E-rank adventures and lower due to the orc settlement and the birth of an orc king. The guild didn't want greenhorns getting in the way of higher-ranked adventurers like the Wind Falcons.

"Oh well. The orcs should be exterminated soon enough, right? Let's just return home for now, Teto."

"Okay, Lady Witch!"

As always, we put the herbs we collected inside my magic bag and headed for the town's western gate. Just as we were joining the line of adventurers though, we heard a low roar coming from the northern forest.

"Prepare yourself, Teto."

"Got it, Lady Witch!" Teto instantly drew her sword and shield.

Just as the nearby travelers and merchants also went on alert, ten red-skinned humanoid monsters charged full speed out of the forest.

"Ogres! Run!" The people all began pushing each other in an attempt to get within the town's walls more quickly. Ogres were widely known for eating humans, so this frenzied panic wasn't at all surprising.

“Everyone, remain calm! Slow down! Single file now!” The gatekeepers were doing their best to lead the people in safely, but the ogres were rushing forth in a full sprint.

“Dammit, how did ten C-rank monsters make it all the way here? Someone, call for adventurers from the guild!”

“Can’t! They’re all out exterminating orcs!”

“Then get whatever guild workers you can find! We can drive the ogres off from atop the town walls!”

Though they were shaking, the gatekeepers continued to shout their orders. “Protect the civilians at all costs! Call for backup!”

“This doesn’t look good,” I said. “Those ogres are gonna trample all the people who won’t make it into town in time. Teto, how many monsters do you think you can take?”

“Hmm... I dunno, but I can sure find out!”

“Let’s give it our best shot then. Come on!”

Despite this being our first encounter with ogres, they didn’t seem as intimidating as the stone golem boss we’d fought in the dungeon. They weren’t as big, and likely weren’t as strong either. And we could claim victory either by defeating the ten ogres before they reached the gates, or by stalling them long enough for all the people to finish evacuating.

While Teto took on the vanguard, I began casting magic.

“*Fly! Wind Cutter!*” I could fly much higher now, and with much greater stability. From my bird’s-eye view, I aimed a blade of wind at a different ogre from the one that Teto was attacking. But my first attack spell—strong enough to split an orc clean in two—was blocked by the ogre’s tough skin, leaving little more than a scratch.

“Ah, so they’re using Body Strengthening. But they’re still not as strong as that stone golem.” The ogres were coating their bodies in mana to raise their defense, but the stone golem was still a higher-ranked monster. However, unlike how dungeon monsters dropped materials after they were killed, you

had to flay aboveground monsters' corpses to retrieve their useful parts. That meant to claim any spoils of war, you couldn't damage their bodies too much.

"Hm. A *Wind Cutter* probably won't be enough. But if I use my higher-damage fire magic..." I could definitely defeat the ogres, but I'd need to be careful to avoid damaging any materials.

"Haaaaaah!" Teto's sword smashed against an ogre's cudgel...and the sword broke. "Oh no! The sword Lady Witch gave me!"

The ogre then smacked Teto away with its cudgel, sending her rolling about ten meters away. The nearby civilians screamed.

"Ouch! All right, now you're gonna get it!" Teto just stood back up as if nothing had happened, then fiercely engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the ogre. Teto was several times stronger than the ogre due to her physical strength as a golem and the intensity of her expansive mana pool of Body Strengthening. With each successive blow, the ogre's arms shattered, its feet plunged into the ground, and its chest collapsed.

"Graaahhh!"

Three ogres then rushed Teto, only for her to take on all of them at once, breaking their legs with a series of low kicks. But even after being knocked back, her clothes and equipment in tatters, she continued attacking them.

"Teto's down there fighting like a berserker. What should I be doing?" Even if I went around Teto and pummeled the other ogres with a bunch of *Wind Cutter* spells, I'd probably just piss them off. In which case...

"I'll use the mana inside my crystals. *Hardening! Shoot!*" I hardened the mana crystal in my hand, then shot it down with Origin Magic.

Noticing the superhardened crystal rushing straight for them, an ogre swung its cudgel to knock it out of the air—but the crystal shot right through the club and lodged deep inside the ogre's head. Moments later, the mana within the crystal depleted, and then the crystal shattered violently once the hardening magic wore off.

"Well, that worked!" I could shoot pebbles at the same speed, but they wouldn't break past the ogres' Body Strengthening. So by using the mana within

the crystals to keep them hardened, I was able to launch an effective physical attack with magic.

“I’ll call that spell *Hard Shot*, I guess.” I proceeded to work out a system for taking down the ogres one by one. I’d use the mana in a backup crystal to keep my attack crystal hardened, then use my own mana to fire it with Origin Magic. Crystal pierces ogre head, ogre dies with the rest of its body undamaged. Rinse and repeat.

“Perfect! Once I’ve finished off the rest of them, we can get that loot.” It only took one shot to kill each monster, so they dropped like flies. The last remaining ogre tried to hightail it back to the forest, but I didn’t let it. One mana crystal to the back of the head, and it fell just like the rest of them.

“How are things on your end, Teto?”

“I just finished!” Teto smashed a fourth ogre’s face in, then turned to me with ogre blood splattered across her cheek. She wasn’t injured, but her clothes and armor were in tatters. Luckily though, she avoided complete indecency thanks to her underwear and a few surviving scraps.

“Here, take my extra robe and cover yourself up.”

“Yaaay! Lady Witch’s robe!”



Once I cleaned the blood off of her with magic, Teto happily wrapped herself in my spare robe.

Next order of business then... I called for a nearby guard. “Can you call someone over from the adventurer’s guild? I’ll need to report on what happened here.”

“Huh? Ah... Of course! Right away!”

All the people who had been scrambling to get into town were now frozen in place, staring at us in astonishment. Dangerous ogres had appeared, and here Teto and I had taken them all out handily. To hide from everyone’s gazes, I pulled my hood over my face and took a look at my status.

NAME: Chise (Reincarnator)

CLASS: Witch

LEVEL: 44

HP: 420/500

MP: 2,420/4,021

SKILLS: Staff Martial Arts Lv 1, Origin Magic Lv 3, various others...

UNIQUE SKILL: Creation Magic

I had 2,800 MP when we first arrived in town, but after eating strange fruits over the past month and leveling up seven times by defeating the ogres, my total MP was now over 4,000.

Guild employees started appearing from town, and were quickly followed by adventurers who had been in the northern forest to defeat the orc king.

“What the hell happened here?”

“Hey, all the ogres that ran from the north are dead!”

“I’ve never seen an ogre killed like this before. It looks like these ones were each taken down in a single headshot.”

“And then these ones over here were beaten to death! Who the hell managed *that?*”

Once the adventurers and guild employees were gathered together, I asked them to explain what happened exactly with the mission to exterminate the orc king. Lyle of the Wind Falcons proceeded to fill us in on everything.

First off, the adventurers had all gathered for their final campaign against the orc settlement and its orc king. But the settlement had attracted a pack of ogres that set up shop in a nearby cave, presumably to gobble up any unsuspecting orcs they could snatch. Though there were adventurers in the subjugation party who were strong enough to take on the likes of ogres, some felt it prudent to leave the ogres be and simply focus on their orc-exterminating mission.

The orc king was a B-rank monster, and its settlement had nearly three hundred orcs inside. A single ogre meanwhile was typically C-rank, but a group of them together raised their rank to C+. It was rare for ogres to cooperate with each other though, so some of the adventurers argued that they’d have no problem picking off the ogres one by one after they dealt with the more pressing matter of the orcs. There was also a chance that if they battled the ogres first, the orcs would notice the great congregation of adventurers and go on the defensive, spoiling any chance of a surprise attack on the settlement.

So while the adventurers went off to battle the orcs, the ogres had—ironically enough—organized a group to attack Darryl Town. The adventurers realized this not long after defeating the orc king and its orcs, so they all rushed back to try and stop the ogres before it was too late.

“I see,” I said. “And then Teto and I defeated them all before they could break into town.”

“You really pulled through for us yet again,” Lyle said. “But how the hell did you defeat all those ogres?”

Apparently, ogres had been greatly feared since ancient times for their tough bodies and for how they unconsciously utilized Body Strengthening. The typical ways to kill them were either getting them to slowly die of blood loss, or to keep slashing away at them and hope you get in a fatal hit at some point.

Higher-ranked adventurers or knights who had undertaken sufficient training

could slice ogres in half with a single slash, so the corpses here must have appeared pretty abnormal to everyone. The adventurers could only make out six ogres that had their heads destroyed by something like a thick spear perhaps, and four other ogres that had somehow been beaten to death, their chests and heads caved in.

“Teto just seriously punched them,” I said. “And to explain my method simply, I used the mana stored in crystals and shot them at high speed into each ogre’s head.”

“You shot mana crystals at them?!” Lyle said, clearly stunned. “We’d heard that you hit them with something, but *mana crystals*? They sure did a ton of damage though...”

“I used their mana to harden them. That negated the ogres’ Body Strengthening and allowed them to break through. Then once they ran out of mana, they shattered. Call it a magic bullet, if you will.”

When I told them I’d used six such magic bullets, Lyle’s expression stiffened. “You were willing to give up something that precious to save the fleeing civilians... How much mana could those crystals store, anyways?”

I heaved a sigh. “About 1,000 MP. And I used six.”

Lyle whispered to me quietly, “Crystals like those cost five small golds apiece, you know? Not going to say you did the wrong thing with that stunt you pulled, obviously—you did save lives. But still, *oof*. Thirty small golds. That’s a whole lotta money down the drain.”

The average reward for killing a single ogre was two small golds. So ten ogres, twenty small golds. Adding in what I’d get for selling off the ogres’ skin, bones, and magical stones, I’d likely just break even—or perhaps even be a bit in the red.

It made sense everyone would be this bewildered by my use of mana crystals—valuable mana tanks meant to be reused again and again—as single-use high-damage projectiles. But since I made them all with my Creation Magic, money wasn’t an issue for me.

“Don’t worry, Lyle. I did it because I wanted to.”

“Of course. I understand,” Lyle said, looking very much like he did not, in fact, understand.

And so, after settling affairs related to the orc king extermination and the ogre attack, we headed into town to report our herb-gathering results at the guild. But that’s when we got a call from the guildmaster...

Chapter 19: Jumping Up in Rank Is a Given

After defeating the ogres, Teto and I sat across from the guildmaster in the guild's reception office. He had been on our side after our run-in with the delinquent adventurers, and now was once again giving us an apologetic look.

"I've heard reports saying the two of you expertly defeated the group of ogres that appeared near the gate. If you hadn't killed them with such swift proficiency, the people who couldn't escape in time would have suffered serious injuries—or worse. Thank you."

"We just happened to stumble upon a method of killing them, is all."

"I also heard that to kill the ogres, you used mana crystals which would sell at five small golds apiece."

I had only used the mana crystals as projectiles because I didn't have anything else on hand that would pierce the twin barriers of a C-rank ogre's Body Strengthening and tough flesh. Shooting a pebble or what have you at high speeds was something probably any D-rank mage could do, but I got the impression it wasn't a spell most could pull off multiple times in a row like I had. From my perspective, I'd simply been experimenting on the fly, and never considered my use of mana crystals to be any kind of noble sacrifice. Everyone acting so apologetic about it was really making me feel awkward.

"Miss Chise, I'm going to have to speak strictly from the guild's perspective."

My mind had drifted to brainstorming better methods of taking down ogres, so my response to the guildmaster was a bit delayed. "Ah, okay. Please do."

"Though it pains me to say it—especially considering the loss of your precious mana crystals—from the guild's standpoint, you did not complete any actual quests when you slew the ogres, so there aren't any rewards the guild may offer you."

I nodded. Nothing we could do there.

The guildmaster continued: "But since the raw materials in the ogres' bodies

were left undamaged, we're prepared to give you two small golds for each ogre after the guild dissects and sells them. It's very rare for us to get this many ogre corpses in such good condition, so while we have no quest rewards to bestow upon you, we can at least sweeten the deal for the remains of the ogres a little."

Adding up all the ogres Teto and I had killed together, that would net us two large golds. A normal person throwing away mana crystals as I had would be in the red, but it was a good reward for us.

While we were going over the prices of ogre parts, Teto tugged at my sleeve from her seat beside me. "Lady Witch, my magic stooones!"

"Oh, that's right. Guildmaster, we don't mind you selling the ogre parts, but can we keep the magic stones?"

"That's fine, but those are the things that'd sell for the most..."

"This girl here is just crazy for stones." This technically wasn't a lie, so long as I didn't elaborate any further.

"Yes, I love getting new stones!" Teto backed me up.

The guildmaster nodded at us. "You're not alone there. I've known knights and adventurers who collect the magic stones of monsters they defeat as a way to show their achievements. They can always sell the rocks later if they need to though, of course."

I see, so some adventurers might keep magic stones around for the sake of proving their strength.

"What would you like to do?" the guildmaster asked. "You're certainly allowed to keep the magic stones, but we'd greatly appreciate taking at least a few of them off your hands."

"Sure, I can sell the ones from the ogres I defeated."

"Six stones then. That'll give you two a total of sixteen small golds. Deal?"

I nodded. "Sounds good. Is that everything then?"

"No. I'd also like to talk about raising your ranks."

Teto and I both leaned in closer.

“You two slew ten C-rank monsters in front of a large group of people. We also already heard from the Wind-Riding Falcons about how you slaughtered some high-ranking orcs. With both of these accomplishments in mind, the guild has decided you’re strong enough for a higher rank.” He paused, then took a sip of water before continuing. “Furthermore, the fact that you prioritized saving lives has shown the guild your true worth as indispensable members. As such, we have decided to raise the two of you multiple ranks at once.”

“Not what I was expecting.”

“Chise, you will jump straight to D-rank, while Teto will be raised even further to C-rank. While you, Chise, managed to efficiently slay the ogres via strength-boosting mana crystals, Teto’s ability to defeat ogres using only her fists left an especially strong impression upon the guild.”

Raising our ranks was probably the guild’s way of making up for the tactical and financial loss of all my mana crystals. I certainly had no objections, as getting a boost to D-rank would allow me to get into the guild-managed dungeons.

“That’s fine with—”

“Teto objects!”

“What’s this all about, Teto?”

She made a strained face. “Mmmph, I want to be the same as Lady Witch. I don’t want to be the only one at C-rank!”

“Hold on a second, Teto!” Did she seriously want to be the same rank as me that badly?

The guildmaster folded his arms. “I’ve heard plenty of people whining for me to raise their ranks, but I’ve never met someone who wanted their rank *lowered*.”

“I apologize...”

“No, it’s fine—we haven’t officially raised your ranks yet. But thinking about it now, if Teto jumped all the way from F to C, she’d stand out quite a bit, and

would likely be targeted again by nasty adventurers like Zance and his boys. Jumping from F to D is a tad less unusual, so that should give you some space to soften the blow. But still...I think I can at least make your journey to the next rank a bit smoother. I'll make it so you're both exempt from the C-rank exam."

That was all well and good. And with that settled, we remembered to turn in our medicinal herbs for the gathering quest we'd completed, and received our new guild cards.

"So this is a D-ranked adventurer's guild card, huh."

"Yaaay! I have the same card as Lady Witch!"

"Congratulations on hitting D-rank, kids. So what are your plans now? We're gonna have some quests hunting down stray orcs for a while here in Darryl."

The adventurers may have destroyed the settlement with its orc king, but there were still a good number of orcs that escaped. Since orc-slaying quests were D-ranked, we'd have no trouble finding steady work for a while, but...

"Now that we're D-rank, I think Teto and I will hit the road again."

"Such is the way of the adventurer. But what's your end goal?"

"We don't really have one, other than one day finding somewhere Teto and I can live peacefully."

The guildmaster gave me a pitying look when I said that, before returning to his default fierce expression. "Adventurers of your caliber will be able to find work anywhere. While I'd love for you to stick around, I'll be rooting for the two of you just the same."

After thanking him for all his assistance and encouragement, Teto and I left the guild and headed back to the inn. There, we received a more exuberant welcome than I was expecting.

"They're back! I heard that you two were the ones who beat those ogres! It's not every day we have true heroes staying here!"

I didn't have the energy for a big celebration or anything, so I put on a convincingly tired expression and headed straight for our room.

"Sorry, Teto. I just want to get some sleep."

“Okay, Lady Witch. Good niiight!”

The dining hall-slash-pub downstairs would probably be bustling late into the night, what with both the destruction of the orc settlement and all the ogres being slain. Meanwhile, Teto and I went straight to bed, having already far exceeded our daily quota of excitement.

Chapter 20: Teto's New Gear, and Then On to Our Next Stop

Having achieved our goals in Darryl Town, Teto and I prepared to set out once more.

"We're good on money after defeating those ogres, so let's go buy whatever we might need."

"Okay, but...you don't really need to *buy* anything, do you?"

Teto was of course thinking we could just make everything with my Creation Magic. It was true we could do that for food and our small daily needs, but...

"We need to buy *some* food and things, so no one gets suspicious. Let's at least pick up some preserved foods."

"Aww, but that stuff isn't yummy at all!"

"Oho? So you don't want any of those dried fruits you enjoyed so much the other day? Okay then."

"Lady Witch, I've changed my mind! Let's shop 'til we drop!"

That was easy, I thought with a giggle.

We soon made our way to the market. Teto was right about my ability to create pretty much anything we needed with Creation Magic, but there were just some things I couldn't pull off so easily.

"Let's buy you some new equipment, Teto. I'd like to look for some good books too."

"Equipment and books?"

"Yep. I can't create the information stored in books, if I don't already know everything that'd be in them." I needed more knowledge to supplement my mental images for future attempts at Creation Magic, and nothing was more efficient than a book packed with useful information. "I'll need more magic

knowledge if I want to get stronger.”

“I seeeeee,” Teto said, nodding along.

While fighting the ogres, I realized that I’d been using Origin Magic by feel. It was one thing to be able to defeat monsters, but if I was going to be serious about living as an adventurer, I needed to be able to take down monsters without damaging their sellable materials, and without destroying our surroundings. We’d managed all right in that encounter with the ogres, but our methods certainly had room for improvement.

“*Hard Shot* works against C-rank monsters, but I need to find something other than mana crystals to shoot.” It wasn’t the most prudent of projectiles, certainly—but I also needed to keep in mind that such attacks wouldn’t work against spirits, or any other enemies that couldn’t be damaged physically.

“And as for you, Teto, didn’t your sword break in that ogre battle? I think you’d do better with a sword made to order—one made by a weapons expert to fit your style of fighting—rather than something I create, or something we find in a dungeon.” It probably didn’t matter much to Teto herself, since she wasn’t fussy about what she fought with. But during her sparring sessions I watched with Mana Perception, I had come to realize that some adventurers used swords that allowed them to transfer mana more easily.

I proceeded to explain the usefulness of such a weapon to Teto as simply as I could:

Transferring mana used for Body Strengthening into something else (namely, a weapon) was something much easier said than done. If Teto were to use 100 MP to strengthen her body, she would likely only be able to transfer about 10 of that MP to a normal sword... But that’s where special metals come in. A sword made of mythril or magisteel would allow her to use 50 to 60 MP to sharpen its blade and utilize stronger attacks. In essence, the more control one had over their mana, the more they could use for Body Strengthening—but wielding a weapon made with a metal that already had a good mana transfer rate was a much more efficient way to become stronger. Fight smarter, not harder.

“And that’s why I think we should buy you a weapon.”

“Er... I don’t really get it, but I’ll be happy with whatever you buy me, Lady

Witch!”

“Okay. Let’s head to the weapon shop then.”

We ended up going to the one that most adventurers at the guild used. There I quickly found the two dwarven brothers who ran the shop.

“Hello. We’d like to look at your wares.”

The older of the two dwarves responded, “If you kids are just here to window-shop, then scram. We’re busy working.”

“Don’t say that, bro! Sorry about that, miss. What are you looking for?” The younger dwarf smiled softly, in sharp contrast to his moody sibling.

I got straight to the point. “I’d like you to outfit this girl with armor and a weapon for around three large golds.”

“Please, pretty please?” Teto added.

Teto and I likely each exuded a very different energy at this moment, to the point that the dwarf brothers weren’t sure whether to respond to my straightforward request or to Teto’s sugary-sweet plea. There was also the fact we were young and offhandedly offering three large golds... The situation probably strained credulity.

“Hmph. We don’t sell toys for children here.”

“He’s right. Even if you were to save up that much money, we could never sell weapons to— Huh?!”

Teto and I held out our guild cards, showing that we were D-rank adventurers.

“D-rank... Chise and Teto?” the younger dwarf read aloud in quiet shock.

“Wait, weren’t they the ones who...?”

I tried moving things along. “So will you sell us something? She’ll need a magisteel or mythril sword, and then some leather armor that won’t constrict her movements.”

“Hold on just a second,” the older brother cut in excitedly. “If you’re Teto, show me the sword you were using!” The dwarf’s tune had changed completely.

Teto pulled out both her broken swords from the magic bag I'd given her. "This is the sword Lady Witch gave me, and this is one we found in a dungeon. They broke, but they're precious gifts from Lady Witch, so you can't have them!"

The elder dwarf put a hand to his chin in thought. "You really fought those ogres?"

"My sword broke partway through, so I had to finish them off with my fists."

The younger dwarf gave an embarrassed smile. "Eh heh heh... We just got some of those ogres' skins in our shop. We were told about how they'd been slain, but to think that you two were the ones who did it..."

Teto had beaten four ogres to death physically—so while their skins were still usable, their flesh, bones, and organs were apparently a mess. But that worked out okay, since no one really used ogre flesh or organs in anything, and you could just crush their bones into powder to be mixed into alloys with metal.

The older dwarf brother stared intently at the two swords. "Hm, not at all showy. This one is blunt as hell, but the iron in it is ridiculously pure and strong. The dungeon sword meanwhile looks like a smithing sample. But you did shit taking care of them! You might've cleaned off the blood and guts at least, but neither of 'em have been resharpened or anything. And you've been running your mana through them all willy-nilly!" Once he finished giving his assessment of Teto's swords, he went into his workshop and came out with a few of his own.

"Kid, hold these swords and try running your mana through 'em."

"Okay!"

One sword was made of iron, another was made of magisteel, and the third was made of mythril. Following the instructions she was given, Teto picked up each sword and directed her mana through them. As she did, I focused mana into my eyes to see how well she did, only to notice that the elder dwarf brother was doing the same.

He looked over to me and said, "Oh, did you notice the way we gather mana in our eyes?"

“Yes. So you two can use Body Strengthening as well, huh?”

“We’ve been all for craftin’ things with mana ever since we were little. So it’s probably like how adventurers use mana without really thinkin’ about it, you know? At any rate, using mana is what separates us blacksmiths from regular metalworkers.”

“I see. Learn something new every day.”

The dwarves also told me about how focusing mana in your eyes could make it easier to see minute details when doing delicate work, or to keep your eyes from hurting from the light of a forge. While they went over such tricks of their trade, they watched how much mana Teto put through each of the swords they handed her.

“Gettin’ back on track, I’d suggest a magisteel sword for Teto.”

“We’ve budgeted up to three large golds. Shouldn’t we be able to afford mythril?”

“Hold your horses. It’s true that mythril has the best mana transfer rate outta all of the metals out there. But judgin’ by this girl’s broken swords, she’s pretty damn strong. That means she’d do best with magisteel, which makes for a stronger and sturdier blade.”

While I understood the explanation, Teto just tilted her head in confusion.

The younger dwarf continued: “Plus, the swords she used have gotten real good at takin’ her mana. We oughta make use of those too.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

The elder brother, with his forge-tanned face, gave me an amused grin. “Normal iron swords’ve got bad mana transfer rates. But the more you use something, the more you break it in. Mana works the same way. If we use some magisteel as a core, and reuse the iron that’s used to her mana, we can forge her a good sword.”

“So I can keep using the sword Lady Witch gave me?”

The elder dwarf turned to Teto. “Yeah. In the beginning, it’ll be weaker than somethin’ made purely outta magisteel. But by mixin’ the magisteel in, the

iron'll gradually react to your mana and turn into stronger magisteel. A weapon that's broken in with the user's mana will react to it and try to return to its original shape, you see."

His younger brother added, "At first your sword will only have a little magisteel in it, but it will be astronomically cheaper than a fully magisteel sword. Your weapon will become a magic sword that won't require future maintenance."

"The term is *automatic restoration*! As far as I'm concerned, it ain't a proper magic sword if it can lose its luster!"

The dwarves' proposal for Teto's sword sounded enticing. If we were going to be traveling for extended periods of time, we wouldn't always have a blacksmith close by. So it would be incredibly handy for Teto's sword to be able to automatically repair itself.

"What do you think, Teto?"

"I like that I'd be able to continue using the sword you gave me, Lady Witch."

I turned back to the dwarves. "Then we'll go with your suggestion. So for the cost..."

After it was decided that we'd have them make a magic sword for Teto, they also took her measurements to make her new equipment from the ogre skins. The sword would cost one large gold, while the ogre-skin gear would be five small golds. All in all, it would only cost us half of our original budget—so after paying a deposit, we left the weapon shop.

"Next up is the bookstore. I'm going to get myself some magic tomes."

At the town bookstore, I spent seven small golds on books that interested me. Most were around five silvers despite being light on content, so I took my time flipping through books before I picked the ones I felt would be the most useful. Still though, it all added up. In the end, my books and Teto's gear cost us all the money we'd earned from slaying the ogres, plus some of our guild card savings.

Though we had risen to D-rank, we headed to our usual herb-gathering spot to earn enough money for daily living, since Teto was weaponless for the time being. We figured the plains north of town wouldn't be busy, since there were

still some orcs scattered about, but...

“Teto, I think they really *are* following us.”

As we headed to the plains for our quest, I noticed a group of G-rank or F-rank apprentice adventurers around my age tailing us. They weren't getting in our way, but they were always within sight, guardedly picking their own herbs.

“Lady Witch, Teto can scare them away if you want.”

“No, it's fine. They're not bothering us.” The apprentice adventurers probably wouldn't be able to protect themselves if any orcs showed up, so they decided to stick close to us ogre slayers while they picked their herbs.

When we returned to the guild to sell our herbs, I complained to the receptionist. “Really though, what would they have done if I were a mean adventurer?”

The receptionist gave me a warm look. “I doubt those kids would stick around dangerous adventurers, no matter how strong they might be.”

Teto chimed in, “Lady Witch acts like she was annoyed, but really, she was watching out for them. She showed which spots had herbs and clearly demonstrated the correct way to pick them.”

“No, no,” I denied, turning my head away. “I just lost sight of some of the herbs, and they mimicked what I was doing all on their own.”

Teto and the receptionist both gave me questioning gazes in response.

For one reason or another though, after I left Darryl Town, retired mercenaries and former D-rankers would go on to guide the younger adventurers in their herb-gathering missions in much the same way Teto implied I had.

*

It took a week, but Teto's gear was finally ready to be picked up at the weapon store.

“Oooh, looks good on ya!”

“Thank you!”

Teto looked like a full-fledged adventurer equipped with the gear the dwarf brothers made.

“Here’s the remaining balance we owe,” I said. “Feel free to count it.”

“Yep, that’s all of it. That was one fine request you gave me there!” The elder dwarf brother had an incredibly satisfied look on his face, completely unlike the cranky one he’d made when we first walked in.

“Lady Witch, Lady Witch! Can I do it?” Teto had pulled out her reforged sword and was standing at the ready. I glanced at the dwarf brothers, who nodded.

“Just guide your mana through it, okay? No swinging it around.”

“Okay!” Teto proceeded to expel a massive amount of mana from her body and poured it all into her sword.

The older dwarf whistled. “Well, I’ll be damned.”

Absorbing Teto’s mana, the sword’s blade gradually turned black from base to tip.

“Normally it takes a while for a sword to get used to your mana and change color like that, but this girlie here just straight-out pulled it off in an instant!”

“Her mana pool is amazing,” the younger dwarf agreed. “She’s a swordswoman, but she might have just as big a mana pool as a court conjurer.”

While the dwarf brothers watched on in shock, Teto turned to me, all smiles. “How’s that, Lady Witch? Teto can protect you now!” But the moment she stopped expelling mana, she swayed, then dropped to her knees.

“Are you okay, Teto? I think you overdid it.”

“Heh heh, sorry.”

Teto had pulled all the mana out of her core at once in order to turn her sword into a fully magisteel one. Though she had more mana than a human, her ability to regenerate that mana was limited.

“Try not to push yourself like that.” I looked back to the dwarves to bid them farewell. “Teto and I are going to be leaving town after this.”

“Thanks again for givin’ me such a great job order. If Teto’s got that much

mana in her, I expect her sword will change once more eventually.”

After the weapon shop’s dwarf siblings saw us off, we headed to the town’s coach station. We had researched departure times in advance, and our plan was to hitch a ride to whichever town struck our fancy.

“How are you doing, Teto? Feeling any better?”

“Oh, I’d feel *much* better if you gave me a great big hug!”

I’d been resting my hand on her back and stealthily charging her mana back up, but she didn’t look the least bit apologetic for falling to this state...

When we made it to the station, we found the Wind-Riding Falcons.

“Hey, girls! So you’re finally off then?” Lyle said.

“Hello, everyone. What brings you here?”

“We wanted to see you two off. You helped us and so many other adventurers while you were here.”

I tilted my head, not sure what he was getting at. Since Teto and I came to this town, all we’d really done was spend one week in the reference room, two weeks collecting herbs to raise our ranks, and one week waiting for Teto’s gear to be finished.

Seeing my confusion, Lyle explained, “You healed John and slew all those ogres, obviously. But this past week, you’ve also been going to the training grounds after collecting your herbs, haven’t you?”

“Sure. I’ve been practicing self-defense and how to dodge there, but that’s only for my own benefit.” I primarily attacked with ranged magic, but there was always a chance of an enemy closing in on me. So during their breaks, the scouts and archers at the training grounds gave me advice on footwork and what to do whenever an opponent got too close. I would practice by having Teto chase after me.

“The way you two were pushing yourselves to get stronger—even after taking down all those ogres—inspired some of the adventurers who’d been lazing about at the same rank for a while.”

“Really? That wasn’t my intention, so thanks feel a bit unwarranted.”

“We’re all thankful, regardless.”

And so, Lyle and his friends saw us off. Anna the archer, a fellow female adventurer, was especially worried about the two of us traveling alone. Seeing just how concerned she was about us made me feel happy, but also a little embarrassed.

“All aboard!” called the coach driver to everyone gathered at the station.

“Let’s go, Lady Witch!”

“Yes, let’s. Goodbye, Darryl Town.”

Once aboard the coach, we watched as the town grew smaller and smaller in the distance.

Chapter 21: Our First Carriage Journey

Aboard a rattling coach, Teto and I headed for our next destination.

“This is worse than I thought it would be. *Creation*: two cushions.” I quietly created the cushions in my magic bag, then pulled them out for Teto and I to sit on. This would make the hard seats of the shaking coach much more bearable.

By leveling up and eating strange fruits, my mana pool had grown to over 4,000, so my repertoire of creatable goods had grown immensely. But no matter how many different things I could make, I only created what I needed, so I never used up my daily supply of mana. I would save my leftover mana in crystals, which I imagined would come in handy whenever I needed an extra boost.

“Here’s a cushion for you, Teto.”

“Thank you!”

At first I’d been pretty excited about leaving town and traveling on a coach—but it was going so slow. The scenery hardly ever changed.

“Teto, want some dried fruit?”

“Yep!”

“Teto, want some water?”

“Okay!”

I was bored stiff. There was nothing to do but feed Teto and read the books I’d bought in Darryl Town. The other passengers gave us curious glances at times, but otherwise kept to themselves.

At one point I felt a bit nauseous from the swaying coach, so I used Body Strengthening to focus mana into my head, strengthening my ears’ semicircular canals. That thankfully put an end to my motion sickness, so I was able to keep reading without discomfort.

“I see... So you can combine elements, huh.” This magic tome mostly just

touched on low-rank fire, water, wind, and earth spells. But it also had an interesting chapter on the technical aspects of spellcasting. By merging together different components, you could cast more complicated spells at higher strengths.

I took out a pen and paper to jot down the different combinations mentioned. *I'll practice these high-ranking attack spells next. Hopefully one of them will be enough to take down ogres cleanly, so I won't have to waste mana crystals again.*

With my hood pulled up and obscuring my face, I probably looked suspicious to the other passengers. But it wasn't long before they started chatting with each other, and eventually the coach driver himself struck up a conversation with me.

"Looks like you're reading magic books, missy. Are you an apprentice mage then?"

"Hm? Uh, yeah, something like that."

"Isn't that something. What kind of magic can you use?"

"I can cast everyday spells like *Light* and *Clean*. I also know a bit of attack magic..." I wasn't used to strangers chatting with me like this, but I tried my best to at least respond with the bare minimum, if only to keep things from getting awkward.

Teto, bored from the journey, rested her head on my lap and joked around with me, which made some of the other passengers smile.

A little before sundown, the coach came to a stop at a little village—one of many rest stops that could be found at fixed intervals along the highway. Caravans of merchants and travelers would work together to protect themselves throughout the dangerous nights.

"Okay, Teto. Let's set up our tent and make some dinner."

"On it!"

Going right back to our lifestyle from before our time in Darryl Town, Teto quickly set up our tent. Since the tent I made with Creation Magic would stand

out, we disguised it by covering it with a canvas coated in water-repelling wax.

The other coach passengers set up their tents as well, and then began helping themselves to various preserved foods for dinner. Teto and I meanwhile boiled some water to prepare our meal.

“Hey girls, what is that you’re having?” a passenger asked.

“Instant soup. All you have to do is mix it with boiling water. Want to try some?”

“Yeah, it sounds good.”

I was using instant soup powder I’d poured into a big jar. Some other passengers who must have overheard the conversation came up to us, clearly interested. All this curiosity towards the soup gave me an idea...

“Hmm. How about one cup for three small coppers?” The instant soup I’d created was basic wholesale stuff, so a cup wouldn’t even cost twenty Japanese yen. But since we were in an alternate world with no modern conveniences like instant soup, I took novelty into account and upped the cost to three small coppers—around three hundred yen.

“I’ll buy a cup.”

“Bring something to pour it in, and I’ll ladle some out for you.”

It turned out there were a lot of passengers willing to pay for some warm soup while camping on a coach journey. A couple with a little kid bought a cup and were apparently going to split it three ways between them, so I poured an extra ladleful into their bowl.

“Ah, vegetable soup sure warms you up!”

“Yeah. It’s not the most filling supper, but it tastes great.”

“It’s perfect for dipping hard bread into.”

After dinner, I went to sleep in my tent while Teto kept watch as my guard. We were two young girls traveling alone, so there was a chance someone might attack us late in the night. Nothing of event happened though, and morning arrived safely.

On the second day of our coach journey, I was bored enough to read through all my books a second time. But one passage definitely piqued my interest:

Those gifted with an abundance of mana tend to live longer, and the blessed few who reach the essence of magic may even acquire eternal youth...

I read that part over and over again, unsure of just how much it might apply to my future.

It was during this second stretch of the coach ride that I noticed everyone starting to smell...so I used *Clean* on them all.

On the third day, we reached our destination: the town of Ottoh.

Chapter 22: Quests in Ottoh

“Thanks for getting us here. It was fun.”

“Thank you!”

“You’re welcome. Stay safe, girls!”

After stepping out of the coach and saying goodbye to the other passengers, we asked a guard for directions and headed towards the adventurer’s guild of this town.

Unlike the border town Darryl, Ottoh had relatively few monster attacks, so the town walls were low and the town spread out over a greater area. The outer edge of town was crowded with one-story housing complexes that were built as the town grew, creating a downtown-like ambience.

“I wonder what sorts of quests they’ll have here.”

“Whatever they are, Teto will do her best!”

We stepped inside the guild and got a few inquisitive looks from the other adventurers there—perhaps a party of two young girls was an unusual sight, was all. They looked away by the time Teto and I reached the receptionist.

“Hello. We just arrived in town, so we came to introduce ourselves. This is my guild card.”

“And here is Teto’s.”

The receptionist did a double take when she looked at our cards and saw we were D-rank, despite our ages.

I asked, “Are there any inns you would suggest? We’d prefer somewhere safe, since it’s just the two of us.”

“There’s an inn on the main street you could go to.” The receptionist gave us detailed directions.

“Thank you. We’ll see you again tomorrow, when we start taking quests.”

“Ah, yes. See you then!” the receptionist replied, still a bit flustered.

Teto and I took a look at the request board.

“Hmm. Hmm.” Teto stared at one of the quest descriptions intently. “I can’t make all of this out, but I know this one is for gathering herbs!”

“It is, but that’s just a G-rank quest. We should shoot for something E or D.” Though Teto couldn’t read, she’d impressively begun to recognize simple words and numbers.

Browsing the selection of quests available in this town, I noticed just how much variety there was to them. There were subjugation quests, of course, but from D-rank and up there were quests for guarding goods or people, quests for collecting materials from monsters, quests from nearby villages, and quests from rich merchants.

Once I was finished looking through them all, we left the guild and headed to the inn the receptionist had recommended to us. It was cheaper than the one in Darryl Town at only eight large coppers a night, but the quality of the food and beds were still reasonable. We weren’t quite satisfied with dinner, so I created one of the delicious grilled skewers we’d eaten in Darryl. That night, I fell asleep in Teto’s arms, and the next morning we woke up early to check out the guild requests.

“Ah, this quest wasn’t here yesterday... This one sounds good.”

“What kind of quest is it?” Teto asked.

“Logistical support for a reclaimed village. E-rank.”

The mission was to support a newly reclaimed village that was about three days away from this town. A section of forest had been cleared to make a little village, and the adventurers who participated in its development would become residents there. The actual development jobs were already being handled by a group of adventurers, but they were still looking for a few more to take care of other necessary day-to-day tasks. The reward was one silver a day, and food would be included. The daily tasks would be performed under the direction of the Gyaspar family, which was headed by a count who managed several towns, including Ottoh itself.

“Let’s go ask for some more details.”

“Okay, Lady Witch.”

We walked over to the receptionist, and I showed her the quest sheet in question. “Excuse me, but what exactly would we be doing for this mission?”

“If you take that quest, you’ll mostly be doing things like cooking food, doing laundry, and cleaning. Lots of small everyday tasks. Most adventurers here are men, so it’s been difficult to find anyone to accept this request.”

“I see. We’ll take it then.”

“Thank you very much! I’ll go ahead and mark it as accepted.”

Teto and I headed for the reclaimed village right away, deciding to just hoof it. But instead of walking—which would have taken three days—we used Body Strengthening to run most of the way, getting there in only a day and a half. Though I didn’t mind riding quietly in a carriage, running with Body Strengthening was fun and exhilarating.

Once at the reclaimed village, we found a sizable area with all its trees cut down...and a lot of tents set up around the ruins of old buildings.

“This is awful,” I couldn’t help but remark. There were dirty and bloodstained clothes lying on the ground everywhere, accompanied by scattered foodstuff and empty liquor bottles.

They’d said there was a village, but they didn’t mention it would just be a bunch of tents.

“Excuse me! We’ve come to do the logistical support quest!” I called out.

“Looks like our new recruits are here. Hey, call for the supervisor!”

“Gash, you’ve got visitors!”

A single young man slumped and staggered his way over to us, his face betraying his utter exhaustion. As soon as he got a good look at me and Teto, his shoulders drooped even further. He gave a long, deep sigh.

“A woman and a child. Well, we might get some better food, at the very least.”

“I’m Chise, and this is my partner, Teto. You are?”

“I’m Gash Gyaspar, the supervisor for this reclaimed village. Once everything settles down here, I’ll take the role of magistrate.”

“The Gyaspars... They’re the ones helming the reclamation project, right?”

“That’s correct. I’m technically a member of the count’s family, but...I’m just the good-for-nothing seventh son.”

Though aristocrats could usually provide high social status and excellent jobs for their first three sons, any children born afterwards tended to have trouble securing futures for themselves. There were typically only a few viable options for them: mingling with the commoners, becoming military or civic officials, or striking out on their own to complete development work.

“So, what is all this exactly?” I motioned towards the disaster area that was this tent village.

Gash scratched at his face in embarrassment. “We’re calling it a village reclamation, but it’s more accurate to say we’re rebuilding a village that was destroyed by monsters. I thought we’d be done after cutting down some trees, clearing out the monsters, and calling a few people in, but...”

I cut straight to the chase. “You’ve got absolutely no practical life skills, so you’re just living from moment to moment.”

Even if he was the seventh son, Gash was still technically nobility, so he probably didn’t know the first thing about living out on the frontier. And since adventurers typically lived the wandering life, their homemaking skills often fell by the wayside.

I massaged my temples, now fully realizing why this place had to resort to issuing an E-rank quest for basic chores. It was *bad*. “Okay, Gash. How many adventurers are taking part in the reclamation?”

“Four parties, twenty people total. All men.”

When an adventurer wanted to settle down with his wife, they would save up enough money to buy a field somewhere. But most of the men here were single. Once the village reclamation was complete, they’d either get permanent

residency here with a house and some land—or, if they wanted to continue being adventurers, they'd receive an equivalent payment from Count Gyspar. In order for the reclamation project to be considered completed, it needed to be at a level where it could house at least a hundred people.

“Okay, let's get started then. First off, each party probably wants more than a tent to keep themselves out of the elements. We'll need to restore about five houses then. I'll leave that to you, Teto.”

“Got it! *Block!*” Teto cast a spell, touching the wreckage of a nearby house that wasn't being used. What was left of the stone walls immediately fell to pieces.

“Whoa! What the hell are you doing?” Gash cried.

“Be quiet and watch.”

The chunks of stone wall that Teto demolished were restored, with her Earth Magic slicing the uneven pieces like clay and sticking them together to produce uniform building blocks. These stones were then magically placed onto the old housing plot, forming a complete house in a matter of minutes.

“Whoops! Lady Witch, I forgot to make a door!”

“Then add one, and be sure to reinforce the structure properly so there's no chance of it breaking apart and collapsing.”

“Okay!” Teto went on to use the wreckage of two old houses to make a single new one.

Gash stared in shock. “A-amazing...”

“From now on the adventurers here can use the houses Teto builds, so they can go ahead and start putting all those tents away. Teto, keep up the good work—just make sure you don't overdo anything!”

“Okay! *Block!*” While she began work on a second house, I set out to learn everything about the current status of the reclamation efforts.

“Gash, do you have any maps of the old village?”

“Huh? No, I'm afraid not.”

“Then get some paper, or use a tree, or whatever. Just draw me a map, and write out all the details you can of the village’s current status.”

“U-understood!” Intimidated by a little girl, Gash rushed to his assigned task. In my anger, I might’ve unconsciously released some mana and wound up magically coercing him...

“Damn, that kid’s amazing,” a nearby adventurer said. “Gash actually listened to her.”

Another added, “But he showers us with booze whenever we request it, so that’s not sayin’ much!”

“You’re not wrong, ha ha!”

I glared at the wisecracking adventurers. “Teto and I will be taking over management of food and supplies, so don’t expect to drink yourselves stupid anymore.”

“You can’t be serious! Liquor’s the only thing we have to look forward to around here.”

“He’s right! The pay might be nice, but there’s shit-all to do for fun. So don’t mess with our booze, if you know what’s good for ya!”

I could understand their argument, considering the sorry state they had been in this whole time. But if I backed down now, this whole reclamation project would fall apart.

“Do you have a *problem* with my methods?”



Unlike when my mana had naturally leaked out and intimidated Gash, I intentionally poured it out of me now to scare the men into submission. They all took on defensive positions, as if preparing for a fight. Even the adventurers who had been napping inside their tents sprung to action, jolting awake and drawing out their weapons. But none of them attacked me—instead, they all turned stiff, frozen where they stood.

Once the adventurers got the message that I wasn't just some kid, I stopped releasing mana.

“While I'm here, I'm going to do my job. That means I'm in charge of the village's food stocks, which are hereby off-limits to the whole lot of you. If you want snacks or drinks of your own, you can eat what you hunt, or buy whatever you'd like from any merchants who happen to stop by.”

It took a minute for one of the adventurers to respond to my mana-infused spiel. “Fine. We're sorry.”

Well, glad that's all squared away...

“Lady Wiiiitch. I finished the first house!”

“Thank you, Teto. Adventurers, get right to using it! But first, make sure you gather up all the trash around your tents. I'll burn the garbage for you.”

Once my intimidating aura lifted, the adventurers slowly started moving again and got to work.

Chapter 23: Baths Are Laundry for the Heart

“Miss Chise, I made a map!” Gash cried out.

I thanked him and gave the map a careful look. “Okay, so this is the field here, and the well is at the center of it. That means the river is to the east of the village.” I could see buckets around the broken well, so that must have been where the adventurers would bathe. “We’ll save fixing the well for later. Let’s head to the riverside first.”

“Now what are you going to do?” Gash asked, his scratchy voice rising to a screech.

I turned back to face him. “I’m making a bath and a spot for laundry. Goodness, you guys are putting us to work.”

With Teto and Gash following behind, I headed to the river. In it were some pretty large rocks, with plenty of water streaming around them.

“Teto, can you make a canal, a bathing spot, and a place to do laundry for me? Make the depth of it all around thigh-level.”

“Got it!” Shaping the rocks around the riverside in the same fashion as she had while making the houses, Teto made up a canal, bathing area, and laundry area. The water then flowed into the canal and bath before draining back into the river. I proceeded to create a stone slab with earth magic to shut the drain, stopping the flow of water. Once the bathing area had enough water, I then added another stone slab to the water intake, stopping any more water from flowing in.

“Wow, amazing!” Gash exclaimed. “You made a bath and laundry station in no time! What the heck are two skilled mages like you doing taking on a quest like this?”

“I was just interested, that’s all.”

“I’m here because Lady Witch chose this quest!”

Gash didn't seem to accept our nonchalant responses though.

With laundry on my mind, I asked Gash, "Was there any clothing among the reclamation supplies?"

"Huh? Yes, they did send clothes."

"I see. You won't need to wear dirty clothes anymore then. *Fireball!*" I shot a ball of fire at the bathwater, causing a burst of steam to fill the air around us.

"Wah?! What now?"

"I'm preparing the bath. Ah, but it's probably too hot right now—and there's less water too, thanks to all the steam. I'll have to add a bit more water to adjust the temperature."

I went to work adjusting the water temperature by letting in more river water and shooting a few weaker fireballs at the bath. As I did, the adventurers who had been moving their things from the tents to the temporary housing came running to the river, perhaps thinking that the steam and hiss of boiling water were coming from attacking monsters.

When they arrived and saw that wasn't the case, one of them asked, "What the hell are you doing, kid?"

"Making a bath. Go get new clothes from Gash, and gather up all your dirty laundry. I'll wash everything here. Then you can all start taking baths."

The adventures looked at me dumbfounded. "Nah, we're good. We've got a guy who knows the *Clean* spell."

"Bathe. That's an order." I released enough mana to intimidate the adventurers once again, making them all flinch. Then after dialing it down a bit, I explained my reasoning in a detached way. "How many times does that person need to cast the spell to get you completely clean? And does he have enough mana to do so for every single adventurer here?"

"N-no..."

"I thought not. That's why you need to bathe. You all must be thoroughly caked in dirt, sweat, and monster blood. If you don't get yourselves cleaned up, you'll get sick, you know?"

It seemed I finally convinced them all to bathe.

Since not all of them could fit in the bath at once, we split the adventurers into three groups: one to bathe, one to keep watch around the bath, and one to carry over dirty laundry with baskets I made with Creation Magic. Some of them clearly weren't happy about it, but I kept them on task.

Once a pile of laundry was gathered, I heaved a sigh at the awful stench. "Ugh, they really did just leave the mud and blood as is. This definitely isn't gonna all come off in one wash... *Creation*: detergent. *Wash!*" I made a big ball of river water and placed the detergent inside. Then, I caused a vortex to spin within the water ball and tossed the clothes in one article at a time, brushing them against one another.

"Gotta love detergent. All the filth is coming right off." The next step was to rinse all the detergent-scented laundry in a ball of clean water. I could tell that there were some light stains still, but most of the blood, sweat, and dirt stains had vanished.

"It would take ages to dry this much laundry, so... *Dry!*" This spell blew hot air on all the wet clothes. Normally I'd prefer not to dry clothing this way, since it could damage the fabric—but there was no way around it today.

Sorting the finished laundry, I saw that most had holes and tears in them. "Some of these clothes are too frayed to wear anymore, but we can use them for fabric to patch up other clothes." So I made a pile of wearable clothes, a pile of clothes that just needed a patch or two, and a pile of tattered clothes to use for the patching up.

"Whew! Been a long time since I took a bath, now that I think about it."

As Teto and I sorted and folded the laundry, the first adventurers to use the bath were finishing up.

"Hey, kid! We're all done," the leader of the village's adventurers said. He had changed from the dirty clothing he'd been wearing for an entire week into a work uniform provided by the reclamation outfitter. Now that he was free of dirt and had even used a knife to shave off his beard, he looked like a whole new man.

“Isn’t that better? You look less like a bandit now.”

“Hey, that’s mean!” he cried with a bitter grin, only for his features to morph into something more humble. “We’d all been in such a rush to finish the reclamation and get ourselves settled down, that our setbacks sent us in a downward spiral. We’d forgotten how to live like decent people. Thanks for reminding us.”

“We haven’t done anything special. We’re just doing what the quest asked us to.”

“Lady Witch is embarrassed!”

I pulled my hood down over my face. “If everyone from the first group is done, I’ll go clear out the dirty water and replace it.”

“Thanks,” the adventurer leader said. “But are you okay mana-wise? You’ve been using a ton of magic since you got here.”

“I’m fine. I’ve got plenty of mana.” Since I wasn’t making hot water out of nothing—just heating up the river water and moving it to wash the laundry—I wasn’t actually using as much mana as you’d think.

After draining the used bathwater out into the river, I filled the bath again and heated the water with more fireballs. It was a lot easier to pull off the second time, since I knew how much mana I needed to use to get it the right temperature.

“We should get to making dinner soon,” I said. “Gash, where is the food?”

“It’s, uh...gone.”

“Huh? Gone?”

Gash explained how our predecessors had pulled a fast one on the reclaimed village. Not only had they neglected to do any logistical support, but they’d embezzled the food supplies. Though the Gyaspar House had issued the quest, Gash was the one actually running things here—not the count. Despite seeing what the previous quest-takers were doing, Gash was intimidated into silence by their well-built physiques.

Things went from bad to worse once the adventurers performing the actual

reclamation began doing whatever they wanted, and things got completely out of hand. Though they thankfully didn't turn violent, they still all did as they pleased.

Gash concluded, "Once the adventurers caught wind of your predecessors' misdeeds, they got fed up and chased them off, ultimately making them fail their quest. In revenge though, they tossed around half of this week's stock of food in the dirt, ruining most of it."

Almost all the green veggies, breads, and meats were spoiled. The only food supplies left relatively unscathed were the bottled liquors and the seasonings, which had been stored elsewhere. Any luxury grocery items like sweets had been stolen, unsurprisingly.

I sighed. "This is making my head hurt, but there's no changing the past." We'd just have to make do with what was left until the next shipment of supplies got here. For the time being, I took a look at what bits of food were still there.

"We can acquire more meat by hunting, and the root veggies should still be fine. We're also near a forest, so we'll be able to gather wild fruits and vegetables there. As for bread... We've got no choice. I'll just have to use what I've brought with me. Teto, come help!"

"Okay!"

We took out what bread we had from my magic bag, but since we'd only brought enough for two, I had to use my Creation Magic to supplement it. I then used what we had on hand to cook up some vegetable soup and stir-fried meat and veggies.

After making a stone outdoor stove in the center of the village and using fire magic to control the temperature, I cast a *Wind Cutter* spell adjusted for cooking to slice all the vegetables. I was on stir-fry duty, while Teto handled the soup.

As the vegetables and the preserved bacon we'd bought boiled, the broth scum bubbled to the top as white foam, which Teto dutifully skimmed off. I meanwhile cooked up three rounds of stir-fry in a wok-style frying pan before transferring it all into a big metal container. Teto and I carried that and the pot

of soup over once everything was ready.

“Dinner’s done, so come bring your plates,” I said. “You each get two pieces of bread. Teto and I will be serving a set amount of soup and stir-fry, so I don’t want to hear any complaints.”

The adventurers obediently lined up for their food in an orderly manner. Though they’d been dirty and living rough backwoods lives for a while, it seemed bathing them, dressing them up nice, and feeding them a decent meal was enough to have them all in the palm of my hand.

“Delicious. This has to be the first bit of actual cooking we’ve had in ages.”

“Yeah, the previous guys’ cooking was so bad. *This* stuff’s delish.”

“What the hell? You got more meat than I did!”

“Ha ha ha. Looks like I lucked out. Don’t forget, the girl said no complaints!”

I had wondered if this lot would be of any use at first, but things appeared to be brightening up.

Once everyone finished eating, I clapped my hands a few times to get everyone’s attention. “Teto and I did a lot today, but if we’re going to keep on like this, we’re going to need more help.”

“Cleaning, laundry, preparing the bath, making food. We’ll also need to do the dishes,” Teto explained from her spot beside me, counting each off on her fingers.

“Yeah, you’ve got a shit-ton to do,” the leader of the adventurers said. He looked around the village at the dramatic changes we’d made since arriving, and seemed to actually appreciate everything we’d done.

“Exactly. Until we get some more people to assist us, we’ll be having two big meals a day: breakfast and dinner. I’m sorry we have to cut it down that far, but if we don’t, Teto and I won’t be able to get *anything* done.”

Really, there should have been more people taking on this assistance quest, but not many adventurers were interested in such long, plain missions. Teto and I would have to handle everything ourselves for now.

“Is that all right with you, Gash?”

“Ah, yes! If there’s nothing we can do about it, then that’s that I guess.”

How unreliable can you get? Setting that thought aside, I continued: “I’ll be announcing our daily schedule next. Teto and I will make breakfast in the morning, and then after eating we’ll clean the dishes and start on laundry. I want all of you to put your dirty stuff in the laundry baskets we handed out earlier. In the afternoon, we’ll be helping with various odds and ends, and then in the evening I’ll prepare the bath for you all. Finally, we’ll have dinner and go to bed.”

Some people didn’t look thrilled by my declaration, but since they didn’t have any reason to object, they stayed silent.

“Okay. We’re going to eat our food now, and then we’ll be cleaning up and heading to bed.”

Teto and I took our servings of dinner to the temporary housing, where I reheated the food with magic before we ate. Afterwards, we brought all of the dishes to the riverside, washed them, and then finally got back to our housing and into our sleeping bags.

“Feels like it’s been a while since I last spoke to so many people.”

“You were cool, Lady Witch!”

“I’m exhausted. I don’t like giving people orders. I want to take a bath, but let’s just go to sleep.”

I cast *Clean* on Teto and myself just before drifting off to sleep, hoping that tomorrow everything would go a little more smoothly.

Chapter 24: A Day in a Pioneer Village

Mornings in the village started early.

Teto and I got up at sunrise, waking ourselves up with some cold well water before getting dressed. Instead of putting on our normal adventuring outfits though, we wore basic shirts and pants or dresses that would be suitable for our work in the village. Then we checked on the food supplies and got busy cooking breakfast.

“It’s time for breakfast, everyone!” I yelled as I walked around the houses. The men slowly poured out, wearing only their underwear and looking like they’d had an awful sleep.

“Okay, line up for your food. Also, drop your laundry in those baskets.” Though I was still giving orders, they seemed to be getting into the swing of things after a week of the same routine, as much as they may have hated it. Plus, they were generally good at getting up early, since they had to fight for the good quests every morning at the guild.

Gash, on the other hand...

“G-good...morning...”

“Good morning. Here’s your bread, soup, and side dishes.”

Since he grew up as the seventh son of a noble, he was awful with mornings. But once he got some warm soup in his belly, he gained some measure of facility.

Once breakfast was done, I got to cleaning. “Teto, you get the laundry. I’ll carry these dishes.”

“Roger!” After hefting a huge laundry basket onto each shoulder, Teto headed to the riverside.

Meanwhile, I used the dark magic *Psychokinesis* spell via my Origin Magic to gather all of the dishes and float them away. “Telekinesis is so handy. Teto,

watch your step.”

“Whoops... Thank you!” Teto nearly tripped over a tree root, but I used the invisible magic hands of my *Psychokinesis* to hold her up and keep the mountains of laundry from spilling out of their baskets.

Once at the river, we got to washing. “*Wash!*” I made up a ball of river water, then began washing the clothes bit by bit with some environmentally friendly detergent I made with my Creation Magic. Once I got the dirt out of the laundry, I got rid of the dirty water and rinsed the clothes off in some clean water.

“Teto, can you hang these up to dry?”

“Got it!”

Once the clothes were rinsed, I used a combination of wind magic and inward-facing barrier magic to squeeze the water out before letting Teto hang it all to dry. We had tied up some strong rope between the trees on the river’s edge for this purpose.

After the laundry was done, I washed all of the dishes and left them to dry in the sun too. “That does it for the dishes and cooking tools. It seems we’ll have nice hot weather today, so they should dry fast.”

“Right!”

Shielding my eyes, I looked up into the cloudless blue sky. The bright sun and the cool breeze coming off the river felt wonderful. “Teto, I’ll help you hang the laundry up to dry.”

“Thanks.”

I couldn’t reach the clothesline without standing on my tiptoes, so I used my *Psychokinesis* spell to lift all of the laundry into the air and hang it on the rope.

“You two are already hard at work, eh?” Some of the adventurers who had been working near the river took a break and started chatting with us. Though they’d been dumbstruck seeing the wash floating in midair the first time they saw it, they were used to it by now.

“Looks like you’ve been working hard too. Are you all taking a break?”

“Yeah, it’s hot as hell. We came to enjoy the water for a bit!”

The adventurers came to the river quite often after logging or other reclamation work, in order to rinse off all the grime and dirt. And whenever they had a successful hunt, they’d chill and process the monster corpses in the cool water of the river.

They now proceeded to shamelessly strip off their shirts and hop into the water half-naked right in front of us.

“Ahh... Nothing beats a dip in the cool river on a hot day.”

“Whoa, watch it!”

“Take this!”

“Now you’ve done it. Come here!”

I watched in exasperation as the men splashed each other. “You might have adult bodies, but you’ll always be kids.”

Hearing an overly mature kid like me say that must have embarrassed them, because they all quieted down and began to just clean themselves.

Off to the side, Teto watched with sparkling eyes. “That looks fun! Teto’s gonna play in the water too!”

“What, with them? Wait, Teto!”

She took off her shoes and knee socks on a boulder near the riverside, then jumped in. At least she kept her shirt on.

“Aaah, it feels great!” Teto was a surprisingly good swimmer, despite her body having been made with mud. Perhaps it was thanks to her Martial Arts skill that she had such great form.

It wasn’t Teto’s swimming ability that the adventurers focused on, however...

“They’re massive.”

“I thought she was just a kid, but she’s got a killer body.”

“Those are birthing hips there.”

The men were all leering at Teto, whose soaked clothes were clinging

translucently to her body. I quietly cast a water spell.

“Ack, my eyes!”

“Ugh, I got water up my nose.”

“I’m...bl...gu...hr...drowning!”

They each got a small burst of water to the face.

Teto looked on in confusion for a moment before coming back to me. “You should swim too, Lady Witch!”

“No thanks, I...” My immediate reaction was to decline her invitation, but she countered with her pleading puppy-dog eyes. I sighed. “Oh, fine.” Since I didn’t have a bathing suit, I just took off my robe and shoes before stepping into the water.

“Ah, it does feel nice.”

“I’m happy you like it too, Lady Witch! I’m gonna go find some fish for supper.” Teto let go of my hand and began searching for freshwater fish, river crabs, and prawns.

I decided to help her out, but I quickly discovered that I couldn’t swim nearly as well as Teto. I immediately sank.

“Lady Witch? You shouldn’t stay under the water so long.”

“Grk, guh, urgh.” I coughed and sputtered. “Whew... I’m okay. I can do this, don’t worry.” My next attempt to swim was also a complete failure, however. I knew how to swim in my past life, I was pretty sure—but for whatever reason, this body was giving me trouble. No matter how much I moved my arms and legs, I kept sinking to the bottom of the river.

“Are you okay, Lady Witch? How about you sit over here and just put your feet in the water.”

“Very well...” Apparently I was just deadweight in the water. Shocked by my unexpected weakness, I put my robe back on and pulled the hood down over my eyes.



The leader of the adventurers apparently noticed my pathetic floundering. “Pfft... Don’t think I’ve ever seen someone fail to swim *that* badly before.”

“Laugh all you want. I wasn’t expecting to do so poorly either.”

The adventurer gave me a troubled smile before sitting down on the rock beside me. “Sorry for laughing. But it’s kind of a relief.”

“How so?”

“You’re still so young, yet you’re a capable mage that put this pioneer village back on track. You had your act together, unlike the rest of us adventurers. But you still have some things to learn too.” He chuckled again, surely recalling my flailing about in the water. “You’ll definitely need to be able to swim though, if you’re gonna be living the adventurer’s life.”

He had a point. If I ever ran into a pond, bottomless swamp, or river while slaying monsters or collecting materials, one misstep could cost me my life. I also recalled how the Wind Falcons trio had gone into the water on purpose to try and get rid of their scents while running from orcs. But still...

“I’ll be fine,” I said. “I could always just fly through the air instead, or put up a barrier around myself and walk on the bottom of the river or sea.”

“Shit like that should be *way* harder than just swimming!” He burst into another fit of laughter.

And so, frustrated at my inability to swim, I started practicing with Teto during breaks on hot days. But no matter how much I practiced, I always sank. So after a while, I finally gave up trying.

Chapter 25: Learning New Techniques

Preparing food and doing the laundry weren't our only support jobs in the pioneer village. After we finished washing things by the riverside, we'd return to the village and gather up the little bits of trash hiding in the temporary housing with wind magic, then burn it with fire magic outside. We'd then sprinkle the ash on the fields that would be used for farming in the future. It was usually already afternoon by the time we finished cleaning.

"Let's get going, Teto."

"Right-o!"

"The two of you are going out again?" Gash asked.

For the first few days after we arrived, I'd spent my days pouring over documents with Gash in hopes of getting a full picture of the pioneering plan. I sorted documents, listed reclamation plans by priority, and occasionally gave advice. I was thankful that Gash was willing to listen to me, despite my looking like a twelve-year-old kid.

"Yes, Teto and I are going to pick some medicinal herbs nearby."

Teto waved. "See you!"

"Thank you both."

Teto and I made our way to the plains southwest of the village. "The herbs for potions grow all over around here. We've even got the stuff for mana potions." Though I could create various things with my Creation Magic, I wanted the skills to make things without it. Luckily there was an adventurer at the reclaimed village who knew how to make potions.

The mixologist in question was going to teach me and Gash all the basics. As a witch, I wanted to learn how to make potions just in general. Meanwhile Gash was hoping to make potions for the sake of not having to import them, saving money and space for other supplies. And as for the mixologist, he was happy to build connections with us, aiming to one day open an apothecary in this village.

In exchange for the alchemy lessons, I agreed to collect herbs from the nearby plains. I also had another goal in mind though. “We should have enough herbs now, Teto. Which just leaves... *Creation*: soapwort seeds.”

“What are those, Lady Witch?”

“Seeds for an herb that can be used in place of soap.” Since I’d used detergent made with Creation Magic, the men of the pioneer village would probably be unhappy if they couldn’t continue to clean their laundry at the same standard after we left. I couldn’t just give them modern-era detergent, so I figured I could at least plant soapwort seeds on the plains and have the mixologist adventurer make soap later.

Back in Darryl’s reference room, I’d found descriptions of herbs that were used in place of soap, so it shouldn’t be an especially odd concept. But the new soapwort I created had some special qualities:

1. When used as an herb, it smelled pleasant and had no poisonous elements.
2. Though it wouldn’t spread easily (in order to keep it from affecting the nearby plant life), it was hardy.
3. It could adapt easily to a variety of environments, and the soap components were both environmentally friendly and naturally derived.

I spread most of these ultimate soap plant seeds on the plains, and saved the rest to plant in pots made with Teto’s earth magic, which I’d give to the mixologist.

“Okay, I think we’ve gathered more than enough herbs, so let’s head back and have the mixologist teach us how to brew potions.”

“Sounds exciting.”

Teto and I returned to the village and headed for a repaired building near the well.

“Hello. We’ve brought the herbs we’ll need for today.”

“Please teach us today!”

The mixologist let us in. “Thanks for picking those herbs for me. That’ll be a big help.”

“We also brought these seeds for you.”

“Those are the soap seeds from your homeland, yes? I see... They’re different from the ones I’m familiar with. You’re really okay with giving them to me?”

“Yes. In exchange, please teach me how to brew potions.”

“Of course. I can show you in my spare time.”

After putting away the herbs and soap seeds, the adventurer began teaching me mixology.

“Do you know the difference between magical potions and regular decoctions?” he asked.

I answered immediately. “Whether the plants have mana or not?” The herbs we collected all contained lots of mana. That was why focusing mana in my eyes allowed me to spot them so easily.

“You’re half right. It’s true that magical medicines have mana circulating through them. But they’re made by taking ingredients like plants and monster innards and adding a human’s mana to the mana already contained within them, amplifying or transforming it.”

He went on to explain the various factors that determined a potion’s efficacy:

The reason that the freshness of ingredients was so important was because magical medicines like potions had both medicinal components and mana within them. The mana the mixologist would add to them was also important. If the ingredients were less fresh, the medicinal composition and mana within them would be weaker, so the healing factor would drop no matter how much mana the mixologist added. On the flip side, no matter how good the ingredients you used were, if the maker’s skill, mana, and methodology weren’t up to snuff, the finished potion would be less effective, and possibly even poisonous.

“So those are the basics. It’s similar to how blacksmiths combine their mana with metals and monster ingredients in their hearths to make weapons. But while they craft tools, we fabricate consumables.”

A lot of what he said sounded similar to the dwarven brothers’ spiel at the

Darryl Town weapon shop, where they'd crafted Teto's magical sword. But speaking of Teto, it seemed she had no interest at all in brewing potions, as she'd stepped away to make more pots for the soap seeds, which she'd then plant.

The mixologist smiled as he watched her. "Let's end the lecture on potions here and get to actually brewing some."

I pulled a blank book I'd made with Creation Magic out of my magic bag, so I could note everything the mixologist did to make his potion.

"You have a magic bag? I'm jealous," he commented.

"Really?"

"Really. The reason I became an adventurer was so I could go out myself to get good ingredients. But no matter how careful you are, a sudden rainstorm can always soak your materials, ruining them by the time you get back to town. I wouldn't have to worry about such things if I had a magic bag." He went on to say how he would kill for one that had a time-stopping effect, as that would keep all his ingredients as fresh as possible. I decided to not mention how my magic bag could do just that.

As the mixologist stirred his pot of boiling herbs, water, and mana, he shared stories from his early adventuring days. "When I was first starting out, I had no money to buy potions. So whenever I was hurt, I'd chew up some herbs I picked and slather them all on the wound."

"Huh. Did that actually work?"

"It's an ancient folk remedy. Human bodily fluids hold mana well, after all. Just think of the inside of your mouth as a cauldron and add your mana to make the medicine. It's no different from what I'm doing right now."

I jotted all of this down and remained alert for any other valuable tidbits he might mention.

The mixologist chuckled. "This really makes me happy though."

"What makes you happy?"

"The mature little girl who whipped our useless asses back into shape is now

here having fun listening to an old man like me.”

Is that how I look? I wondered, touching my lips to gauge my expression.

Holding a pot in her arms, Teto said, “You’re smiling, Lady Witch. Your eyes are sparkling too.”

The mixologist nodded. “It’s a relief to see you still have some childlike qualities.”

Since I technically had lived another life already, I wasn’t too happy being called childlike. But then again, I didn’t know how old I was when I died. Though I had knowledge from my past life, I had no memories of myself as a person—but going by how much I knew, I assumed I’d at least reached adulthood before I passed.

Teto poked my cheek to break me out of my reverie.

That got another laugh from the mixologist. “Anyways, that’s the basics of potion-making.”

While we chatted over related topics, he finished brewing his potion, cooling and straining it through a cloth before pouring it into a bottle. The finished potion was one that would restore 1,000 HP. Considering how the C-rank adventurers in the pioneer village had around 3,000 HP, this potion was probably intended for the general public.

“Now you try.”

“Go, go, Lady Witch!”

As Teto cheered me on, I tried brewing my first potion. I’d focused mana in my eyes while I watched the mixologist brew his potion, so I had a good idea for how my mana should flow. I carefully prepared and boiled the herbs before transferring it all to the cauldron.

“What’s the best herb-to-water ratio?”

“You’ll figure that out from experience and instinct. Even veteran mixologists end up making lower-quality potions while getting used to new tools.”

I figured that would primarily be due to any slight differences in size and shape between cauldrons and whatnot. I decided I’d have to create some

measuring cups and work out some strict ratios once I got the potion-making down pat.

As I mixed my concoction of herbs, I spread my mana through the wooden spoon and into the liquid inside the cauldron. I got so into it that I actually began humming to myself. Once I felt I'd reached the limit on how much mana the potion could hold, I stopped stirring.

About 1,000 MP, it seems. My mana pool was currently just a bit over 4,000 MP, so it looked like making potions would be mana-intensive work. But I did get about ten potions' worth in one go, so that was nice.

"Whuuuh?" After bottling my finished potions, the mixologist stared in shock as he compared them to his own. Our potions were identical both in color and in healing potency. "This was your first time, and yet the potion you made is on the same level as mine! So this is the difference talent makes..."

The mixologist suddenly turned serious. "Chise. How large is your current mana pool?"

"Just over 4,000. I think it'll keep growing too." Though I'd started with 50 MP, which was low even for an ordinary person, eating strange fruits and leveling up had drastically raised my maximum mana. And even if my leveling up were to ever slow down, I'd still have the strange fruits to keep my progress going.

"That's amazing. My mana pool is only at around 2,000, and I've plateaued," the old man explained, looking a bit jealous. "Having more mana obviously gives you an advantage when concocting potions. You can make more at once, and you can shorten the time needed to brew them."

Mixologists with smaller mana pools would use smaller cauldrons to keep the amount of potions they brewed at once low, and manage the mana they infused into the potions to keep waste levels low. If they didn't want to settle for making lower-quality potions, they would have to supplement their MP with mana crystals.

"I'm sure that as a mage you're already well aware, but that mana is your strength. You could survive anywhere with just your mana pool and the potion recipe you just made. That said though, your skill is still amateur-level. I'll teach

you how to process lots of different ingredients.”

“That’d be great, please do.”

Even though he’d had the dramatic difference between our levels in magical aptitude shoved in his face, the mixologist continued to teach me potion-making over the days that followed. I dutifully took notes on everything he taught, then used my free time to put what I learned into practice. As thanks for teaching me, I created him a mana crystal so the two of us could utilize the more MP-demanding potion recipes he’d never been able to brew on his own.

“Heh heh, you actually look your age when you’re studying potions, Chise! Though I’m one to talk,” the mixologist said. He’d acted as giddy as a child when I gave him the mana crystal to use.

And so together we worked on coming up with new potions that could benefit the reclaimed village, using whatever materials we could gather in the region.

Whenever I was studying, Teto would take care of the potted soap plants. “Grow nice and big, okay?” she said as she watered them, careful to never overdo it. She then gazed at the wet soil with a big smile on her face, waiting for the plants to sprout.

I never paid attention to her gardening efforts too closely, given the focus my potion-making efforts required of me—so I didn’t notice anything unusual until it was too late. But the soil in the potted plants was from Teto’s body, which was constantly topped off with an abundance of mana. And since she was unconsciously pouring her mana into the soil every time she touched the pots...

“Lady Wiiiitch, something grew!”

“Grew? Ah, so the soap plants sprouted?” Checking the pots Teto had been growing the plants in, I saw two unexpected things in a couple of them.

“Wha?! Teto, what are those?”

“I don’t know. They just grew!”

Inside the pots were two little creatures: one that looked like an aggregation of plants, and one that looked like a clump of dirt. They were both small enough

to fit on my palm, and they just looked up at us in confusion.

Hearing our commotion, the mixologist looked our way. “Hm? What’s wrong?”

“Something, uh...grew,” I said, pointing at the pots.

He looked them over and smiled. “Ah, the soap plants have sprouted? Well, all of them except for in those two pots, it seems. That’s a pity.”

Huh? Are Teto and I the only ones who can see them? It was then that I realized I’d been brewing potions and focusing mana in my eyes just before I’d looked at Teto’s discovery. So I cut off the flow of mana—and sure enough, the little creatures vanished.

“Aaah, so they’re spirit things,” I said quietly. I wasn’t sure if they were made with a fragment of the spirit Teto had absorbed, or if it had something to do with the environment around the village—but they were newborn spirits. Returning mana to my eyes again, I noticed that they must not have had much sense of self yet, because all they did was stare back at me.

“Lady Witch, what should we do with them?”

“Hm. I’d feel bad leaving them in the pots like that, so let’s move them into the forest.”

Using the excuse that we were cleaning up the pots that hadn’t sprouted, Teto and I moved the newborn earth and plant spirits to the forest.

“I’ll give you two some mana to make sure you grow good roots. *Charge.*” I gently touched the spirits, and they absorbed my mana in the same pleased way that Teto did. “Goodbye, little spirits. I hope you stay healthy.”

“Bye-bye!”

As Teto and I bid them farewell, they faded inside of their respective elements.

“They might just be newborns now, but as they grow over time, they might make the environment around them more fertile.”

“I hope they grow nice and big!”

“I do too. But Teto, you need to stop doing things that could create new spirits.”

“Got it.” Teto slumped dejectedly at my warning.

By the way, in case you were wondering, the spirits born from Teto’s mana and soil would end up becoming the village’s guardian deities many, many years later.

*

And so, a week after I started learning potion-making, just as all the other soap plants finished growing...

“Ha ha, you’ve gone and learned every magical medicine recipe I know,” the mixologist said with a dry laugh.

I had learned every potion-making skill the man possessed in a single week. I also learned how to dispose of the poisonous potions that resulted from brewing mistakes. And on top of all that, I learned the art of Mana Extraction, which—as the name would suggest—allowed me to extract the mana from potions, and seemed like it could be used in other applications too.

My status page reflected my efforts with “Mixing” showing up as one of my skills.

“Since my profile says I’m a witch, I might be getting rewarded for witchy behavior—casting magic spells, brewing potions, and the like,” I murmured to Teto that night when we were alone in our temporary housing. My reincarnated body seemed to be just as efficient as you might expect.

Chapter 26: They've Started Calling Us the Goddesses of the Pioneer Village

Though it had been a lot harder than we'd expected, we'd gotten this mess of a reclamation project back on track. And now that we had a bit of give in our lives, we were able to spice up our meals by going out to the plains and mountains to pick medicinal herbs and wild veggies, or to catch wild rabbits and birds. Our food problems were then solved for good once another load of supplies came in, and it sounded like tomorrow we were even going to get some more people to come help work.

Over the three weeks since we'd come to this village, Teto and I would bathe with dirt walls around us to deter peeping toms. I'd also put up a number of barriers, so there was no way anyone could sneak a peek. Though I sometimes just got by with the *Clean* spell, I greatly preferred the feeling of my body warming up in the hot water.

"Whew, that was a good bath."

"Yup!"

After we finished, Teto and I leisurely walked back to the village, cooling ourselves off with the night breeze.

"We're baaack!"

"Oh, Teto, welcome back," Gash said.

Back when we'd first arrived, we'd forbidden anyone from drinking liquor, but after seeing the adventurers work so hard to develop the village, we began allowing them one drink each. They were now all enjoying their day's ration after dinner while playing games. It was worth noting that Gash had been pretty afraid of the cranky adventurers when we first showed up, but now he was friends with all of them.

"Make sure not to play too hard," I said.

“Uh... You’ve got that robe on, so you must be...” Gash paused for a moment. “Little Miss Chise?”

“Of course. Who else could I be?” Though it was true I usually wore my hood up to hide my face, I currently had it down since it would be stuffy to wear right out of the bath.

“I thought you were just a kid, but you’ve got a pretty face!”

“I get that you don’t have a lot of options for women at the moment, but do you really think you should be hitting on *me*?”

“I’m not hitting on you!”

While everyone around us struggled to hold back laughter at my scathing remark, Gash just sat there frozen, jaw dropped.

“The new helpers Gash asked for should be coming tomorrow, so we’re going to bed,” I said to the group of adventurers. “Good night.”

“Good night!” Teto echoed.

And so we returned to the house we’d been using, and after I put a barrier up around the whole thing and charged Teto with my leftover mana, we went to sleep.

Adventurer Leader’s Side

“Hah, to think that kid could pull this place back together.”

“Took a hit to my self-confidence though.”

“Don’t sweat it, man. Just keep doing your best!”

“Ugh, fine.”

I gave Gash a slap on the back. Since his family was footing the bill, he was the supervisor of this reclamation project—and once things were done he’d become the magistrate, or maybe even the mayor.

Things sure didn’t go as we planned here at first. Perhaps that shouldn’t have been a surprise though, since the village had already been destroyed once before.

There turned out to be more monsters lurking around than we'd expected. It was hard just to find a safe place to sleep. Though the adventurers here were all confident in their strength, most of them didn't know shit about agriculture or pioneering. We had some mages, but they mostly only knew attack magic for slaying monsters. Their spells couldn't help much in the way of village development. And then there were those thugs who were supposed to assist the project, but instead embezzled our supplies.

With all that going on, we were all on edge, and eventually lost ourselves to the booze. But just when we thought that the pioneer project was done for, we got a new helper.

"This is awful..." The first words out of little Chise's mouth were correct, but at the time we didn't have it in us to accept that reality. I can't think back to the forceful rant she went on afterwards without laughing.

Furious that there was nowhere to sleep, she had her friend Teto make up houses. She told us we were filthy and threatened us into bathing. She took all the dirty laundry, smooshed it all together, and washed it all with magic. She used the last of our food supplies to make us a filling meal.

Little Miss Chise did tons for us. She used magic to purify the village's broken well, and Teto fixed it with earth magic. She made us a spot to store the lumber we logged, and flattened the ground where we'd pulled up tree roots. Some of the guys suffered injuries from monsters while out logging or hunting, and normally would have just let the wounds heal on their own. But when we headed to the baths, Chise noticed the cuts and bruises.

"Tell me if you're hurt. It's another part of our job. Teto, bring the potions I made."

"Here!"

"Wah, that's cold!"

Once we cleaned our stinging wounds in the bath, Chise poured some cold potions on the injuries. Though you'd normally have to pay two or three silvers for such treatment, she never accepted any money for the potions.

"It's already included in my daily pay. Plus, these are just potions I made for

practice. If you want to pay me back, don't get hurt anymore. No injuries means less work for me."

The blunt way she said things like that made her sound unfriendly, but we could tell she cared. It was *because* she could heal us with magic and potions that she threatened us as menacingly as she did. She was eerie enough with her hood pulled down over her eyes, but the way she scolded us with logic was even scarier.

"She's kinda like a mom, worrying about us." That was how one buddy of mine put it.

I thought it was a bit much to think of a twelve-year-old girl like a mother. But thinking about how she did our laundry, found our hidden wounds, heaved her sighs, and threatened us when she was pissed... She did actually remind me of my own ma. I remembered how my ma would whip my ass and order me around when I was a kid. When I thought about it that way, I felt like I could trust Chise more.

One side effect to all this though was how Gash, who'd never had any confidence in himself in the first place, became even more self-loathing and drank himself to tears. In an instant, she'd taken all our half-assed reclamation work and fixed it all with her magic. It showed us just what would happen if the country's royal mages were ever sent to go settle the land. That's why I actually asked her once during a break:

"Wouldn't you be able to do all this pain-in-the-ass reclamation work in a flash, Chise?"

Chise put on a pensive expression, and I couldn't help but grimace a little when she didn't immediately deny it. But after thinking my question over, she replied, "I could do it, but I won't."

"Why?"

"Sure, Teto and I could make a village easily enough. But would there be any human pride in it?"

I worried a bit when she said that, but she probably had a point. Was there any worth in a village that someone just gave us?

As adventurers we did dangerous jobs, confident in our skills. But would we have the ambition to protect a village we didn't even build for ourselves? We'd probably just run. Then, when we wanted another place to settle down in, we'd probably ask a mage like Chise to simply make us another village.

I said as much to her, in response to her question.

"Exactly. So I'll do what my job description asks of me, but I won't be taking anyone else's jobs. And besides, what you do now during the pioneering stage might become your jobs in the new village."

"Jobs?"

"Farmers aren't the only thing a village needs."

Chise gave me a childlike smile from under her hood before listing off professions:

The adventurers who exterminate the monsters could be hunters, or part of a vigilante corps.

The ones who cut down trees for the reclamation work could be lumberjacks, and those who turn that wood into charcoal could be charcoal burners.

We had someone who could brew potions already, so he could be the town chemist.

Mages could read and write, so they could be teachers.

The ones who used fire magic could run the riverside bathhouse.

If people liked liquor, they could become brewers.

You needed casks or barrels to brew liquor, so those who were handy with tools could be woodworkers or carpenters.

The mayor could be whoever kept pulling us along on the straight and narrow.

And whoever settled the village's problems, did clerical work, managed taxes, and dealt with traders and whatnot could be the magistrate.

Saying stuff like that made us actually think of how we'd live in the settled town.

“I could be a hunter, huh?” one adventurer said.

“You love booze, so you can start a brewery!” said another.

His friend responded, “I’d be able to drink all I wanted with the excuse that I was just tasting it! Gotta have you growing the wheat I’ll use for the beer.”

Another man said, “I’m not one for grunt work, but I’ve got an aptitude for taming. Would there be anything I could do?”

“You could raise animals, obviously. Or even be a beekeeper!” someone replied.

An adventurer added, “That just leaves our leader to be the mayor, and Gash can be the magistrate! Do your best, guys!”

Everyone had gone through different experiences during the adventures that led them here, so what jobs they’d all take on once the village was completed became a hot topic. Reclamation work had been such a pain, but our worlds opened up in just an instant.

“Thanks, Chise.”

“Break’s over. I’ll get to making dinner. Try not to get hurt out there.”

When she said that with a tiny smile on her lips, she really felt less like a kid looking towards the future, and more like a seasoned yet gentle adult woman. What an odd kid.

And later, once she gave us the okay to have one cup of booze at night, we started having some fun again.

“Man, little Chise’s damn good.”

“She is. She turned everything around here. She’s our angel!”

“Nah, she’s not friendly enough to be an angel.”

“You’re right. Then she’s a goddess! A great woman who’s way out of our league!”

“That sounds good, but she’s too little for that. Maybe give her five years or so.”

“Ha ha ha ha ha!”

While we were shooting the shit and laughing like that, Chise and Teto returned from their late-night bath. Teto was smiling to herself, all warmed up, while a gorgeous black-haired girl stood beside her.

Little Miss Chise's almond-shaped eyes narrowed in pleasure as she enjoyed the night breeze after her bath. I'd thought she was weirdly mature for a twelve-year-old girl, but from her features I could tell she'd be a real beaut once she grew up. In a few years' time, she'd be an enchantress, charming everyone around her.

Gash (who was drinking with us) was technically a noble, so he should've seen tons of gorgeous noble ladies in his life. But he was just as stunned by Chise's face as we were.

"Good night," Chise said.

"Good night!" Teto added.

And with that, the two girls headed to their allotted housing.

"She really is a goddess."

"Our goddess of fortune."

All of us adventurers started praying to her from then on.

In later years, woodwork made from trees cut in the nearby forest would become one of the village's local specialties, and we started selling a certain item.

"This depicts the goddess who descended upon our humble village when we were first settling it."

Sold as lucky charms were wooden plates carved with the image of a girl's face in profile, with the important things she'd taught us engraved on the back. They were popular among pioneers.

Chapter 27: Now That the Village Is Taking Shape, It's Time for Marriage Interviews

This world has mana and levels. When adventurers used their powers to develop a village, they worked like heavy machinery, with results at a standard that even modern people would be shocked by. But at the same time, villages abandoned by humans were overrun by monsters and mana-infused plants at an alarmingly fast rate. That meant the sites of former villages decayed and disappeared after only a short period of time, while buildings protected with mana would last hundreds (if not thousands) of years, becoming ruins.

“I see, so there are ruins like that too...”

“You seem so mature, Chise, but you’re still a kid if you’re fascinated by stories like this! There’s nothing special about any of these places I’ve been.”

“Don’t bad-mouth your experiences. I’m interested because I’ve never been to such places before.” I chided the adventurer who had been telling me about his travels, only for him to act a little bashful.

“Well, yeah, it might sound interesting to someone who’s never seen any ruins before, but most of the treasure inside them has already been looted—and no, there are never any hidden rooms or anything like that. Ruins are nothing more than unmanaged structures teeming with monsters,” he explained.

Yes, they might not be anything an adventurer looking for fame and fortune would want, but I didn’t think like that. “Thank you for telling me such a wonderful story. I’ll try going to some ruins with Teto one day.”

Teto stopped eating her meat skewers for a moment so she could chime in: “Yeah, sounds fun! Let’s do it, Lady Witch!” She raised an arm in the air, already raring to go.

The adventurer looked at the two of us in dismay. “So...you’re really leaving us?”

“Yes. Once the village starts looking like a proper one, we’ll be continuing our journey.”

Thanks to me and Teto, the reclamation project went much faster than planned. And with the extra money saved from speeding things up so much, the village was able to hire more assistant workers, meaning we had less work to do. So now we spent our time having fun, meeting with Gash to think up things the village could call its local specialty, or cooking with the ladies who had come as additional help.

“Chise, Teto, please use your magic to assist with the settling work,” Gash entreated us one day.

“What? No.”

“If you do, I’ll increase your pay! You’ll get two silvers a day, the same as all the men.”

“Okay then.”

I wasn’t going to sell our labor for cheap, so we decided that on the days we acted as mages and took care of the fields, built the roads, or held back rising rivers, we would be paid extra.

With our magic, the garden soil that would normally take years to develop in a pioneer village became ready for planting immediately. There was also the issue of the road that connected this village to a nearby town. Half of it was taken care of by the town, but the other half was just a footpath covered with conspicuous wheel ruts. So Teto and I used earth magic to level the ground, making it easier for horses to walk on. It typically took three days to travel between the village and town, but now the trip could be made in just two.

“This’ll make it easier for people to move in, and still be able to visit family and friends in their old town.”

“That’s great.” Gash seemed to have gotten over his issues, and was trying to use us as best he could.

Employing a court mage or high-ranked mage adventurer would normally cost you at least five silvers a day. But even if you hired one, there was no guarantee that it’d speed up settlement, since they’d quickly run out of mana. If you hired

multiple mages to work as a set, you'd also need to hire people to guard them, or hire any party members they might have. Once you added in the cost of any mana potions they'd need whenever they ran low on MP, you could end up spending around two or three small golds a day. At that point, it made more sense to simply hire more laborers.

But Teto and I could do all that work, and we were willing to take D-rank mage rates. We also had huge mana pools, so we didn't need mana potions, and on our breaks I could meditate to restore my mana. Gash had become a more determined supervisor, and it was a nice change of pace to wield great amounts of magic under his orders.

And so, the long-awaited day finally came...

"Welcome to our pioneer village," Gash said. "You're interested in moving here, correct?"

In order for the all-male adventurers to keep living in the village after finishing their quests, many women were invited to immigrate to the pioneer village. We were now holding a blind date party with the first round of them who arrived.

Most of the adventurers were in their late twenties to early thirties. In comparison, most of the women who gathered at their request were ladies from surrounding villages who were either widows, or who'd been working so hard to help their families that they'd missed the chance to marry. Since they'd helped around the house, none of them would have trouble with chores. But more significantly, they were fine with marrying former adventurers. Gash told us about how difficult it was to find women who met that criteria.

"I want everyone to be happy, after all." It was nice to see just how much he'd grown to care about the adventurers of this reclamation project.

And on Gash's part...

"It's nice to meet you. My name is Mary."

"N-n-nice to meet you too!"

It had been decided that he'd be engaged to Mary, the daughter of a merchant family from Ottoh. It was a political marriage set up by Count Gyspar and the merchant who was supporting the pioneer project. The count benefited

by having a new village for Gash to oversee as magistrate, giving Gash the title of baron and earning the Gyspar family another steady tax revenue. The merchant meanwhile benefited through the new connections with nobility, and gained a new market for the family's goods.

Though it might've been a political marriage, Gash and Mary didn't look bad together. And with this round of blind dates, more and more couples would form, so the village would finally start to look like a proper one.

Once a team of agricultural advisors arrived, preparations for farming the right crops at this time of year went underway. Villagers began building their homes, and adventurers continued hunting monsters for the time being to earn money. The merchants in Mary's family would sell the food and special goods everyone needed.

And so everyone in the pioneer village started to have big dreams for their futures. And within my visions of the happy settlers living their lives, I couldn't imagine myself being there with them.

"It's about time, huh."

"What?" Gash looked over to me, puzzled.

"You guys don't need me and Teto anymore, do you? It's probably time we get our quest marked as finished."

"That...might be true. I'll calculate your earnings and write you both up a quest completion form."

"Thank you."

The rest would be up to everyone who was staying in the village.

With Teto at my side, I headed to the plains on the outskirts of town. The land was covered in grass, with lots of little flowers blooming. I recalled recent talks about how it would be a good place for sheep and goats to graze, or a nice area to plant more flowers for beekeeping. It would also be a good spot for gathering potion ingredients, and the soap plants we'd sown were growing too.

"Hey, Lady Witch?"

"Yes, Teto?"

“You don’t want to stay here?”

“Hmm...” After thinking it over properly, I quietly answered with a question. “Do you remember how I bought some books in Darryl Town?”

“Yeah?”

They were all about magic and mana. But in one of those tomes, there was one line in particular that stuck with me.

“One book said that people with lots of mana tend to age slowly, and live unusually long lives.”

The mage adventurer on the pioneer team with the most mana had 5,000 MP, just like me. He was forty, but he looked young enough physically to be in his early thirties. Plus, adventurers who used Body Strengthening tended to look younger—and elves, a race known for their skill in magic, were famous for their youthful appearances and long lives.

“I currently have over 5,000 MP, and I intend to keep on growing my mana pool.” Eating strange fruits for one month would raise your total MP by 100 to 500 points. In the beginning, the growth rate had been small—but the more mana I had, the greater my gains became.

“I’m going to age slower and slower, and live much longer. When I think about how my body would never change, no matter how long I stayed here... I just get kind of lonely.” By continuing to eat strange fruits, I would be able to create even more things with Creation Magic, and I’d become stronger too. But it would all come at the cost of living at a different pace than other people.

“Hmm... Teto won’t be lonely, as long as she has Lady Witch. But Lady Witch is lonely?”

Teto’s whole world was just me and her, so she didn’t really understand what I was getting at. But she was right. I wouldn’t truly be lonely with her at my side. Smiling bitterly at her honest feelings, I flopped down onto the grass, resting my head on her thighs.

“Sorry, didn’t mean to get you down. Let me make it up to you.”

“Okay!”

While the villagers were having their blind dates, Teto and I could relax. And once the sun went down, the people who liked the village enough would decide to stay, and it'd grow bit by bit.

"Let's head back."

If my life span increased with my mana pool, I might not be able to live with other humans for long. But looking at it another way, maybe ten or twenty years down the line in our journey, it would be fun to come back to this village and see how much it had developed.

Chapter 28: Defending against a Sudden Monster Rampage and Abusing My Creation Powers

The blind date party was a success. A number of new couples were born, and there were other people who decided they wanted to move to the village as well. With time, they'd all get to know each other, and eventually form new households.

Teto and I had gone to sleep in our assigned house that evening on a good note, only to be awoken by violent shaking. We both shot up reflexively.

"Teto, something's coming! Get ready!"

"Okay!"

I sprang up, staff in hand, and Teto followed. The other adventurers also all came running out of their homes.

Gash hurried straight over to me. "Chise, what the hell is going on?!" He apparently hadn't gone to bed yet, likely working late into the night on village matters.

I shook my head. "I have no idea. I recommend you take the noncombatants somewhere safe!"

"Got it! I'll have them all brought to the underground food storage rooms."

"Please do! *Fly!*" While Gash and the adventurers evacuated everyone, I cast a spell to fly up into the sky, where I could look out towards the forest. With mana concentrated in my eyes, I could make out countless suspicious lights.

"Those are monsters. At this rate, the village we worked so hard to build is going to end up..." There was no time to waste. "Teto, build a defensive wall around the whole village!"

"Understood!"

On my orders, Teto used the soil between the village and the forest to make

compacted mud walls about five meters tall. Seeing such large-scale magic surround the little pioneer village all at once had everyone in a tizzy. Teto and I meanwhile quickly moved to the top of the walls, facing the monsters charging in from the north.

“Let’s do this. *Wind Cutter!*”

I unleashed a massive flurry of wind blades at the monsters coming from the forest, slashing right through their bodies. As I took out more than thirty with a single spell, others weaved through the corpses, bounding towards the wall around the village.

“Let’s go!” Teto cried. She jumped down from the wall and cut down the monsters as they approached. Covering her blackened magic sword with mana, she tore straight through the beasts. Some tried to bite her, but they were unable to get through her Body Strengthening. Teto was able to shake them off and defeat them easily enough.

“Chise, we’re back!”

“You’ve gone too far, Teto! Back up!”

The evacuation of the noncombatants to the underground food stores must have finished, because the adventurers returned one after the other. Some of them called for Teto to fall back out of concern for her safety, but she just ignored them, gleefully slaughtering the monsters and getting herself covered in their blood.

“Teto’s fine,” I said. “Just let her do her thing.”

“All right, fine. Not like I’d make it all the way out there to rescue her, anyway.”

Strength-wise, the monsters were all low D-and E-rank, but they just kept pouring out of the forest and struggling to get past Teto. If anything, the way that they were trying to run up the village walls made it seem as if they were running *from* something.

“Okay. You all stay on top of the walls and make sure no monsters get inside. Try not to fall—they’ll swarm you.”

“Got it. Even if we do fall though, we can handle monsters like these at least for a little while!”

They were veteran C-rank adventurers, so I had to imagine they’d be able to climb back up the walls to safety on their own, should things get hairy.

“I’ll head out into the forest then.”

“What, alone? No way!” the leader of the adventurers cried.

But I just shook my head back at him. “If we don’t find out what they’re running away from, the situation is just going to get worse. And I can fly to check. Would any of you even be able to keep up with me?” That shut him up. Seeing me use high-rank flying magic shut them *all* up.

“Teto, protect everyone!”

“Okay!” she replied with a bright smile, swinging her sword. She was completely covered in monster blood though, so I idly thought about how I’d have to give her a bath once everything was over.

I flew off towards the dark forest alone, and soon enough I spotted a great hole in the mountains where all the trees had been knocked down. “What is that? *Light!*” I stopped in the air above the hole, casting a spell to illuminate the area.

“A monster. Is that a dragon?” What I discovered was a blue creature with a long, curved, snakelike neck, which was swallowing up entire monsters left and right. And it didn’t have just one head—it had *four*—and all eight of its eyes were now staring directly at me, alerted by my light.

“A dragon with multiple heads... A hydra?” The monster encyclopedia I’d read in Darryl said that hydras had strong regenerative abilities—and the more heads they had, the more dangerous they were. Three heads would make it C or B-in rank, while four would bring it up to a B.

“If all the adventurers in the village rushed a three-headed C-rank one at once, they could beat it. They might even be able to take out a four-headed one, but...” Some of the people I’d been living alongside for the last month would likely die in the process. As that thought weighed heavily on my mind, the four-headed hydra stretched forth a head to try swallowing me whole.

“Tch! *Wind Cutter!*”

While dodging the attack, I shot wind blades at its neck. I used much more mana than usual, since a typical attack had barely scratched the ogres’ skin way back when—and surely the hydra was *at least* that strong—but still I only managed to cut into its hide a few centimeters.

“RAAAHHH!”

Not only did this monster use high-ranking Body Strengthening to harden its skin, it could apparently heal itself with some kind of regeneration skill. I watched as the cut I’d inflicted on it bubbled up, then disappeared entirely.

“This is a pain in the ass, but its hide seems about as hard as the ogres’ skins. That means...*this* should end things! *Hard Shot!*” I pulled four mana crystals from my magic bag, hardened them, and sent them flying. The strengthened crystals passed straight through all four heads, each of which promptly collapsed.

“Whew, glad that’s over... Ah, spoke too soon.” The heads had all crashed into the ground with an earthquaking *thump*, but the wounds just bubbled up and started regenerating.

“You’d think taking out their brains would be enough to kill them... Wait, what’s this?” Hidden near the spot where all the hydra’s necks met its body was a tiny fifth head. “It can probably keep regenerating so long as it has at least one brain left.”

I shot off another volley of mana crystals, aiming for all five heads at once. “I won’t miss this time!” But unfortunately the fifth head seemed to have learned from my earlier attack, because the hydra used its biggest head as a shield to take all of the crystals at once. The head was torn to pieces—but as expected, it immediately began to regenerate.

“God, this is impossible! How am I supposed to hit all five heads at once?! Whoops!”

“RAAAHHH!”

I barely managed to slip away from the hydra’s intense water-jet attacks spewing from its mouths. If it had been fire or poison breath, the forest around

us would have gone up in flames or ended up polluted, so it was a small mercy that the beast had a water affinity instead. But if it kept shooting these jets off everywhere, it was liable to knock down the entire forest.

“I need to defeat this thing on my own... But how? How can I beat it?” Luckily for me, the hydra itself was slow, so I could easily dodge—but I had no attacks strong enough to destroy all five heads at once.

“Well, if I don’t have one, I’ll just have to *make* one! Let’s do this!” I flew up into the air directly above the hydra’s body, high enough that none of its heads could reach. Then I pulled out a massive number of mana crystals. Rousing the mana inside them with my own, I pulled out every last bit of MP they held. The crystals all shattered under the pressure of the colossal amount of mana gathering within me.

“One hundred mana crystals, each holding 1,000 MP! Here’s some Creation Magic using 100,000 MP! *Creation: guillotine!*” I created a massive execution blade that could slice the hydra in half, and lifted it up into the air.

“Off with its heads!” I used the rest of my mana to make a path for the blade to drop, and added even more weight to it with dark magic.

“SHREEEEEE!”

The hydra tried to pull its slow, heavy body out of the way, but the guillotine blade was too fast for it, slicing right through the spot where its necks joined its body.



The hydra's body split in two...only for the clump of necks to squirm off, trying to flee.

"It's still alive? Just how tough is this thing? Though at least its mana appears to be dropping." It was only a hypothesis, but I wagered the hydra's regeneration ability stemmed from its heads, utilizing mana received from the magic stone in its torso. Now that I had severed that connection, the hydra could no longer use its regeneration, so the heads were just trying to slither away in a panic. But since the heads were all still connected at the bottom by a chunk of flesh, they ended up pulling against each other and failed to make any real headway.

"Okay, I don't have much MP left. I've gotta finish this quickly."

Though the lion's share of the mana I used on the guillotine came from my mana crystals, I had still used a lot of my own MP as well. Since I didn't have much left in me, I pulled out a self-brewed mana potion from my magic bag and chugged it.

"That refilled more MP than the ones I've made with Creation Magic," I noted. That bottle gave me back about 500 MP. While that was plenty for a normal mage—for me, it was only about ten percent of my total mana. But still, it was a big relief after the massive dip my mana pool had taken, so it calmed me down a bit mentally.

I began brainstorming how to destroy the hydra heads, which were each as big as my entire body. "I've still got some extra mana crystals left, so... *Hard Shot!*" This time, the hydra's heads couldn't avoid my hardened mana crystals—so all five were soundly pierced, silencing the beast for good.

"Whew, it's over..."

A five-headed hydra would be A-rank, but since this one wasn't fully developed, it would probably only be an A-at best. Between the life-and-death battle I just had with it, the massive mana drain I suffered, and the large-scale Creation Magic I used, I was mentally exhausted.

"I'll put up a barrier and...rest...a little bit..." Chugging a second mana potion, I plopped back against a nearby tree, the entire area still reeking of hydra blood.

But before I could put up the barrier to protect myself, a colossal wave of fatigue hit me, and I completely lost consciousness.

Chapter 29: By the Way, What Am I Gonna Do with This Thing I Made to Beat the Hydra?

“Ngh... Where am I?” I awoke somewhere dimly lit, so I cast some light magic. The light let me see that I was surrounded by walls that looked to be made of vines and dirt.

“I remember beating the hydra, so I must’ve lost consciousness before I had the chance to put up my barrier.” I wondered if I had been taken somewhere...but my back was still against the tree trunk I’d leaned against to rest. It didn’t look like I’d been moved.

“So what happened here? Ah...” I touched the walls of plants and dirt, only for it all to gradually crumble around me. I shrunk into my robe reflexively against the cool night air that blew in.

As the walls went down, the scene outside came into view. The stench of the hydra’s blood filled the air, and since the monsters had all run away from its rampage, the whole area was silent. What stood out more were the two things that appeared before me.

“You’re...the spirits that were born from the potted plants?” Popping out from the remains of the vine-covered dirt walls were two tiny humanoid spirits—one made of plants, the other made of dirt. It was then that I realized...

“You guys protected me? Thank you.”

After I’d lost consciousness, the little plant and earth spirits must have made walls to protect me from the cold and any predators. In response to my thanks, they twisted themselves around bashfully before fading into each of their respective natural forms.

I smiled, then looked up into the night sky. I didn’t know exactly how long I’d been out, but sleeping had helped regenerate my energy and mana quite a bit.

“I’ve got about...seventy percent of my mana back. But I really overdid it here...”

I'd created the anti-hydra guillotine without thinking, and now I had no idea what to do with it. The hydra's body was about twenty meters wide, while the guillotine easily dwarfed that at around thirty meters. I couldn't tell how tall it was since it was stuck deep into the ground, but from what was visible it was at least fifteen meters high.

"Would anyone believe me if I said some hundred-meter-tall giant came and killed the hydra with its hatchet? No way..."

Heaving a heavy sigh, I looked at the guillotine covered in hydra blood. "Well, since the metal things I make with Creation Magic are just basic iron, I might be able to fudge things if I cut it into pieces." Though I'd used it as a heavy blade dropped from high up in the air, it was actually just plain metal with no mana in it.

"Wind Cutter!"

I figured it'd be more believable if I said I'd lifted a big sword with my telepathy rather than a gigantic guillotine blade. So I chipped away at the metal using *Wind Cutter* in an attempt to make it look as close to a big sword as possible, then used Dark Magic and Earth Magic to cast *Corrosion*, which dissolved the chunks I sliced off and the part of the guillotine that was buried deep into the ground. The smell of rust mingled with the stench of hydra blood.

"Okay. I might be able to fib about how I beat it, but there's no way I can hide the fact that the hydra existed in the first place." Even if I managed to get rid of the corpse, the sheer volume of blood left would make people suspicious. "Guess I've got no choice but to fiddle with the corpse so it doesn't look like I dropped a guillotine on it."

Using my Dark Magic spell *Psychokinesis* to lift the hunk of metal I'd cut out from the massive guillotine blade, I hacked away at the flesh where the hydra's heads had been connected, splitting the neck chunks off one by one. Then, I burned away at the hydra's sides with fire magic to hide how I'd fought it.

Since a five-headed hydra would cause too much of a fuss, I took the smallest fifth head and hid it in my magic bag. They'd give a four-headed hydra a B-rank. Probably.

"Whew, dealing with the corpse tuckered me out, and I *know* I stink... I wanna

have a bath.”

Just then, my mana-enhanced senses picked up the sound of footsteps approaching.

“Oh, I wonder if they’ve finished things back in the village?” I said to myself.

“Lady Wiiiitch, Lady Wiiiiitch!”

“Gwuh, Teto?!”

“Lady Wiiiiitch! You were taking too long to get baaack!”

“Wh— Teto, no hugs while you’re like that! Let me go!”

Since she probably spent all night cutting down monsters, she was covered in dried reddish-black monster blood and specks of monster entrails. I used *Clean* since I *really* didn’t want her hugging me like that, but she was so filthy that one cast wasn’t enough.

Following Teto came the adventurers from the pioneer village, who drew their weapons the moment they saw the hydra’s body.

“A hydra?!”

“It’s fine,” I said. “I killed it already.”

“What?!”

“Seriously? How the hell did you kill a hydra this size?!”

Since I’d known they would ask this, I gave them the explanation I’d thought up earlier. “It had just come to, and hadn’t noticed me yet. So I used that big sword to stab it in the neck and pin it to the ground. Then, I spent the entire night burning the spot between its body and necks. Its regeneration ability was awful. I’m exhausted.”

“Chise, there’s no way you lifted a sword that heavy... Uwah?!” One adventurer tried lifting up the iron buster sword I’d carved from the massive guillotine—but it suddenly got lighter, so he fumbled it. The sword then floated in the air above him.

“*Psychokinesis*, a Dark Magic spell. I lifted the sword up above the hydra, accelerated it, and sliced the heads off.” I explained how after that, I burned the

hydra with the flames of my fire magic until it finally stopped regenerating. “I know you might have some questions, but it’s taboo for you to ask.”

“Yeah, you probably actually did something else to kill it, but an adventurer’s gotta hide their secret weapons. Regardless, thank you for protecting the village we built. Though I have to say, it’s kinda terrifying you took out a four-headed hydra all by yourself.”

I knew it was natural for them to feel that way, but I still felt sad that they called me scary.

“Yeah, glad you used your powers against that hydra rather than us!”

“Right? I’d be absolutely terrified if little Chise punished us like that.”

“I’m glad you use your words instead of your magic to order us around.”

As the adventurers chattered and laughed amongst themselves, I couldn’t help but shyly smile back. It seemed they’d called me terrifying out of respect rather than actual fear. It was a bit of a relief to realize that.

Teto just watched all the commotion silently, a blank look on her face as she hugged me.

“Okay then. As the witch who saved your village, I’d like a reward,” I said, smirking evilly. The adventurers winced.

“Y-yeah... I guess we would’ve been dead meat if you and Teto hadn’t saved our asses. Like with the wall around town and all...” the adventurer leader said, averting his eyes.

I gave him my demands. “There’s no way I can bring a monster this huge back, and I don’t have the tools to cut it apart—so I’ll give most of it to you. In exchange, I’ll just take its magic stones. You guys can do whatever you want with the rest.”

“Seriously? Shouldn’t you keep a head or two in your magic bag as proof you beat it?”

“What do you think would happen if I brought it to the guild and claimed I killed it?” I asked.

The adventurers looked me over before nodding.

“Ah, yeah, I see what you mean. No one would believe a tiny girl like you could take out a hydra, D-rank adventurer or not,” one said.

Another added, “They’d be suspicious if a D-rank claimed to solo a B-rank monster.”

“Right? So I’ll just take the most valuable part—the magic stones—and say I know nothing about the rest. I’ll sell the stones off somewhere to get the money. You guys can simply claim some rogue adventurer killed the hydra, or that it died of natural causes—and then you can sell the parts.”

“Yeah, but it feels like we’re stealing your glory.”

I wanted to sigh at how hardheaded they were being. But the whole reason I was suggesting this was because I’d seen how seriously these questionably inflexible guys took their pioneer work. “I’ll be traveling for a long time yet after this. I’ll have plenty of chances to raise my rank, so don’t worry about me.”

“You realize you’re sayin’ that you’re gonna get yourself into tons of trouble, right? But even if you will...”

“Oh, shut up and take it! You guys are gonna get married and support your families from now on, right? Your wives will leave you if you don’t have any money!”

“Got it, ma’am!” they all cried in unison.

Since they were being so stubborn about it, I’d released some mana to make them listen to me. I’d trained—no, taught them well during this pioneer project.

“Fine, we’ll take the body,” the lead adventurer said. “It’d be a pain if it rotted and turned into an undead, after all. As for what we’ll use the parts for, we’ll leave that up to Gash.”

It looked like the adventurers realized their stubbornness and pride were no match for me. I did find it funny though how they still couldn’t accept keeping the hydra parts for themselves, intending to dump it all onto Gash.

I nodded. “I’ll leave the rest to you guys then. Teto and I are gonna head back and bathe. We’re both filthy.” I was especially concerned about the black blood Teto had gotten on me when she hugged me, and the stench from burning up

the hydra.

“Sure, leave it to us!”

After the adventurers saw us off, Teto and I headed back down to the village.

Chapter 30: We'll Leave All of the Cleanup to Someone Else and Get Ready to Leave

When we returned to the village, Gash was giving orders from behind the dirt walls, and the women who were planning to live in the village started preparing emergency rations. I noticed there were a few adventurers left behind to keep the village safe.

Gash spotted us and came running. "Chise, you're okay! Thank goodness!"

"Yes, I'm fine. What about the villagers?"

"We're all fine too. No one was injured. But..."

The women behind Gash were all looking our way, worry written on their faces.

"The problem's been solved," I said, "but the adventurers who headed up the mountain can give you the full report once they return. Teto and I are going to bathe and have a rest."

"Ah, okay. Understood." He didn't seem to like my answer, but seeing Teto's state (and smelling the stench coming off of me), he let us go.

We headed to the river where the baths were, only to find it had all been trampled down by the monsters, since it was outside of the wall Teto had made. The bath's anti-peeking fence had been knocked down, and I could see monster footprints left in it.

"I'll put up a barrier so we can relax."

After absentmindedly hosing down the area with water magic, I cleaned Teto's clothing, leather armor, and sword. The ogre-leather armor had some minor damage, but her magic sword appeared flawless—its mana must have repaired any dents in it.

Once we'd washed all the dirt and grime off ourselves, I shot a few fireballs at the water we'd let into the bath and got in.

“Whew, I’m exhausted.”

“Lady Witch, Lady Witch, Teto’s super strong now. I protected everyone!”

“Yes, good girl, Teto,” I said as I poured bathwater over her head. I had to shampoo her hair numerous times to get all the dirt off.

It was then I remembered that on our way into town, I’d noticed some small rough-looking gates in the dirt wall, when there hadn’t been any there when I flew off to the forest. “Teto, did you make those gates in the wall around the village?”

“Yep! They said it was hard to get in and out, so I made them after we killed all the monsters.”

“I see. You worked hard.” I rinsed her hair again, scrubbing all the filth out as she giggled and grinned happily.

But then I thought about how although the walls were helpful as an emergency measure, it would probably be best for them to come down to allow the village to grow. “I should probably talk to Gash about it.”

“What was that, Lady Witch?”

“It’s nothing, don’t worry about it.”

And so, after we got all the grime and stench scrubbed away and changed our clothes, we headed back into the village.

“Ah, Chise, Teto,” Gash greeted us. “Welcome back. The men who went to the mountain told me all about what you did. Good work.”

The leader of the adventurers added, “We’ve put anti-monster scent balls around the hydra’s corpse. Later, we’ll return with the right tools to take it apart.”

“Are you really okay with only taking the magic stones though, Chise?” Gash asked.

“Absolutely. You can sell the rest of the hydra, or eat it, or use it for the village in some way. Anything you want.”

“Understood,” Gash said. “I’ll go along with your request, though I’m not very

happy about it..." It seemed he wasn't thrilled about my forced charity either, but at least he was willing to suck it up and accept it.

"Ah, that's right. I had something I wanted to ask," I said.

"What is it?"

"What do you want us to do with the dirt wall Teto made? I'm thinking it'll be in the way of any future expansion for the village. Would you like us to take it down?"

"We'll leave it for now, considering the monster attacks and all."

"Are you sure? Wouldn't it get in the way of the village growing?"

"We've still got some room inside the walls, so we should be fine for a while. More than anything, the people who want to move to the village have been spooked by the attack, so they'll probably be thankful to keep the walls that protected them up."

I nodded, understanding that he was prioritizing the feelings of the villagers.

Gash continued, "Although, saying that, I expect we'll need to bring the wall down in a few places to make some large proper gates for entering and exiting the town."

"All right. We'll leave it then."

Gash might have been unconfident back when the whole reclamation project was in shambles, but now he could answer questions just fine.

"One last thing..." I said.

"Yes. Here are the quest completion forms you requested. And here are the payment requests for your month of work here. I've taken the liberty of adding the days you did direct development work separately."

Teto and I each took our papers from him.

"Okay, then we'll be leaving once we get the hydra's magic stones. Thank you for having us."

"Oh, no, thank *you*. Without the two of you, this project would have failed. And if you hadn't killed that hydra, things would have gotten even worse. Thank

you so much!”

Gash and the others all lowered their heads.

Leaving the rest of the cleanup to the villagers, Teto and I headed back to our assigned housing and took a nap.

That night, dinner was a chunk of meat cut out of the hydra. Though some species of hydra were poisonous, we were lucky enough to have slain a water hydra, so it was edible. The fatty white meat tasted similar to eel. The chunks of meat were cooked on skewers, and crunchy when eaten. While there were monsters that tasted delicious cooked, I personally wasn’t a fan of the way most adventurers cooked them. So I cut the hydra meat into thin slices and cooked off the fat in a covered pan. I took a bite of the light, unseasoned meat.

“Mmm, much better this way.”

“Teto wants to try it too!”

“Okay, okay, give me a minute.”

As I cooked up Teto’s portion, some of the adventurers and women asked me for some too, so I made enough for everyone to try. It was very well received. After giving them all the rundown on how to cook it, I finally settled down to eat my portion, my past life as a Japanese person making me wish I had white rice and soy sauce to go with it.

Next was a party, full of eating and drinking. Freed from the stress of the sudden monster rampage and the appearance of the giant hydra, villagers were dancing in front of the bonfire and seeing who could drink the most. The adventurers confident in their strength were arm wrestling off at a table, while the more nimble ones were throwing knives at empty wine casks. Those who got drunk joined in the dancing. It was hard to tell if their strange dances were from their distant homelands, or if they were just plain bad dancers. It was enough to make me, Teto, and the women who had come to the village all start laughing.

“Ha ha, that’s awful. I’ll show you how to *really* dance. Teto, come here!”

“Roger!”

Infected by the weird dancing and the surrounding vibes, I got up, took Teto's hand, and started folk dancing around the bonfire. Teto and I grasped our hands together, and after making some simple right-left steps, we spun before taking each other's hands again. It wasn't anything as stiff as what nobles would dance. Seeing that the steps were simple and that it could be danced in pairs, the pioneer adventurers joined up with the women they were interested in and mimicked our dance moves around the bonfire.

"Dammit, why am I with a guy?!" one man yelled.

"Because we have fewer women than men. Nothing we can do about it!"

The way some of the complaining men danced together invited even more laughter. Those who weren't dancing gave us some rhythm by whistling, clapping, or drumming with cutlery.

The villagers all continued to dance, changing partners between songs—but I got tired pretty quick, so I sat in front of the bonfire at the edge of the party site and simply watched everyone.

"That was fun, Lady Witch!"

"Yeah, it was. We got to have a lot of fun." Maybe it was because I'd eaten my fill, danced around the bonfire, and laughed—but I felt light, despite my fatigue. It was a kind of pleasant weariness. "It feels great."

I leaned into Teto, who gently caught me. "You looked like you were really enjoying yourself, Lady Witch."

Cuddling up to Teto, I absentmindedly watched the people dancing around the bonfire. They'd all done away with their embarrassment, their reputation, and their status—they just had fun dancing. The sight was all the more precious from the fact that it existed because we helped build this village and protected it from monsters. It was also a fragile and ephemeral scene, where all the smiles could easily vanish the next time a crisis occurred.

In the center of that scene were Gash and the leader of the adventurers. This time, I was able to make this all possible with them—but next time, they'd have to protect everyone on their own.

"I need to entrust things to them." I knew somewhere in my heart that I

couldn't stay here forever.

Exhaustion and sleepiness clouded my vision, making it seem as if the bonfire were sparkling. I slowly closed my eyes, all energy leaving my body.

"Good night, Lady Witch."

I fell asleep snuggled against Teto. She would eventually carry me back to our housing, but apparently the party lasted late into the night.

*

Three days later...

Since our quest was completed, we were housed out of the goodness of the villagers' hearts, waiting for the hydra to be cut up. During that time, all of the cooking and cleaning we'd been in charge of had already been taken over by the women.

Teto and I walked around the village, fixing the paths and plains trampled by the monsters. And once Teto carried the monster corpses a short distance away, I burned them all up.

"The herbs got trampled, but they're already all grown anew. Good job, herbs." I was truly impressed by the vitality of these potion and soap herbs.

And at last, the day came when the magic stones from the hydra were removed from the corpse.

"Hydras have a little stone in each of their heads, and a big one in their body," the adventurer leader said. "They're all yours, girls."

The magic stones had been extracted from the four heads (excluding the fifth one that I'd hidden), and though they were all different sizes, they were all a beautiful blue. Meanwhile the extra-large stone from the body was light green and egg-shaped, about eighty centimeters tall.

A monster's strength came from the size of its magic stone. I'd thought the hydra would be either B+ or A-, but it might have crossed the line into A-rank. The adventurers who butchered the hydra's corpse might have realized that it wasn't just four-headed, and thus was possibly an A-rank monster. But hopefully they also figured I had hidden the fifth head and tried to pass the

hydra off as B-rank in order to keep the peace in the village.

“Hey, Chise...”

“Hm? What’s up?”

“Never mind, it’s nothing. Thanks.”

I put the hydra’s magic stones in my magic bag. “Well then. We’ll be heading back to town to complete our quest.”

“You don’t want to stay until the next wagon comes?”

“If we wait that long, we’ll never leave.”

As Gash and the others reluctantly saw us off, Teto and I left the village.

“Come back someday!”

“Bye-bye, everyone!”

Though everyone in the village had gathered to see us off, I didn’t turn around, looking straight forward instead. Teto, on the other hand, kept looking back towards the village and waving over and over again.

Once we were over the hill and the village was out of sight, Teto spoke to me.

“Lady Witch?”

“Yes?”

“Why are you crying?”

After being reincarnated in this new world, I didn’t really have any purpose or goals. I was just reborn with the goddess Liriel telling me to live a long life. It wasn’t like I wanted to become a hero, or have an adventure the likes of which had never been seen, or anything.

I didn’t have memories of my death, but after being reincarnated, I had a vague desire not to die again. Left on my own in the wasteland, I had no idea what to do with myself, so I sought power. I leveled up, got skills, increased my mana pool, and increased the variety of things I could make with Creation Magic. After gaining the powerful Origin Magic skill that let me use every element, I defeated a hydra and began gaining merit as an adventurer.

“Lady Witch, why are you so sad?”

“I’m not sad.”

“Does something hurt? Or are you lonely?”

“I’m not hurt. And you’re here, so I’m not lonely.”



I had no idea why I was crying. After being left in this world, I'd handled everything unemotionally. Most of the feelings I did show were towards Teto, whom I'd created myself.

"What do you want, Lady Witch? Teto will go find it for you, no matter what it is."

I felt like I was looking for something.

"I don't know... I don't know."

But over the course of my journey so far, I hadn't felt the slightest bit of fulfillment. Gaining overwhelmingly strong magic, earning money—nothing worked.

"I don't know... I don't know."

"It's okay. I'll help you find whatever it is you're looking for, Lady Witch."

Clinging to Teto, I sobbed loudly. And then, I understood.

Having been suddenly reincarnated in this body, I didn't have anyone to call a parent. I didn't have a homeland either. The only person I could call an ancestor or anything was Liriel, the goddess who invited me to this world, let me pick a skill, and reincarnated me.

But I felt something for my homeland from my past life, though my memories of it were vague. Those feelings of homesickness drove me to go on this wandering journey.

I'd thought that maybe the pioneer village could be my new homeland, after having helped to settle it. That was why I went there in the first place. But I was wrong. Thanks to my Creation Magic and strange fruits, my mana pool would continue growing, and I'd end up becoming an oddity.

"Teto, I just realized. I've been searching for somewhere to be my home. Somewhere I can be me."

"That's what you want, Lady Witch? Then we'll have to keep looking for it!"

"Yeah. Or maybe we could find a place to make our own homeland."

I now knew what my goal was. I could use Creation Magic to make anything I

wanted from modern-day Japan. And so long as I kept eating strange fruits, my mana pool would keep growing—and I'd live longer. So all I needed to do was search for a place where I could be strong, honest, and gentle. Somewhere I would be fulfilled from the bottom of my heart, and could live peacefully.

"I'll make myself somewhere to belong." I finally realized my true desire. It felt like my eyes had been opened. "I'll need land. And money to get through society, with social status too."

By traveling around as an adventurer, I would find myself land. By completing quests, I would earn money. And by raising my rank, I would gain social status.

"Thank you, Teto. I've decided what the goal of my journey is now."

"I see. That's great!"

"Having a good cry was refreshing. Let's get our quest turned in and head off on our next adventure."

"Got it!"

And so we ran back towards Ottoh, where we'd accepted the quest. But partway there I just started flying, while Teto used Body Strengthening to keep running, so we managed to get back in just half a day.

Chapter 31: We Decided Our Next Destination Based on Where My Staff Fell

After returning to Ottoh Town, we turned in our finished quest.

Our E-rank quest to provide logistical support for the pioneer effort paid us one silver a day, so it came out to about sixty silvers between the both of us. Since it was an E-rank quest while we were D-rank, it wouldn't make our rank go up. But by accepting Gash's requests in the field to use our magic to help with development, we were able to count each day of that as its own D-rank quest. Adding our rewards from all that, the two of us earned around fifteen small golds altogether.

"So we earned about 1,500,000 Japanese yen. That ended up being a pretty high-paying job." Or in modern Japanese terms, it was like I was carrying my own personal high-performance heavy machinery.

Having become moderately wealthy, we took out only as many silvers as we'd need and left the rest on our guild cards.

"Now let's go buy a map so we can find the best place for us to live."

"Okay!"

Teto and I roamed the town, searching for a map. But unfortunately...

"Yeah. Of course there aren't any."

Since most citizens usually spent their entire lives in the town where they were born, the average person had no need for a map. Any maps anyone did have were usually little better than a memo, showing how long you'd need to walk down a road to reach the next town over, or whether or not there were alternate paths to a nearby village through the forest. And since a good map could be used to plan a route for invasions, such top secret strategic resources would never be sold to average townsfolk.

"All we were able to get was a simple map of the surrounding areas from the

adventurer's guild, and someone's travel log."

Just about all we could do then was head in the direction of what our map didn't cover and get another local map to attach to it. Either that, or get in with the royalty or aristocracy and get a map of the whole country that way.

"But this travel log might give us more hints than I thought it would."

Whoever wrote it was a pretty detailed writer. Skimming through the passages, I found mention of one spot that interested me in particular.

"The Wasteland of Nothingness. I was able to get within a step of that location. It was a place where all you could see was faded earth. Within the barrier erected by the gods, the barren lands were unlivable, punished and cursed to be sterile. The sheer nothingness there struck fear into me, and I fled. I could just imagine demons living there."

The Wasteland of Nothingness—just the name struck something in my heart.

"It'd be nice if we could find a forest or something that's easy to live in, but if this Wasteland of Nothingness really is empty, I'd like to go there."

"Why's that, Lady Witch?"

"Hm? Because no one is there, maybe."

"If you want to go there, then Teto will go with you!"

But we had no idea where the Wasteland of Nothingness actually was. Because of that, I checked the directions on the map and stood my staff up.

"We'll let the gods decide where we go." Letting go of my staff, it fell slowly towards the southwest. According to the basic map, there was a dungeon town in that direction.

"Okay, onward then."

"Let's go!"

Heading towards the road to the southwest, we began our travels anew. But since there weren't any coaches going that way at the time, we walked a safe distance from the highway, picking any herbs and defeating any monsters that we happened to come across. This was so we could both earn money off of the

herbs and get magic stones for Teto to absorb.

“Lady Witch, Lady Wiiiitch!”

“What, Teto?”

“I want one of the stones from the hydra.”

“Okay. You can’t have the big one, but you can eat some small ones.”

“Yay!”

I pulled out two of the stones collected from the hydra’s heads and handed them to her—and she immediately tossed them right in her mouth. Her eyes narrowed in delight as she assimilated and swallowed the stones, making some crunching and snapping sounds that I didn’t really enjoy hearing.

“Ah, they’re so delicious. It feels like they’re spreading through my body!”

“I-I see... Um...”

She’d transformed quite suddenly after eating the dungeon golem’s core and the dungeon core itself, but I didn’t see her changing again this time. However...

NAME: Teto (Earthnoid)

CLASS: Guardian Swordswoman

TITLE: Witch’s Follower

GOLEM CORE MANA: 14,400/14,400

SKILLS: Swordsmanship Lv 4, Shield Proficiency Lv 3, Earth Magic Lv 3, Monstrous Strength Lv 2, Mana Regeneration Lv 1, Subordinate Strengthening Lv 1, Body Strengthening Lv 5, Regeneration Lv 1, various others...

By fighting mock battles against adventurers, she’d learned the Body Strengthening skill, and after eating the hydra’s magic stones, she’d also gained the Regeneration skill. On top of those, she’d gained a host of other skills from her experiences.

“You’re really brilliant, Teto.”

“Hwah? Lady Witch praised me! I’m so happy!”

She acted like a bit of a dummy, but she was a genius, able to immediately remember and learn anything she was shown just once.

I decided to check my status too.

NAME: Chise (Reincarnator)

CLASS: Witch

TITLE: Goddess of the Pioneer Village

LEVEL: 50

HP: 750/750

MP: 6,250/6,250

SKILLS: Staff Martial Arts Lv 1, Origin Magic Lv 6, Body Strengthening Lv 3, Mixing Lv 3, various others...

UNIQUE SKILL: Creation Magic

All in all, Teto was stronger. But I was definitely growing as well.

“Aging slower means growing slower too, right?” It was said that your aging would slow the more mana you had, but by how much? If I kept growing my mana pool, aging ever more slowly, I imagined I could stop aging altogether once I got to a certain point.

“An eternal twelve-year-old. Just imagining becoming some kiddie hag makes me shiver with disgust.” If I ended up always looking like a kid, I could only imagine people would look down on me. I’d have to figure out a way around that. Ideally, I’d like to stop aging between the ages of seventeen and twenty—the period where humans grow the most—but that might be impossible.

“Worst-case scenario, I could grow my mana pool to an absolutely massive size and use illusion magic with some substance to make myself look older.”

It would definitely be a waste of mana, but strange fruits would probably make it possible, I thought as I created another one. I ate it as Teto and I

walked.

Extra Story: The Pioneer Village, Thirty Years Later

In a certain town in the Kingdom of Ischea, forestry and agriculture thrived—and soap, their local specialty, was sold all across the land.

“There are still traces of the original village, but it’s changed a lot.”

“Lady Witch, Teto made that wall!”

Teto and I gazed down at the town from a small hill nearby. The wall that we’d made in the past to stop a monster attack had become an inner wall, with a newer one built outside of it, providing two layers of defense. The settlement itself had grown so much that the baths I’d made on the riverside were now within the town limits.

I took a look at a promotional pamphlet for the town’s soap, which had only recently begun to spread.

“It’s unknown when the soap herb—otherwise known as bubbleaf—became known to the world. It was discovered in a little village focused on forestry. But thanks to the herb’s heart-easing scent and its softness on both the skin and textiles, it soon spread far and wide. Thanks to the discovery of this bubbleaf, the level of public hygiene in every town has rapidly grown, and the likelihood of death by epidemic has dropped.

“What’s more, the soap components extracted from the bubbleaf have been mixed with flower essences and plant-based oils, producing fragrant soaps popular with the aristocracy—a development spearheaded by the royal family of Ischea.”

I then read through a picture book titled *The Goddess of Suds*.

“The village where bubbleaf was discovered was developed around forestry and the sale of herbs. There is a legend about the bubbleaf, which became the village’s greatest product.

“One day, a dirty woman appeared in the village. She was sick and filthy, and though most of the villagers ignored her, the village’s young apothecary gave

her medicine as an act of charity. Once healed of her illness, she gave the man a strange seed.

“The man planted the seed, wondering what would grow...only for an odd plant to sprout. This plant could bubble up and clean away any dirt. Using this plant, the filthy woman—a witch—was cleansed and reborn as a goddess. She lived happily ever after with the apothecary.

“Whether it is true or not, it is one of the goddess myths passed down in the region. Sometimes the goddess is named Liriel, one of the Five Great Goddesses, while other times she is referred to as a servant of Liriel, or a saint.”

I couldn't help but smile bitterly at the contents of the book. “They’ve glorified the story way too much. Plus, it didn’t happen long enough ago to be passed down... But a story like this is more interesting, I suppose.” Wondering if that’s how all regional legends and folklore started, I put the pamphlet and picture book back in my magic bag, then adjusted the wide-brimmed witch hat on my head.

“Let’s get going.”

“Okay. Let’s buy some soap!”

Teto and I descended down the hill and entered the town. At the entrance was a young man in his twenties from the vigilante corps, who gave directions to visitors.

“Welcome to Gash Town, also known as the Town of Soap.”

“Huh. So they named it after Gash.”

“The name comes from the magistrate Lord Gash, who worked hard to help this town grow,” the young man explained, clearly proud of his town.

Gash, who had become magistrate, started the soap business with his wife Mary’s connections as daughter of a merchant, using the product’s success to develop the village further. They also made good use of the wood in the abundant mountain forest to the north, selling furniture and charcoal. It seemed they also made good use of the mixing skills they’d honed using the soap plants to manufacture plant paper.

I gave appropriate responses as the guard told us about the town.

“What are you two ladies here for today?”

“We came to buy some soap from the source, and to do some sightseeing.”

“And I’m Lady Witch’s escort!”

Apparently this town was a popular spot for noblewomen and girls to travel incognito and stay a while. Teto and I were wearing strange clothes, so the young man probably assumed I was some noble lady and Teto my guard escort.

He laughed. “A mage and a swordswoman, eh? Reminds me of the adventurer stories my pops told me when I was a kid. He knew a little mage who could control the earth, and a swordswoman who could make stone walls and mow down monsters.”

I pulled my hat down over my eyes, slightly embarrassed.

“Well then, come on in. Our soap is sold in the town’s main shop.”

After thanking the man for explaining things, we entered the town, looking around and seeing all the happy townsfolk. There were more people now of course, the population including everyone who was born here or moved in from elsewhere over the last thirty years.

“It looks like a nice, happy little town.”

“Teto thinks so too!”

As we approached the inner wall that Teto had made with her earth magic, we saw that parts of it had broken down from the wind and rain, and subsequently were reinforced with bricks. *I still think they should’ve just torn the thing down*, I thought with a smile.

We eventually made it to the shop we were told about. We entered and saw that a young woman was tending the store, and Teto and I proceeded to browse the soap section.

“I wonder what this scent is?”

“It smells sweet and refreshing. Just the kind of smell you like, Lady Witch!”

I found one bar of soap with a sweet, soft, yet distinctly herblike scent that I

liked, so I held it up for Teto to enjoy with me.

The shopkeeper approached us. “Welcome. Have you found a scent you like?”

“Yes, I quite like this one,” I said, showing her the soap in my hand.

She launched into an explanation: “This soap is made from a combination of our town’s honey and an herb that works on both wounds and burns. It’s only sold here.”

“I see. I’ll take five of them.”

“They’re six large coppers each, so your total will be three silvers.”

Once I paid, I waited for her to wrap up my bars of soap. Teto and I wound up wandering about the store again, only for our eyes to fall on one wooden carved relief.

“Huh? It’s Lady Witch!”

“Me?” I turned to the shopkeeper to ask, “Excuse me, what is this?”

“Ah, that’s one of our town’s lucky charms.”

The thing I had pointed to was a wooden carving of a girl’s profile. It was labeled as “The Goddess of the Pioneer Village,” and on the back were words I’d once used to rouse the pioneer team, along with the heading: “The Goddess of the Pioneer Village’s Secrets for Success.”

“My dad was one of the pioneers who settled here, and many from his generation are thankful to this goddess-like female adventurer.”

“I see...”

As I gazed at the relief, the shopkeeper apparently took a closer look at my face. “Miss, you look an awful lot like the girl in the carving. Could you be...the daughter of that adventurer who helped build our town?”

I was sweating bullets, thinking at first that she’d guessed who I was—but it had been thirty years since the reclaimed village was settled, so she went with a more logical guess. My appearance hadn’t changed since then, so of course normal people would sooner assume I was a daughter, rather than the famous adventurer herself.

“I’ll take one of these carvings as well,” I said, ignoring the shopkeeper’s question.

“That will be two coppers.”

After tipping her with a silver, I took all my soap and the souvenir carving. But just as Teto and I reached the shop exit, two men stepped into the store.

“I bagged a deer today, Gash, so why don’t we get all our families together and eat it?”

“I was able to catch some river fish as well. I’ll bring them and we can drink to our successful hunts.”

It was the former leader of the pioneer adventurers and Gash, side by side. The adventurer leader was over sixty now, and while most of his hair had gone white and he had more wrinkles, he still looked lively enough to be mistaken for a fifty-year-old. Gash, who worked as the village’s magistrate, had aged and grown calmer, smarter, and more confident, making him a gentle-mannered man near old age.

As the two entered the shop, their eyes fell on us. It was a bit weird to see how wide their eyes opened.

“Wait... Little Chise?”

“Yep. Long time no see. Looks like you’ve been well.”

“And...is that Teto?”

“Yup! I’m glad we got to see you again!”

They both realized who we were, so we answered as if it was nothing. Though they’d grown into refined, cool old men, they started tearing up like children.

“Kid... You haven’t changed a bit! You look exactly like you did the last time we saw you!”

“We’ve heard all about your exploits. It’s good to see you again.”

“Having lots of mana slows your aging, after all. We heard about your soaps and came to buy some,” I said with a little smile. The two adult men roughly rubbed at their eyes with their sleeves before looking at us earnestly.

“We’ve reunited with some old friends!” the adventurer leader proclaimed. “Let’s get our families together and drink!”

“Yes, that sounds great,” Gash said. “We need to give them the biggest welcome we can! We can invite everyone from the old pioneer team too!”

And so we ended up having a deer meat and river fish barbecue at the former adventurer leader’s and current mayor’s family homes. The other pioneer team members came in turns, telling us all about what had happened over the thirty years since we’d last seen them. Though the team had been all men, now they had their long-married wives, children, and even grandchildren at their sides.

I was able to see them happy, and got to hear so many stories about their lives. Sadly there wasn’t enough time for everyone to recount everything they’d gone through by the time the unexpected party came to a close.

“I hope they keep doing well,” Teto said, later that night. “You do too, right, Lady Witch?”

“Yes, I do. I hope their remaining lives—and the lives of their children and grandchildren—are full of happiness.”

We walked over the exact same hill we’d passed over the last time we’d left this place, and once we couldn’t see the town anymore, I used teleportation magic to send Teto and I back to our own home.

Afterword

Hello, nice to meet you. I'm Aloha Zachou.

I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who picked this book up, to my editor I-san, to Tetubuta-sama who did the beautiful illustrations, and to everyone online who looked at my work before it was published as a book.

Making Magic is my third published work. My other two are under a different label, and quite honestly, I can't even imagine what kind of new readers I'll get from GC Novels publishing my first large-size book. I'm just here trembling (metaphorically).

When I was first writing the web novel version of *Making Magic*, the original title was too abstract and wasn't attracting many readers, so I changed it over and over again, trying to come up with something catchy that readers would like. I'm pretty confident in the actual content of the story, but it really made me realize just how important a title is.

After that, my editor I-san approached me, and I started working towards publishing this with GC Novels. We communicated through email and phone calls, and they helped me choose an illustrator that fit the series, pick the color scheme for the character designs, work out a title logo and where to put it, and review my drafts. My impression of the job back then was that they were so serious about everything, I thought they were gonna eat me right up!

I'm thankful for how thorough they were with each part of the book's structure, and it really opened my eyes. It was an important experience that made me realize what the term "splitting hairs" really meant.

Making Magic is a story about Chise the witch making everyone happy with her kindness and loving strictness, and I hope I can show it to all of you.

Please keep treating me—Aloha Zachou—well from now on too.

Lastly, I'd like to once more thank every reader who picked up this book.

I had a lot of fun illustrating this!
The difference between Chise and
Teto's psychiques is so good...

Tetubuta

Tetubuta



Making Magic

Aloha Zachou
illust. Tetubuta

The Sweet Life of a Witch Who Knows an Infinite MP Loophole

Volume I







Little Miss Chise's almond-shaped eyes narrowed in pleasure as she enjoyed the night breeze after her bath.

I'd thought she was weirdly mature for a twelve-year-old girl, but from her features I could tell she'd be a real beaut once she grew up. In a few years' time, she'd be an enchantress, charming everyone around her.

Bonus Short Stories

A Cute Monster

After clearing the dungeon, Teto and I wandered through the forest.

“Lady Witch, something is coming!”

“Ah, that’s...” I tensed up, squeezing my staff, as Teto moved out in front of me to shield me.

Popping out of the brush was a large rabbit with horns on its head—a creature fittingly called a horned rabbit.

“Lady Witch, it’s a monster!”

“Yes, it is. But let’s just watch it for now.”

The rabbit monster hadn’t seemed to notice us, mindlessly chewing away at the grass underfoot. As it nibbled away, its little tail quivered. Its fluffy white fur looked quite soft. But soon enough its ears bolted straight up, and it gazed in our direction with its round eyes.

“Kyuuu, kyuuu!”

The adorable bunny monster took a hop towards us. Back on the wastelands I’d fought slimes and other monstrous animals, and in the forest and the dungeon I’d fought goblins and orcs. It was a pleasant change of pace to come across a creature this soothing.

But just as I was about to take a step and reach out for the rabbit monster...

“Hi-yah!”

“Kyuuu...uuu...”

“Mr. Bunny?!”

Teto had rushed forward and slashed at it with her sword before I even had a chance to get close. The bunny let out a final weak cry before collapsing.

“Lady Witch, I got us something to eat for dinner tonight!” Teto exclaimed, waving her hand at me. She proceeded to tie the horned rabbit’s feet up and hang it from a tree branch to drain its blood.

“Th-thanks...Teto...”

All she had done was hunt the bunny so we could eat it. I was the one in the wrong, letting my guard down in front of a monster merely because it looked cute. It was survival of the fittest out here in this monster-infested forest.

I had to steel myself to look at the rabbit monster Teto had dissected. “Let’s give thanks for the bunny monster’s life before we eat.”

“Thank yooou!”

And so that night we had sautéed rabbit, which was so delicious it brought tears to my eyes.

But to soothe my heart after losing my chance to pet something cute, I used Creation Magic to make a soft rabbit plush for myself to cuddle. It looked a bit like the bunny monster had when it still lived.

Praised to Death

After saving them, Teto and I were accompanying the adventurer Lyle and his party back to the town they called home.

“So, what are the two of you to each other?” Lyle asked. Having found us in a forest brimming with monsters, he must have been curious to learn more about us.

I wasn’t quite sure how to respond. “What are we... Hmm, it’s a little difficult to put into words.” Teto was my former golem, who’d gained a humanoid body. She was strong and protected me.

As I searched for the right words to describe our relationship, said golem girl apparently already knew how to answer: “Lady Witch is Lady Witch! She’s the person Teto loves and treasures the very most in the whole world!”

“Wait, Teto...” It was kind of embarrassing to hear her say all that with such a huge smile on her face.

But Teto wasn't finished yet. "Lady Witch is amazing. She's so calm and mature! But she's also teeny-tiny and cute, and knows amazing magic!"

"I see..." Lyle said. He and his friends all looked at me with grins as I stood there mortified, enduring the torrent of compliments from Teto. They clearly enjoyed seeing me embarrassed when normally I was able to keep my cool. Teto didn't notice my discomfort in the slightest though, and continued to shovel on praise.

I pulled my robe's hood over my face as far down as I could, hiding my shame.

"And she's so good at cooking. And she's nice enough to ask if I'm okay!"

"That's true," Lyle said. "And Chise saved our hides in multiple ways."

My embarrassment grew even worse as Lyle and the other adventurers nodded along in agreement. I hung my head even lower.

Teto finally noticed something was up with me. "Hm? Lady Witch, are you okay? Your face is bright red!"

"I'm...fine..."

She stared at my face curiously, but still didn't seem to have any clue what I was embarrassed about.

So I decided to get back at her. "Well, even when I'm thinking way too hard about things, you still listen to me and do what I tell you, Teto. And the incredibly simple way you think sometimes makes me realize things I hadn't before. And you're really great with the sword, and you're the best at earth magic!"

"Yup!"

"And you seem to enjoy all the food I cook. And thanks to you taking the night shift, I can sleep easy. And I trust you more than anyone. And...you're...my most precious companion... Um..."

I was trying to embarrass her through compliments, but all she did in response was smile happily, making me feel even more mortified.

The adventurer trio just watched over us with gentle looks in their eyes.

At the Pioneer Village's Bath

Having accepted the quest to help with the pioneer village, Teto and I did the cleaning and cooking every day so that the other adventurers could focus on their work. And every night, once Teto and I were finished with all the day's tasks, I would fill the pool we'd created by the riverside with hot water so that the both of us could bathe.

"Whew... I'm exhausted."

"Great work, Lady Witch. You worked hard today."

After stripping off our clothes and slipping into the bath, I couldn't help but let out a few words. "Ahhh... I feel like I'm coming back to life."

"We've got the whole bath to ourselves!"

The pool we'd made was big enough for the entire pioneer team to bathe in at once, so Teto and I were able to stretch out as much as we liked. Teto took full advantage of this, swimming laps from one side to the other.

"Teto, no swimming in the bath."

"Okaaay."

I couldn't get that mad at her since we were the only ones there, and she wasn't swimming roughly enough to splash any water on me. If anything, I was both amused and pleased to see the former golem had taken to bathing with me so well.

After watching Teto swim quietly for a bit and sufficiently warming myself up in the water, I stood up. "We should get ourselves washed now."

"Lady Witch, I'll wash you!" Teto followed me back to shore as I got out to wash my hair and body.

"Can I get you to wash my back then?"

"Of course!" Once she lathered a towel with soap, she began washing my back. She did so slowly, careful to not hurt my skin. She then lifted my long hair up so she could wash my neck too.

"Your back is so nice and smooth, Lady Witch."

“Ngh... Stop, that tickles.” I jerked away when her hands slipped from my back down to my sides. “I can take it from here, Teto.”

“Aww, but Teto wanted to wash all of you!”

“Nope. How about you settle for letting me wash your hair?”

“Hmph. Fiiine,” Teto said, reluctantly passing the soapy towel back to me.

After washing my arms, legs, and the rest of my body, I rinsed myself off, then circled around behind Teto to wash her hair.

“Thanks, Lady Witch.”

“No problem.”

After dribbling some of my magically created shampoo onto my palm, I lathered it up and began to gently scrub Teto’s head. Using the bottom of my fingertips to ensure I didn’t scratch her scalp, I massaged the suds all throughout her hair.

“That feels nice, Lady Wiiiitch!”

“Glad you like it,” I said, pouring water over her head to rinse out the shampoo. “I’m jealous of your short hair, Teto.”

Teto’s hair was short enough that it barely reached her shoulders, making it easy to wash. My hair, on the other hand, went down to my waist, making it a major pain to wash. It also felt heavy and clung to my body whenever I took a bath.

“I just love Lady Witch’s long black hair. It’s so smooth and pretty, and it feels nice to touch!” Teto said, turning to me with a smile.

“Thank you, Teto. It’ll take me a while to wash my hair, so you can get back in the bath.”

“Okaaay!”

I smiled at Teto as she relaxed in the bathwater. After lathering up my long black hair that Teto loved so much, I rinsed it with water, wrapped it up in a towel, and then returned to the tub.

It was then that I noticed Teto’s breasts floating in the water. That made me

look down at my own chest, which was just as humble as you'd expect from a twelve-year-old.

"Hm? What's wrong, Lady Witch?"

"Nothing."

Though I wasn't jealous of Teto's big boobs, I couldn't help but press my hands against my own, imagining how much they might grow someday.

Dangerous Poisonous Mushrooms

After becoming adventurers and beginning our journey, Teto and I spent a lot of time in the wild gathering plants and herbs.

"Lady Wiiiitch, I picked a lot today!"

"Thank you, Teto... Wait a second, did you just pick whatever you saw indiscriminately?"

I'd asked Teto to collect some edible plants for us to eat today, and she returned with a variety of mushrooms. I checked each one with my appraising monocle.

"This is edible. This is poisonous. This one is poisonous too."

Teto had picked every mushroom she spotted, regardless of how safe it was to eat. I went through the entire pile and it turned out more than half of the mushrooms were inedible, so we had a lot less for dinner than I'd expected.

"I guess we can have buttered mushroom sauté and mushroom soup?" Once I gathered together the edible mushrooms, I focused on cleaning and preparing them for dinner. It wasn't until a while later that I noticed the pile of poisonous mushrooms had disappeared. "Hmm? Teto, what did you do with all the bad ones?"

"Teto cleaned them up!"

"Oh, thanks for throwing them out for me."

Normally, Teto would always give me big smiles, just begging to be praised. But tonight she seemed a bit distant.

And so the sky turned dark, and just as I was about to leave the night watch to Teto and get some sleep...

“What in the world is that smell?” Something smelled good, so I poked my head out of the tent, only to find Teto chowing down on a roasted skewer of mushrooms.

“Teto. What are you eating?”

“Ahh, Lady Witch! These mushrooms are sooo yummy!” Teto wobbled unsteadily, almost as if she were drunk. She’d apparently been grilling and eating the poisonous mushrooms I’d weeded out of our dinner ingredients. She’d said she *cleaned them up*, but in reality she must have hidden them away for herself.

“You really shouldn’t be eating poisonous mushrooms.”

“But they’re so goooooood!”

Teto was immune to physically damaging poisons, but not to ones that messed with mana and had mental effects.

“Oh, great. You ate a mana-poisonous one, didn’t you? Take a little rest.”

“Oohhh, but I wanna eat...just a little...more...”

She leaned up against me and fell asleep. Her body had the ability to purify itself, so the poison would be cleansed by morning. Nothing to worry about.

“You’re such a troublesome girl, Teto,” I murmured as I lovingly stroked her hair. The feeling that I had a daughter who was even bigger than me was odd, but not in a bad way.

And so I took the overnight shift in front of the fire, letting Teto sleep on my lap.



Sign up for our mailing list at J-Novel Club to hear about new releases!

[Newsletter](#)

And you can read the latest chapters of series like this by becoming a J-Novel Club Member:

[J-Novel Club Membership](#)

Copyright

Making Magic: The Sweet Life of a Witch Who Knows an Infinite MP Loophole
Volume 1

by Aloha Zachou

Translated by Emily Hemphill Edited by Nicholas Rose

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Copyright © 2019 Aloha Zachou Illustrations © 2019 Tetubuta Cover illustration by Tetubuta All rights reserved.

Original Japanese edition published in 2019 by MICRO MAGAZINE, INC.

This English edition is published by arrangement with MICRO MAGAZINE, INC.

English translation © 2022 J-Novel Club LLC

All rights reserved. In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the scanning, uploading, and electronic sharing of any part of this book without the permission of the publisher is unlawful piracy and theft of the author's intellectual property.

J-Novel Club LLC

j-novel.club

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

Ebook edition 1.0: November 2022

Premium E-Book