

NOVEL

8

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LONER LIFE ◆ IN ANOTHER WORLD ◆

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AFTERWORD

Newsletter





Loner Life in Another World (Light Novel) Vol. 8

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Illustrations by Saku Enomaru

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LONER LIFE

◆ IN ANOTHER WORLD ◆

NOVEL



LAZY FRONTIER
HOLIDAY

WRITTEN BY



Shoji Goji

ILLUSTRATED BY



Saku Enomaru



*Seven Seas
Entertainment*

CHARACTERS



VICE REP A

One of Haruka's classmates. A cool beauty prone to glaring at the guys when they do something stupid.



VICE REP C

One of Haruka's classmates. A lively ankle-biter who longs to grow up into an adult. She's like a class mascot.



QUEEN BEE

One of Haruka's classmates. Leader of a group of five fashion-obsessed girls. A former model.



BOOK CLUB PRESIDENT

One of Haruka's classmates. A level-headed strategist who was involved with literary activities back in school. Has known Haruka since elementary.



NUDIST GIRL

One of Haruka's classmates. A former candidate for Japan's Olympic swim team. Close with Fish Girl, her former swim team member.



FISH GIRL

One of Haruka's classmates. After getting chased around by guys in the fantasy world, deeply distrusts men...besides Haruka.



ERAILIA

An elf. Vizumegzero's sister. She recovered from a terrible illness with one of the frontier's mushrooms.



SHALLICERESS

The princess of the Kingdom of Diorelle. Traumatized by experiencing the half-naked heave-ho of the pseudo-dungeon. Also known as the Royal Girl and Shillyshally.



CERES

Princess Shalliceress's maid. Has served as the princess's guard and body double from a young age.



STALKER GIRL

The daughter of the chief of the Shino clan, a family specializing in reconnaissance. A top-class spy with Perfect Invisibility.



MEROPAPA

The Duke of Omui. An invincible warrior hero known as the Frontier King and War God, among other titles.



MERIELLE

The daughter of the Duke of Omui. Unable to remember her name, Haruka calls her Merimeri, and now so does everyone else.



ANGELICA

The former emperor of the Ultimate Dungeon. Haruka used "Servitude" on her. Also known as Miss Armor Rep.



HARUKA

A high school student summoned to another world. The only member of his class not to receive a cheat skill from God.



ANGELICA

A former dungeon emperor. Haruka freed her from the Theocracy, which used her as a weapon of mass destruction. Also known as Dancer Girl.



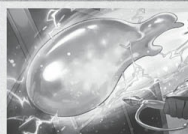
CLASS REP

The student council president of Haruka's class. Talented leader. Has known Haruka since elementary school.



VICE REP B

One of Haruka's classmates. An absentminded girl who was voted most popular student in the class. An Archsage.



SLIME EMPEROR

A former dungeon boss. Absorbs enemy skills with Predation. Haruka used "Servitude" on it.

STORY

Haruka took on the Frontier Reclamation Army alone as they bore down on Omui. Faced with an army of forty thousand, Haruka reopened the pseudo-dungeon souvenir shop for business. He pretended to assist the army with its invasion by providing them with lackluster goods and leading them through the challenging dungeon.

The ruse was used to spy on the enemy and acquire vital information about the opponent's plans. The Church would unleash "divine punishment" by sending monsters across the land in an artificial dungeon deluge to destroy the frontier.

Angelica and Haruka's classmates answered his request and assisted in the defense of Omui. While the others held the line against this "divine punishment," Haruka battled an even graver threat: an immortal mummy controlled by the Theocracy's priests, the dungeon emperor Nefertiri. After a life-or-death struggle, Haruka released her from the Church's clutches, enlisted her aid, and defeated the dungeon deluges. Peace has returned to the frontier at last...

PROLOGUE



LUSTROUS HAIR FELL over exposed amber shoulders as she gazed at the townscape with dark, shimmering eyes.

“There... No, here... Over there?”

“Which one?!”

Her delicate fingers wandered through the air. She looked like an adult with her long legs, delicate features, and perfectly proportional, voluptuous figure... but her glistening tongue stuck straight out of her mouth as she drooled? *Just how old is she?!*

Munch munch!

“No conversation necessary!” I exclaimed.

She pointed at the stores she wanted to visit. Dancer Girl may as well have been in a foreign country, so maybe everything was exciting for her. We wandered around town, exploring the shops and their wares. Were those goods rare, or did she simply enjoy all the people and the lively atmosphere?

“I guess we may as well get her more daily necessities,” I said. “I can whip everything else up at my side job.”

“Thank...you,” Dancer Girl said.

We slid through the crowds, snacking at the food stalls and peering into countless shops. She was having the time of her life as we shopped and shopped. I guess I did owe her *something*, but this total sum of this repayment was getting out of control!

DAY 79

NIGHT

A flight attendant who can't fly is just a part of the cabin crew.

WHITE LOSER INN

ADD UP THE BROKE GIRLS, the orphans, plus Poster Girl and Stalker Girl, and we had quite the crew assembled. The nerds were also more or less here, but they had been released now that the girls were back at the inn. The girls were relaxed, as in the bare skin exposure was spreading exponentially. All the skin knocked the nerds—NPCs who didn't need to read the room because they were as inert as the walls—into their rightful place. Even Elf Girl played with the orphans in booty jorts. That alone was more than capable of fulfilling the nerds' hopes and dreams, sending them to straight heaven. Or maybe they were transforming into hungry ghosts instead. *Should I throw salt at them?*

"Hey, big bro, we're hungry!"

That made sense, given that the girls had spent the whole day running around. The only problem was that half the people shouting this were older teenage girls. When I'd first prepared my orphan-protecting, frontier-style, hyper-defensive, storage-equipped kindergarten backpacks, all the girls had instantly submitted orders for some reason. *What in the world are they up to? Wearing backpacks for kindergarteners?*

"Let's have pizza tonight!"

"Yeah! And lasagna too!"

"Which leaves just enough room for gratin!"

I tried something new for dinner. I didn't have enough ingredients and exhausted my entire stock in one go, but I could finally use the ultimate treasure I'd found in the capital!

"It's pizza, but there's a cheese shortage, so just three slices per person."

We've got plain, margherita, and marinara with cheese and ketchup. There's dried meat and dried mushrooms for toppings, and a mega-mushroom boscaiola, too. But only three slices each, got it?"

"P-p-p-p-pizza! It's heaven on earth!"

It looked like the orphans thought it was tasty, too. Slimey and Dancer Girl danced with glee. Miss Armor Rep gobbled up slices—*come on, the melting cheese stretching out of her open mouth is unnecessarily sexy!* Now I needed to make more!

After that, it was side-job time—aka time for supplemental backpack production. These weren't just extra stock. They also had additional properties baked into the design so that the kids, with their larger heads and weaker necks, wouldn't bonk their noggins when they fell over. They also made perfect shields for running away. Ideally, I would circulate them to all the children in the domain. I didn't think the same design worked for high school girls, though. So why was it kinda hot on them?

"Don't make those backpacks battle-ready equipment!" the girls shouted. "The kids need *backpacks*."

Huh? The frontier was dangerous! You never knew when an attack would happen, as in the monsters would *get* attacked. I mean, those monsters could run into the wives who lived out here on the frontier, after all! Like during the poor deluge a few days back. Those monsters got *wrecked* by the wives.

"They're super functional! They won't get in the way during battle, and they provide great defense. I'm more concerned about the fact that high school girls are trying to wear backpacks meant for kindergarteners... Hey, nerds, why do you want them too?! And there are no lightsabers in this world. I can't make you lightsaber support equipment, damn it!"

"But think of the memes!"

"Get nerfed and die of malnourishment, nerds! I see that you've thrown in some jetpack requests, too! I'd sooner take the nozzle and jet your eyes black!"

"Uh, this isn't what I was expecting!"

That's 'cause your expectations were warped to begin with!

Meanwhile, the meatheads still had meat for brains. It was all, “I want a sick print logo on mine,” and “Gimme a wolf logo!” and “I’ll have a cockatrice.” Brains like rotting chicken! Sheesh!

“You think I’m making you name-brand backpacks or something?! How do you get from a leopard to a friggin’ wolf anyway? Those are totally different kinds of animals! No logos! Did you have a damn cockatrice back on Earth? That’s nothing like a chicken! They’re mythical dragon-roosters, you know! They *don’t exist!* They’ve got *snake tails!* How do you remember the word ‘cockatrice’ and not the word ‘chicken?’ *How?!*”

I couldn’t stand it. Don’t tell my classmates I was making the orphans those blue smocks and yellow bucket hats designed for elementary-schoolers. Teenage girls ending up in those would be criminal. *This is a dangerous situation!*

“I want pink!”

“How could you not go red? That’s the go-to!”

“I’d like white, please.”

“Definitely yellow with a red heart pattern!”

“Orange! Orange!”

“I want mine sparkly!”

“How about something totally unexpected?”

“Polka dots for me!”

“Ooh, I totes want a Japanese-style pattern.”

“I’d like beige, please! Authentic leather!”

“Make argyle, too!”

“I want a translucent lavender butterfly pattern.”

“Black with stars!”

“I want one that’s Scandinavian style!”

Jiggle jiggle!

What was up with these backpack preferences? Were they trending in this fantasy world or something?

“Choose whichever ones you want, okay?” the girls told the orphans.

“Okaaay!”

Starting tomorrow, the general store lady and the armory dude were going to help with the kids during the day. The general store lady was tough as nails, and once the kids got used to the town, we planned to send them to the orphanage. Everyone was getting excited about their big frontier debut.

I agreed that it was better to send them to school. Kids shouldn't spend all day working; the orphans deserved to play. The frontier orphanage was pretty fancy and had plenty of food. With Mrs. Murimuri in charge, that was for certain. Plus, with us around, the logic of this world didn't hold up to begin with. There was a chance the orphanage would become a target. All those arguments made sense...except for what Vice Rep C was doing.

“She's gonna try to blend in with them!”

Tomorrow, I had to go level up Dancer Girl. The other girls were going to help Elf Girl level up, too. Artificial dungeon deluges remained a possibility, so I wanted to defeat every dungeon I could. I didn't think that would be possible without Dancer Girl. Regardless, I needed to crush as many of them as possible in order to improve my equipment.

On the other hand, taking out the Theocracy would require a long journey. While we were off fighting battles and beating dungeons, the orphans would have to wait at home, worried about us. So we had to make them a home here on the frontier. Who knew how long we would be able to stay with them? I mean, I hadn't gotten the chance to go back to my cave at all. *I need to go mow my lawn!*

“Come on, it's bath time!”

“Okaaaaay!”

The boys' side of the bath was tiny, so Poster Girl's parents took them over to the main bath along with the girls.

“How long has it been since I’ve gotten to use my wood bath here? I guess I also installed one at Murimuri Castle, but still...”

Jiggle jiggle.

The general store lady submitted a dense stack of orders like always, but these side jobs wouldn’t take too long with the high-speed precision and control of Wisdom. Given that we planned to start a new dungeon tomorrow, I had to get my equipment in shape. For now, I’d relax, chillax, and unwind... *Oh baby, am I gonna unwind!*

The girls’ meeting was gonna take a while. Why did I feel like they’d gotten longer since Dancer Girl started joining? And why were the topics always “maidens’ secrets?”

“So long as we can maintain peace. That’s what matters, right? If we can whip the frontier into shape, the rest of the continent will be easy. I can’t believe they went and started a *war*, am I right?”

Wiggle wiggle.

We had been in the safest possible position. We should’ve been set. Yet, war had broken out anyway. Not that it’d felt like an actual war, but you know what I mean. It hadn’t been impossible after all. Book Club President had called the war stupid. No matter what you did, you couldn’t stop stupid.

The Merchant Kingdom was ultimately sundered, with their fortunes plundered and fleet destroyed. They couldn’t have achieved anything with that kind of idiocy. The Theocracy lost their trump card, Dancer Girl, as well and no longer had any means to control her. I had picked up the Obedience Necklace she wore, after all, so it was mine now. *Why do all the unethical items keep flocking to me?*

The Theocracy had most likely used Dancer Girl’s powers to start the artificial dungeon deluges. It was magic related to her Underworld skill. Without Dancer Girl, they shouldn’t be able to start any more deluges. They were cut off from spellstones, too, and no longer held a monopoly over spellstone crafting on top of that. What could they even do anymore? Did they have some secret plan?

“Hmmm.”

Boink boink?

Maybe they were scheming to try to kidnap Dancer Girl.

“Dancer Girl is already freed from their control, so they’re going to encounter more than a few problems trying to recapture her...”

Jiggle jiggle.

Still, the fools might attempt it. The frontier had spellstones, and I had sorcery. The Obedience Necklace was also right here. If they wanted to try to take everything back, they’d have to come here. Even so, how could the orphanage, with all its defenders, be any safer?

“Hmmmm...”

Boink boink?

If we assumed they did have another hidden weapon as powerful as Dancer Girl, then no victor would emerge so long as they were equally matched. I also had Miss Armor Rep and Slimey, though, so we’d bonk ’em, and it’d be over with. They’d have no chance if they sent a normal army, not with the frontier army and my classmates on our side. There was no weak link they could attack. Even if they *were* fools, would they really try something? Could they delude themselves that badly?

“Better to be safe than sorry.” I sighed. “We could be living it up all happy and in peace and quiet right now.”

Pat pat.

I went back to my room and started up my high-speed, coordinated, remote-controlled, tentacle-powered side-job operation. The jobs whipped by in the blink of an eye as new products appeared out of thin air to match the order sheets. *That’s a lot of mushroom bento!* I had gotten a lot of orders for specialties that couldn’t be mass-produced. They’d been missing those while I was away. Near the end, my two girls in flight attendant miniskirts came into the room only to get snatched up by my countless tentacles.

“Wh-wh-what, are you, doing?!”

“You guys were trying to pull a surprise attack! I can tell!”

Then we all drowned in a tentacle sea of Lascivious and Sex God and Sensitivity.

“You attacked at the wrong time,” I said. “Maybe if you guys had on your sailor miniskirts you wouldn’t have drowned so easily!”

They seemed to be enjoying themselves, getting flung around in the air by the tentacles so...everything was fine? It was fine with me. *Now, how about I break through some of these layers and join ‘em?*

DAY 80

MORNING

I didn't know if chowing down on a hot dog first thing in the morning was the issue, but they seemed to have totally vanished from the room.

WHITE LOSER INN

THEIR SURPRISE ATTACK encountered an unavoidable accident. They'd charged into a bustling industrial manufacturing zone, resulting in a completely coincidental tentacle ravaging. And now they were mad at me? Their lecture had revved up to full speed, which looked fun, I guess? What lovely smiles they had!

"I, almost died!"

"I'm immortal! I thought, was gonna die!"

You're mad? After all that fun they'd had, they were actually protesting? It looked like they were having the time of their lives to me, but for some reason, I just got a sandstorm of glares flung at me first thing in the morning.

"Losing my mind, mind stimulation, most dangerous region penetration!"

Now her lecture was a straight-up rap. Both of them were wrapped in sheets, radiating bewitching listlessness as they lectured me. *Too sexy!*

"Hey, you're deathless! You ain't dying any time soon. And you've gotten good at talking, Dancer Girl, but why do you always split up your sentences into three parts? Are you a haiku poet or something? I'll get you a sexy kimono. Yeah, I'll make you one?"

When I first met them, their hopeless eyes told me they wanted to die. The first thing Dancer Girl said to me was, "Kill me." Compared to dying, lively anger every morning was *way* better. We had all been on the verge of death last night. *La petite mort*, you know?

“Morning!”

Jiggle jiggle!

Time for our breakfast meeting. It looked like there weren't enough hot dogs for everyone, so I made more. The problem was that I didn't have any chili or mustard, just ketchup.

Munch munch?

Munch munch.

J-jiggggggle!

“This ain't no meeting! And what kinda jiggle was that, Slimey?!” I shouted.

We started to sort out our plan as we munched. *What were we gonna do again?*

“We're just gonna penetrate those dungeon entrances, thrusting as deep and far as we can, right to the very bottom,” I continued. “Then we'll invade and conquer the deepest, darkest parts of the dungeons until we're spent. Got it?”

“Why can't you explain like a normal person?!”

What's with the blushing? I suppose I shouldn't complain about getting a volley of glares from blushing beauties in the morning, but I didn't need false accusations to start off my day. I was just trying to explain the plan!

The last dungeon we'd conquered had ninety-four floors. With the appearance of Mistilteinn, I'd run out of MP and had to leave. Three weeks had passed since then. The frontier would've been screwed if the Church had started an artificial deluge from that one.

“I can't help but remember when I was thirteen. I was just all in my head, swinging around legendary blades and striking poses... Good times! And then Mistilteinn actually showed up! I couldn't believe it!”

Jiggle jiggle.

Because of the Mistilteinn incident, I'd run out of MP, and the expedition had ended early. Monsters had definitely respawned with the amount of time that had passed, making it a perfect place for Dancer Girl to level up. The spellstones

and drop items there were also good. Above all else, we had to destroy a dungeon of that size for the safety of the frontier.

Fortunately for us, the dungeons targeted for the deluges all had around thirty floors. Anything with fifty or so floors was beyond the capabilities of both the frontier army and the imperial guard, possibly even beyond the soldiers of Murimuri Castle. A deluge from a dungeon with around one hundred floors would be too much for my classmates to handle. They could clear a dungeon like that one floor at a time, but having to face all the monsters, dungeon floor bosses, and the dungeon king at once was just way too much to handle.

My classmates seemed happy with the current situation. I couldn't overthink things. Overthinking this world, how I got transported here, and the old god dude wouldn't get me anywhere. With that old god dude's fiery attitude, I may as well have burned him. Oh well. We had to deal with the cards we'd been dealt. We were in a strange land where I hardly knew anyone's name, and that was just how it was. No, seriously. Think about it! I didn't know what country we were in or continent we were on. That wasn't *my* fault! It was because I was stranded in a hostile land!

Still, every problem seemed to lead back to one place: the frontier.

"If we can make the frontier safe, that'll set the foundation," I said. "If war breaks out despite the frontier being peaceful, then it's worse than pointless. It's ridiculous. Maybe this world is just fated to go down in the flames of war. If so, we can just ignore those pointless guys who are trying to start an invasion, ya feel?"

"So... How do you think he *actually* feels about this?"

"Let's just hope we get through this without any friction."

I only took out the Theocracy and the Merchant Kingdom because they were getting up in our business. The Kingdom of Diorelle and the Beast Kingdom served as breakwaters for the frontier, so I'd lend them a hand. Our affairs were ultimately separate, though.

"Did someone say friction? I can cause more of that with my tentacles, although not the kind between countries. I'm not angry, ya know? Just disappointed enough to destroy 'em all! So long as they leave us alone, they

won't get burned to the ground! I won't destroy every last trace of evidence and erase them from the annals of history, ya feel?"

"You're going to burn their nations to the ground even though you're not angry?!"

"There's no hope for them! None!"

I was happy so long as those countries left us alone and quietly went extinct. It was a pain to try to start anything on our end. The risk far outweighed the rewards. Destroying the old dude fetishists wouldn't solve any problems, but I had to admit that it would feel pretty good.

"We're prioritizing dungeons?"

"That makes sense," Book Club President said. "If we get stronger, we can defend ourselves and diminish the risks posed by the dungeons."

"Got it."

When it came to dungeons, we didn't have to worry about risks and rewards. A dungeon straight up offered cash prizes. *And I need the cash.* Let me put it this way. If the Theocracy and the Merchant Kingdom started being nice to us, I'd happily sell them mushrooms and spellstones at outrageous rip-off prices. I'd make a profit and let them wipe themselves out. Heck, I didn't even need to be involved. They could rip each other off and wipe one another out.

"He's putting a bit too much focus on the 'wiping out' part, don't you think?"

"He's just saying 'I hate the church' in every nonsensical way possible," said Book Club President.

"I'm with him there."

However, if the Theocracy couldn't target this kingdom anymore, chances were they would turn to the Beast Kingdom instead. The Beast Kingdom's territory was a buffer zone between this kingdom, the Merchant Kingdom, and the Theocracy. Supposedly, the Beast Kingdom was a federation of lords, too. The enemy couldn't do much about them now, but losing the Beast Kingdom would only hurt us. Plus, I'd have to worry about the beast-ear-obsessed nerds running off and pulling something sheisty.

“They sent us letters of gratitude, didn’t they?”

“Look,” I warned, “letters from hot chicks are almost always a trap.”

“Haruka-kun’s perspective can’t be trusted!”

“You don’t need to tell *us* that!” the nerds shouted.

If something happened to the Beast Kingdom, the nerds would rush to their aid. I couldn’t really blame them, to be honest. I’d been waiting for a honey trap myself this whole time. *Tell me about these hot beast-ear chicks in a little more deta—* Wow. Was that a gale of glares just now? It was pouring glares over here! *What lovely glares you have?* Yup, the girls were pissed.

“Oh, we’ll take this dungeon!”

“Yeah, it’s perfect!”

“Hmm, which one will make us more money?”

“I wish they posted a sign with the cash total you’d get after clearing the dungeon.”

We settled our plans: defeat the dungeons, train, and get stronger. Powering up the girls was obviously top priority. The politics of this fantasy world were none of their business. They didn’t owe any debts or favors. They just needed to focus on preserving their own lives.

“Maybe we can pay back our clothes debt with drop items we find.”

“I don’t want to fight one of those iron woodpeckers though. Getting pecked by that would hurt like crazy!”

A huge rock-paper-scissors competition broke out to decide who was going to which dungeon, but why did they have to use a ghost leg lottery to decide the order? This was taking forever!

“All right, let’s do this.”

“Battle time!”

I would’ve rather done some light training first, but the actual fighting was always way less brutal than our training routine. It made sense, given that training involved taking out a dungeon emperor. Actual dungeons were so

much safer! It was all backward!

DAY 80

MIDDAY

Dungeons have 100 floors at most, so I won't be able to get in my poses on the 101st floor.

OUTSIDE – DUNGEON

WE WENT INTO THE DUNGEON. *It's been a minute!*

"I'm well-prepared after prepping all morning and thrusting against thrilling, blushing, bubbly, bouncing peaches in paradisiacal— Huh? We're already done? Nice work."

Nobody listened to me, as usual. Dancer Girl took out the entire floor of level 1 Ghouls with her chains in a single thrash.

"Pretty big difference, given that you're both level 1," I commented. I was worried about the monsters complaining about looks-based discrimination. They were rotting corpses, after all, and she was a sexy dancer. "I'm more than happy to discriminate! You've got a long way to go before I favor you ghouls over a bountiful beauty!"

If these ghouls had complaints, the least they could do was level up into beautiful monster girls first. Were there any ghouls around here? Was looking for some approaching cringe territory?

When we got to the second floor, I finally remembered those adorable little hopping level 2 Spike Rabbits... Who were getting devoured whole before my very eyes? A certain other hopping, jiggly ball had just consumed their Jump skill.

"Leveling up Dancer Girl is top priority, so leave some for her, Slimey. And I kinda want to fight too?"

Jiggle jiggle.

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

The typical responses—they weren't even listening to me! I supposed Miss Armor Rep was having a fun time, though, so I let it be.

The other two lent Dancer Girl a hand, giving her plenty of monsters to fight, so why did the monsters blow up every time I struck a pose? I was trying to go in for the kill, here! I kept striking poses without landing a single blow all the way to the 27th floor!

"I haven't even landed a hit, let alone killed anything. Twenty-six straight floors of posing, you know?"

Wiggle wiggle.

On this floor, we ran into four branching paths. A place to split up! *Perfect! At last, my time to shine!*

"No, Slimey, don't *you* split up! You'll kill all the monsters, and I'll finish this dungeon as a pathetic, posing teenage boy!"

I begged Slimey for mercy, but the monsters were already on their way to their next life.

"Level 27 monsters are just right for light training, I bet."

I went around the corner to get changed. No need for a teenage-boy wardrobe malfunction, after all.

"I like taking off *other* people's clothes, but not my own, ya know? I'm just gonna close this door."

Jiggle jiggle.

I put on a set of leather light armor, leather gloves, leather boots, and equipped a long wooden stick with an iron tip. None of the items were endowed with any skills. They were just ordinary equipment for fighting monsters around level 20 to level 29. I may have lost all of my equipment's special abilities, but I looked way, way more normal!

"Let's go!"

I activated Magic Entanglement and dashed into a throng of level 27 Black

Apes. Wisdom's High-Speed Thinking allowed time to slow to my will, making my movements fluid. I cut down two apes in one slash and turned around to slice up a third. I swooped into the open space between the remaining two, cleanly cleaving one ape, then the next, in a powerful left-to-right slash. *This works.*

Black apes were gorillas with sharp claws. I knew they were apes, not monkeys, from their lack of tails. That made them smarter than the meatheads, considering that normal monkeys were smarter than them to begin with. Even fish were smarter than those idiots. Their transcendental idiocy had been conclusively confirmed.

"The fact that they're fighting with claws and not tools means they're pretty stupid... Maybe they could hold weapons if they trimmed their nails? I can sell them nail clippers, I guess?"

I had a new set in stock right now, too! *They're flying off the shelves, so get 'em while they last!*

"Come get me, smarty-pants!"

Three were left. Unfortunately, apes that'd lost their natural instincts couldn't even achieve the level of meathead.

I took a step forward and razed these strangely familiar beasts with a single blow of Life or Death. The resulting damage to my own body healed instantaneously. I couldn't manage consecutive attacks, but it didn't do lasting damage, either.

"My old equipment's skills were over the top, weren't they?"

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Still, I could only face enemies up to around level 50 like this. I could use more of my skills than expected without my equipment, but my body was still weak, and my movements slow and dull.

"My body feels heavy. Did I gain weight or something? Just how many calories did I burn at that ball, anyhow? I may be a teenage boy with a high metabolism,

but I spend my days and nights burning whole cosmoses of calories without needing one-more-sets. The extreme days and dizzying nights of burning calories as I try my very hardest throughout all of the godly solicitations and gung-ho positions... I mean, how could I have gained weight? Every last ounce of everything gets burned off at night!”

Since Magic Entanglement also applied to equipment skills and effects, the results surpassed my stats. That was what caused my self-annihilation. Taking off my equipment allowed me to control Magic Entanglement, but I was weak without it. I didn’t have any room for error, not even against level 27 foes. Taking a single blow could potentially end my life.

“Looks like my best bet is to adjust my equipment.” I quickly changed again. Fortunately, the apes didn’t interrupt. “Well, even if they had, I’d kill them, right? Even the females! No teenage boy exposure today!”

I tested out my abilities as we continued. Once completed, I let the other three handle the monsters as we headed deeper into the dungeon.

“I knew it was that staff all along,” I sighed. I figured out that the biggest cause of my troubles was the Universe Staff. At present, this single staff had the “Mistletoe Sprig: A wooden stick. Staff power-up. Magic skill absorption. ?, ?, ?,” the “Entwined Branches: Seven blades. ?, ?, ?...,” plus three staffs: the “Elder Ent Staff: Increases magic power and magic control. MP +70%. Attribute-boost (large),” the “Void Staff: Intelligence +30%. Super effective for wielders of Void magic,” and the “Severing Staff: Total 50% boost to all stats. Magic Skill Control. Severing. Seal. MP boost (ultra).” Finally, it had two swords, “Dimension Blade: Attack power and range controlled with magic. Min Lv: 100. Dimensional Slash” and “The Heavenly Sword of Gathering Clouds (The Grass-Cutting Sword): A sword of gods. Tears apart and destroys evil spirits. Power, Speed, Dexterity, Luck +30%. ?, ?, ?.” Fighting with all of those getting Entangled was dangerous, but since I had worked on my Intelligence and control-based skills, I could wield them—with great difficulty.

“To think I can put sixteen total weapons into here! But if I did, I’d die the second I tried to use it!”

Jiggle jiggle.

In that case, I might be better off with simple equipment, like these “Tough Boots: Vitality +10%.” For the rest, I had to either raise my Vitality and Intelligence or somehow use my control skills to close the gap. It was a fine line to walk. Leveling up my skills beyond the rest of my stats made those skills impossible to control. Everything was balanced through trickery right now. If I got more powerful without gaining levels, I’d lose control altogether. I had basically reached my limit. Well, I’d really been above my limit from the very beginning. I’d just gotten by mixing skills with tricks. Even that had its limits, one of which was the giant spellstone battery I was using to recycle MP. The battle at Murimuri Castle proved the limits of that technique, though. If I ran out of MP, self-destruction began in full force.

Since the Servitude skill caused an experience-sharing effect, I received EXP from my slaves. Despite that experience, I still couldn’t level up. I could hardly imagine getting to level 25, much less level 30.

“I’ve gotta get to level 24 first. It’s not going any faster. I’m in quite the pickle, huh.”

I decided to try participating in the fight with support magic. I grabbed the monsters with Holding magic to disrupt their movements, supporting with a volley of Fire Bullets from the rear. The monsters could resist magic from a level 23 sorcerer, though, and my attacks were ineffective. I could try head-on attacks to nullify their resistances and all sorts of maneuvers, but long-range attacks weakened the farther they were from their targets. My best bet was to attack from close range.

“My stats and skills are plain incomprehensible.” I sighed. “I’m a high-speed stealth mage NEET specialized in close-range combat. How the hell am I supposed to fight? Plus, I’m a NEET! That’s the big problem here!”

Activating Magic Entanglement only hemorrhaged my own HP. I was going around in circles.

“Why does ‘going in circles’ remind me of going around Japan’s ancient pilgrimage trails? At least I’d be getting somewhere on those.”

Jiggle jiggle.

Yeah, my spiraling was hurtling me into a dizzying, sensual, super-speed

teenage triumph of super-try-hard reciprocation, but I needed to get my levels up. I had no problem getting anything else up. Yeah, Sex God was level 3. Revival was level 8... Why was that the only part of me that continued to grow?

DAY 80

AFTERNOON

*I can't escape my body weakening. Liquefying isn't great either,
but I can't pass up womanizing!*

DUNGEON

FLOORS 40+

CONTROL AND ADAPTABILITY—if I'd had those two things in the first place, my life would be easy, but I didn't, so my excess power drained my own HP. Even tricking my stats into controlling my skills had its limit. It would all hinge on whether I could control them just based on feel in the end. Even though Wisdom improved my control by leaps and bounds, it also powered up Magic Entanglement to the point that my body couldn't bear the pressure. Revival was the only thing keeping me alive.

“If I keep surpassing Revival's limit without breaks, maybe I'll acquire a 'Limit Break' skill. That will give a new strength to my late-night struggles! Time to tackle that struggle tonight and break some new limits!!!”

I planned on doing my best. In cases like this, you'd normally expect recovery skills like “High-Speed Recovery” or “Instant Recovery” to level up, but I got Revival instead?

“Maybe acquiring High-Speed Revival or Instantaneous Revival would patch over my Vitality and HP issues. Why do I get the feeling I would no longer be human at that point?”

Jiggle jiggle.

“Anything that makes me stronger is fine by me, but no matter how you look at it, Revival is a monster's skill!”

Wiggle wiggle.

Since I wanted to protect my reputation, I'd have preferred improving my combat abilities in a more human kinda way. I wasn't a fan of losing my arm and it growing back so quickly, to be honest.

I clashed against the level 40 Giant Mantises on the 40th floor. I leaped forward, rolled on the ground, and went for their legs with the Universe Staff. But I was going so fast that the centrifugal force made me end up chopping their heads off instead. I was nothing but speed, so I could use my rotation and centrifugal force to fight. I'd modeled my technique off of Dancer Girl's waltz. Maybe it would become a skill once I mastered it.

"I'd love to add Weight magic to power up a high-speed-boosted centrifugal force attack."

Jiggle jiggle!

My current level of self-annihilation was brutal. If I could succeed just once, then that success should be replicable with Holding. I polished my Holding skills at my side job each and every day, including when cooking, so my Holding control was spectacular!

Dancer Girl's swordplay technique involved stringing together elaborate twirls. I couldn't do that yet, and attempting to imitate her was hurting—or rather, destroying—my entire damn body! Somehow, Dancer Girl could control more numerous and more complicated spins. She had much greater speed and ferocity. Predicting her movements was impossible.

"Dancer Girl's original dance is just too difficult to be imitated. I guess I just gotta blend together the motions as best I can."

Jiggle jiggle.

I turned my joints into centers of centrifugal force and launched into circular movements as smoothly and efficiently as possible. I had to master them. I had to improve my physical abilities and minimize excess power-ups from my skills. Then, it'd finally be possible to use those skills. That'd reduce the wear and tear on my body, limiting the amount of MP required by Revival. I had two good examples to study.

Jiggle jiggle!

“Well, technically three, but if I made you one of my examples, Slimey, I’d definitely lose my humanity.”

What kind of human could shapeshift and eat every kind of monster?

“Shoulder, then arm. Wrist is last.”

“Legs first. Twist your back, then shift from thigh, to stomach, to butt, to back.”

They mixed in some instructions for me. I nearly lost my arms in the frenzy. I had to focus on starting from my shoulders and leading out to my arms. Look, I love thighs and ass as much as the next guy, but I hadn’t really paid attention to my own before. *If I had, what would that make me?!*

I spun around one more mantis, slashing it to bits. I wondered if I’d get a B*yblade skill at this rate. *B*yblade magic. Now that’s wild!*

“No flailing,” said Miss Armor Rep. “Steady your blade, gliding.”

My strict teachers continued their guidance. *How about a lecture tonight from two mini-skirt professors?* How would that be different from the mini-skirt secretaries, though? I could give them stylish glasses in addition to the suit jackets, I supposed. If I couldn’t tell them apart from the sexy secretaries I had faced before, then I could always make them take roll call.

“Who’s going to be in charge of taking roll call while we’re here? Our school is really dropping the ball, don’t you think?”

Miss Armor Rep gave a model demonstration. She launched a casual single attack, but it was still chock-full of technique.

“The tip is last,” she explained. “Body, come along with the arms. Attack with body.”

I combined everything into a single movement, a single slash, but the action itself was a contradiction. My timing with using Magic Entanglement on Teleport was off. I needed to activate them simultaneously, on a single point in space and time. That gap in activation was creating problems, meaning I was better off focusing on improving my swordplay technique. The movement started at the back of the foot, shifted to the thigh, then to the lower back, to

the stomach, to the upper back. The legs and the upper body worked together to create the twist from the chest to the shoulders, with the arms coming last, leading the blade. I had blown the basics out of the water before, but I had to learn swordplay from scratch.

“Hiiiyaah?”

“No need to shout!”

Okay, so no battle cries. *I better take off the spiked shoulder pads, too, then.* Why wouldn’t anyone buy them off me?

It didn’t look like Professor Armor Rep’s attack was too far off from Life or Death, but the fundamentals were totally different. She wasn’t using a skill—it was pure technique. Life or Death used skills to speed up and launch a powerful blow. I couldn’t move like Dancer Girl, either, who used tightly controlled spins to move unpredictably.

The only person whose footsteps I could follow in was Fish Girl. Professor Fish, I should say. Her swordplay technique towered above the other girls’. It was precise, logical, and well-honed. She didn’t waste any motion. Each swipe of her blade followed through to a logical, deadly conclusion. Those were proper movements, a way of fighting that reduced the burden on your body.

I guess ignoring my body and going all-out on high-speed attacks had resulted in self-destructive tendencies. It was the inevitable result of using skills *on* my body in order to attack instead of simply attacking *with* my body. My Body Manipulation skill was level 9 at this point, though. I should’ve been able to master the fundamentals.

I gasped. I’d put in too much power. Unable to control the flow of the energy, my own sword swung me around without landing a blow.

Now we were fighting metal beetles on the 41st floor. They were giant, flying lumps of metal, making them tough to cut.

“We’d be better off swinging bats at these brats! They’re not quite spherical, either, so it’s impossible to aim!”

Swinging at them with triumphant grunts is not a great look for my sex appeal, though.

“It makes more sense to chase after a pitcher who chucks five or six of these balls at you at once and whack the shit out of them! Turn it into a beatdown!”

“Good, practice. Remember the motions.”

Jiggle jiggle!

“Jiggle jiggle?! That’s a secret technique for fluid beings like yourself. If I could do that, I definitely wouldn’t be human anymore!”

No way! Slimey just implied that if my body couldn’t keep up with them, then I should just transform to make it possible. I saw that Slimey wasn’t actually spinning. He was transforming his own body to create the rotation. I couldn’t do that with magic. A fluid-based human would stop being human altogether! Plus, it sounded unhealthy.

“Focus, body, movements.”

Wiggle wiggle!

Wisdom mastered the movements before they were second-nature to me, so I was starting to get a subconscious grasp of things. Jupiter Eye could keep a continuous eye on my two role models, so I had tons of information at the very least. Plus, they looked super sexy in their skin-tight armor... Yeah, I’d been staring at them this whole time.

With some adjustments from the Master Fencer skill, I started to get a handle on proper swordplay. Next was practical combat experience, sort of like the nightly practical teenage boy combat experience I endured. That was the real battlefield. These monsters were just practice.

“This last beetle’s fastball is totally unfair!”

“You still have, much to learn,” my role models called out.

Jiggle jiggle.

I expected a forkball, but it was a swing and a miss. At least the monsters charging us on the next floor—level 42 Skeleton Knights—were a lot harder to miss. They were perfect opponents for a swordfight, too, and their armor made for a solid reward.

I stepped forward, stilled my movements, then launched my slash in the

ensuing instant. The attack had speed and force, and it didn't put any pressure on my body. I still ended up stopping for a second, though, which could prove fatal.

"This'll just get me bonked, won't it? I ended up stopping for a split second, lost my momentum, and delayed the blow."

Boink boink.

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

If I were hit, I'd die. I had to constantly keep moving. I needed to string together a fluid stream of motions, like Dancer Girl. For now, I couldn't. It killed my momentum, and even though the ensuing attack was sound, the risks were too high. I'd get bonked!

"Why do the two of you look so happy about that fact?!"

Boink, nod, rattle!

I decided to borrow the guild's practice grounds on the way back. Time for a quick training sesh! I was rebuilding my entire technique, so training was vital. There were a lot of downsides to what I was doing—I would get weaker in the short run, no doubt. But the short run didn't matter; I just needed the power to fight, the power to whack and bonk. I could figure out the rest while doing the bonking. Bonking solved most of the problems in this universe according to my experience, so it wouldn't be too hard.

DAY 80

EVENING

The ultimate question is to go from the MK-II to the MK-III or the MK-Z.

ADVENTURERS' GUILD TRAINING GROUNDS

HARUKA-KUN AND HIS PARTY finished up their dungeon early after getting all the way to the 50th floor in one day. We spent the entire day working so hard just to get to the 30th floor in our own dungeon. When we got back to the Adventurers' Guild, a lively crowd had formed around the training ground. A silver blade danced through the air like a raging snowstorm. *Another bullying outbreak?*

"H-hang on. A beating in the name of training that doesn't teach anything is just a beating!" he cried.

Angelica-san swooped through the air as Nefertiri-san thrashed her chains. Haruka-kun jumped left and right, dodging both.

"I suppose they're still mad at him," said Vice Rep A.

"I don't think that's it," I said.

"Yeah, they're just criticizing his technique."

Nefertiri-san targeted his blind spots as he crossed blades with Angelica-san. They were pretty savage attacks for supposedly training. It looked like bullying to me. The two girls looked like they were having a real fun time on top of it. Even Slimey looked anxious to join the fun, but if Haruka-kun could dodge all three of them at once, then he wouldn't need to practice in the first place.

"Wh-why don't you ever wait a second when I ask you to?! This is murder! Fort Murdermurder—"

Ker-bonk!

“Gwaaagh!”

Haruka-kun’s movements looked more normal than usual. They were blurry and near-instantaneous, but the eye could follow them. They had a gait, a rhythm, all those aspects of normal human motion. He had eased up on his unpredictable god-speed style.

“Why would he...?”

“This just makes him weaker!”

An unexpected shift in speed and position meant I couldn’t follow his next combo attack. It was beyond human capability. Nonetheless, it was in the range of predictable; as fast and powerful as it was, you could still call it ordinary swordplay. They were elaborate but ordinary sword strikes. With Haruka-kun’s low speed stat, I could easily follow his movements.

“Yeah, he’s a lot weaker.”

“I think I could beat him like this.”

“Well, at least he’s fighting normally. If he improves his stats, then he’ll get stronger.”

“I dunno. At that speed, he might get hit,” mused Vice Rep B. “Haruka-kun, do you want to die?”

Proper movements. Logical, correct human motion. We could understand it now.

“Did he get injured or something?”

“He’s still way stronger than should be possible for someone at level 23, though.”

“B-but at this speed...I could...beat him!”

He was strong and fast, but a normal sort of strong and fast now. Once you hit level 100, all of your stats grew by leaps and bounds, so we had no trouble reading his attacks. Any of us could overwhelm him with our raw stats now. I myself could *definitely* win. Haruka-kun...could *lose* to us?

Haruka-kun stepped forward and leaned back, eliminating the distance

between him and his opponent. He closed in on them in the next instant, but we could see the process clearly. Then he swooped his legs back to where his body had been, a sort of snapping motion. That step forward created a pause, a logical consequence of the movement. That pause would be checkmate; sword swipes rained down at incredible speeds. The speed was incredible, yes, but the swordplay was ordinary. That advanced, masterful technique wasn't anything our stats couldn't handle.

"He would be quite easy to defeat," said Book Club President. "If you simply block his blows as they come, he'll be left in a vulnerable position."

Haruka-kun would fall in that instant. In that slight pause where he left himself open, we could cut him down.

Us...winning? Against Haruka-kun? He had always been too fast to ever understand. His movements used to be impossible to keep up with. None of us had any chance of matching his strength. *That* Haruka-kun had become *this* weak?

The girls were devastated.

"How...? How is this...?"

I supposed it made sense. He was only level 23. Adventurers were typically still training at that level; they hadn't even entered a dungeon yet. Fighters in their 20s normally tagged along with another party, learning from them while staying under their protection. As powerful as Haruka-kun's skills were, and despite his miraculous techniques, he was ultimately held back by his level 23 stats.

"To think he was fighting with these stats all along. He was never really strong after all..."

What Haruka-kun did have was inimitable technique and intelligence, enabling him to think through any scenario farther and deeper than the rest of us. Even with low stats, he'd managed to acquire the Master Fencer title. But he was still slow and weak. That was the importance of stats; he could beat someone around level 30 through level 49 like this, but starting around level 50, his speed stat would fall too far behind no matter how good his technique.

“This is why we decided to protect him! Yet...”

“I can’t believe I let him fight with such a frail body!”

“I thought he was seriously strong. How could I have guessed the stats were lying?”

“Even if it’s Haruka-kun, stats still matter...”

Even Kakizaki-kun and Oda-kun’s groups were losing their cool.

“He’s reached his body’s limits,” Oda-kun exclaimed. “His stats can’t keep up with his skills.”

“And yet... And yet everything he’s done for us so far!”

“He’s risked more than any of us. How could we have let him do that? We’re the worst!”

I resented myself. If the rest of us hadn’t been so powerless, then he wouldn’t have been so cornered. He wouldn’t have had to fight alone this whole time... This whole...

“That’s enough... I’ve had enough...”

“He’s protected us for so long! He shouldn’t have to fight anymore!”

“I’m going to become strong! He doesn’t need to...”

It was time to end this. *Haruka-kun, you don’t have to fight anymore.* He didn’t need to try so hard, risking his life and losing limbs to protect us time and time again...

“Let’s put an end to this,” I said, “until we can return the favor properly.”

I asked Angelica-san to switch with me. It was time for a mock battle with Haruka-kun, using wooden sticks, of course. *But I’m going all out to prove he doesn’t need to fight anymore.*

“All right, let’s do it!” said Haruka-kun. “One at a time? Are you sure? You dungeon emperors don’t need to line up! Haven’t you already beaten me up enough? Just when will you be satisfied? Your lack of wardrobe malfunctions is causing a teenage-boy-dream malfunction, ya know?”

I would face him first. The rest of the girls lined up after me. They all wanted

to express the same feeling—that he had done enough. We owed him so much. *Starting today, we'll protect you!*

“Haruka-kun, here I come.”

I'm not going to cry anymore, I thought. Not until it's all over. I was going all out, so I needed to finish him off before he could use Ground-Shrink and Super-Speed to get away. I needed to prove to him that I had gotten stronger while he had been protecting me. That it was... *Huh?*

“What?!” came a chorus of exclamations.

He's slow! Way too slow! Even with his technique and god-like reflexes, his body moved extremely slowly. Yet somehow, I still couldn't hit him.

“What's happening?!”

I kept missing. I was close, but I couldn't hit him. I came in ready to knock him out, but I couldn't even scratch him. I could see his movements as if they were in slow motion, but I missed regardless. He counterattacked slowly, too. It was a completely obvious, slow-moving attack. I could see what he was doing now, what he planned next. I could see right through him. The next thing I knew, I was on the ground even though I should've been dodging his attacks and striking at him.

“What?”

“Are you fooling around, Class Rep?!”

All the girls who sparred with him after me got demolished, too. Nobody could hit him, not even when attacking two or three at a time. In the end, we all went charging at him at once, and we still got bonked.

“What in the...?”

He should've been weak. His attacks were slow, lacked strength, and were easily seen coming. There was no flaw that should've undone us. Yet, we were incomprehensibly beaten. It didn't make sense. He was obviously weaker, but none of us could win. We saw his attacks and reacted at great speed only to get one-sidedly thrashed.

“What the what the whaaaat?”

“Good work, everybody. Good training? Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl are merciless, aren’t they! The top priority’s survival when training with them, but my beating’s more likely to go viral with rivals like that. I just redirected that bonking-in-the-name-of-training in your direction, you feel? Bonk!”

After all that resolve and giving our utmost to thank him, we still got beaten. Most of the girls were crying—deep down, we were relieved that we hadn’t won. We had to get stronger. Despite our losses, his weakness worried us.

“What the heck just happened?!” everyone shouted.

Some unexpected, unpredictable nonsense lay at the heart of this. Haruka-kun had been weak this entire time. He’d fought in the monster forest, weak as he was. That was why we’d kept trying to grow stronger all this time. At the moment, Kakizaki-kun, Oda-kun, and their friends were training as hard as possible. Once our tears stopped, we girls needed to get back to it. *So, just what was...? I mean, what in the...?*



“Seriously, what *was* that?!”

When we got back to the inn, Haruka-kun was making dinner. Barbecue! Genuine Japanese yakiniku! There was even tare sauce!

“I suppose he could be using calculation-related skills to figure out what we’re doing...”

“That shouldn’t work against all of us, though!”

Haruka-kun hand-rubbed the tare-sauce-soaked meat. Or maybe I should say tentacle-rubbed?

“He nullified my illusion skills, at least,” Book Club President said. “That was all martial arts and technique.”

Smoke curled upwards as Haruka-kun added oil to the frying pans and prepped the barbecue. He even used Holding to create proper ventilation.

“Did he lead us here with the smell of barbecue?”

“Yeah, I was wondering why I was stumbling in this direction!”

He didn’t forget the mushrooms or vegetables, either. They were chopped into proper, regular chunks, too.

“Ailment attacks didn’t work.”

“Yeah, none of our magic attacks or skills appeared to affect him.”

“I was so close to hitting him, but he vanished every time!”

Aaaaaagh, juicy! It looks so juuuuicyyy! Meat, meat, meat, meeeeeeat!

“Class Rep!”

They got mad at me. Everyone was on the verge of a breakdown. The rest of them were trying to avoid looking, but my eyes were glued to that meat the whole time. I was on the verge of tears. *I mean, that grated apple. The garlic!* I remembered talking about my own secret family recipe for tare sauce with Haruka-kun what felt like a lifetime ago. He’d remembered it, and now, he’d made it for me. It was just one more thing I’d thought I’d lost only to have it returned by Haruka-kun.

“It smells so good!”

“It *sounds* so good!”

The kids drooled as they watched the meat sizzle. Kakizaki-kun’s group lined up and waited with their buckets, reeled in by the smell. No one even questioned all this, much less asked aloud. Even at the worst of times, Haruka-kun pretended everything was fine. He didn’t get pumped up about the best of times either.

“Once it’s cooked, it’s a free-for-all,” Haruka-kun said, “but please don’t steal from the orphans, okay? Hey, Tiny Tanuki! This comes with unlimited rice, yeah? But we’ve only got five hundred pounds of meat, you got it? Okay, it’s ready... So... Fight?”

If I wanted to get answers out of him, I’d need to beat him first. Beat him, then prove to him that I was strong enough. *One day*. Until that day came, Haruka-kun would neither give up nor see me as strong.

“Let’s eat!” everyone shouted.

Wooooooooooooooooo! CHOMP CHOMP! Chew chew! Munch munch! Swallow! CHOMP CHOMP!

We wept. Nobody could speak; there were only the wails of tasty tears. We went to the bath so inflated we could float. The orphans were stuffed, too. We would have to deal with the consequences...but that was later. *One more set!*

“Damn, that was good.”

“Barbecue is a powerful weapon!”

“The barbecue plus white rice plus veggies combo-attack did me in.”

“I can’t believe two pounds of meat per person wasn’t enough.”

“I didn’t realize how much I ate. I guess we gotta work out now.”

“One more set! One more set! One more set!”

Even the orphans joined in, singing, “One more set! One more set!”

No, it’s too early for you little darlings.

“Ahhhhhhhhh...”

An even better surprise awaited us when we got out of the bath. Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san handed them out in the changing room.

“Wow! There are so many designs. And the little frills are adorable!”

“Look at the lace-work. That’s got to have been done with modern technology. They’re works of art!”

“Cute!”

We got new (revised) sets of underwear, tops and bottoms, from Haruka-kun. Apparently, they were the fruit of much experimentation by the leveled-up possibilities of our personal brassieres. The one I had was already so comfortable that I didn’t even think about my chest when I fought. The new and improved design revised key points to make our bras even better! I could only imagine a bra like that feeling like pure bliss.

“Unbelievable!”

“The feel and material are totally different from before. He’s even managed a tuck to handle the bonding!”

“Lace straps... Yeah, these are for special occasions only!”

The only special encounters we’d be having were against monsters, but I supposed that was good enough.

With that, Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san handed out the emergency magic-barrier-boosted, revised and improved MK-II bras. They were impressive, radiated fabulous luxury, and felt incredible! His bra-work was simply on another level. Magical defenses were imbued in the very needlework. All the infinite possibilities of a bra had been formed into a single, perfect article of clothing!

“Looking at it, though... He just used the bikini armor technique to make these, didn’t he?”

“In exchange for dropping the full-body shielding, the clothes themselves have maximum defenses.”

“The force field activates if the outer equipment tears?”

If our equipment broke, our lives would be on the line. That was when our

underwear would come to the rescue. *That sounds like a real rough situation either way.*

“It activates when the outer armor breaks, the inner armor rips, and there’s no other defenses left,” Book Club President observed. “Interesting. Normally, you’d just strengthen your armor’s defenses.”

“In a worst case scenario, we could beat a dungeon in our underwear?!”

Regardless, they were lovely. He even gave us spares—two bras and five bottoms each. Patterned sets of designer lingerie. Apparently, he was thinking of making further improvements if we still weren’t satisfied. Angelica-san already had the far-superior next model, the MK-III, a feat achieved through Wisdom Revolution. Also, his tentacles had sent her to some far-off place beyond heaven and hell during the measuring process. Yup. Or so she claimed.

“I love it!”

“They’re wonderful.”

All the girls happily showed off their new underwear sets to one another. I mean, he’d even thrown in the negligees we’d been waiting for. Only Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san had them before, which was totally unfair!

We’re back to our frontier life, I see. Eating delicious food, getting fired up about underwear in the bath, and getting pumped up for tomorrow’s dungeon battles were the sort of days we looked forward to. We were happy to return to these days. All of us were.

“Wow, this underwear is just right! I don’t feel the lift and separate at all!”

“This is more magical than the *actual* magic in this world!”

Our magician used his kindly magic to make delicious meals, cute clothes, and warm beds. He used magic to make us happy. And for our sexiness, apparently. I just wanted Haruka-kun to not have to fight anymore. It was a shame such a kind magician was forced to fight. He was at his limit.

We had to become strong enough so that he wouldn’t have to worry. This was our goal; it was the only thing that mattered. We just wanted Haruka-kun to have a comfortable retirement. Although a post-retirement world tour would

just end in a mass slaughter of some sort, wouldn't it?

DAY 80

LATE NIGHT

For some reason, I'm designated as the guy with dangerous skills.

WHITE LOSER INN

WHEN I UPGRADED the “Intelligence Crown: [Fits three items.] Intelligence, Resistance +30%. Control boost (large). Sorcery boost (large)” with mithril, it turned into the “Wisdom Crown: [Fits five items.] Intelligence, Resistance +40%. Control boost (ultra). Sorcery boost (ultra).” That was a nice buff. It worked better than expected against my classmates and really slowed down fights for me. It also helped me finally get a handle on Teleport, which I had only been able to use to move a short distance in a straight line before. Moving became easier, and although I slowed down, I could completely break down Class Rep and the others based on their fighting rhythms. I still got beat up by Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl, though.

“Just limiting the activation really improved control for me, huh?”

I couldn't control it perfectly. Using Teleport perfectly would make it an unbeatable cheat skill. This world would've been done for long ago if that were possible.

“Void magic is incredibly rare to begin with, so there aren't many counters. I'd just like it if it was a little harder to get beat up, ya know?”

I needed to focus to control it, which meant I paused briefly before activating Teleport. It was more like I *had* to pause or else the overdrive speed would tear my body apart. I needed some way to use Teleport that prevented my movements from getting read. Class Rep and the others struck right during that pause every chance they got. I figured they didn't even know why they lost. It was because they kept attacking during a delay! They really chowed down during our barbecue for dinner, so they'd been too busy to try to figure it out tonight.

“Miss Armor Rep was able to keep up with Teleport, and Dancer Girl anticipated my every move. How is that possible? Is there some flaw with it? I suppose it drains a lot out of me, making it tough to use consecutively. Plus, I haven’t gotten the knack of finding the right distance yet. Is Teleport actually unusable?”

I might’ve beaten my classmates, but Miss Armor Rep had easily kept up. And Dancer Girl anticipated my moves, which meant she could easily pull me into a trap and counterattack. I couldn’t use a technique in a real battle when I didn’t even understand its weaknesses.

“With magic power, see where, you’re going. And movements, simple.”

“Ankles, knees, not hiding.”

The instant my magic power activated, Miss Armor Rep could react accordingly. I closed distances instantly when I used Teleport, so Dancer Girl preemptively struck when she could guess my next motion. Having my ankles and knees point out my next movements nullified the strategy’s whole point. I couldn’t believe she was able to do this.

“But Teleport’s too dangerous to use when coming out of one of Dancer Girl’s free-wheeling spinning motions, right?”

Jiggle jiggle.

Sure, I managed to fool the girls the first time we fought, but I was doomed if anyone figured me out in a real fight. *Just look at how badly my two beauties beat me up today!*

Still, with the world moving in slow motion for me, I had Clairvoyance and Wisdom Eye to see my opponent’s movements and calculate the correct response. That wasn’t enough for me to overcome the gap in our speed stats, but throw in a little Teleportation, and I had enough anticipation and sudden motion to easily wipe the floor with them. It was all a fraud. I just saw my opponent’s actions, calculated the correct response, and then used instantaneous movement to overcome it. I was a bit worried about finding a Fraudster title in my status, but it allowed me to fight, and it allowed me to win. Not getting bonked was all that mattered!

“I guess I just gotta swindle my way into finding some new equipment on a dual-training combat experience mission, right? I wonder if Class Rep and the others really got fooled. I’m sure they won’t say anything as long as I keep winning, but I don’t want them to force themselves into anything too dangerous. Please keep an eye on them for me.”

“Under, stood. No new equipment!”

Jiggle jiggle!

The girls’ meeting ended early today, and I had no side jobs left. *For now.* They were all probably relaxed after the bath, ready to chill—

Huh? *I can’t move?* I was tied up.

“You left, yourself open. Open, open wide!”

“H-hang on, you guys are the ones who are supposed to open up, not me! You’ve got the wrong guy here! I mean, I’m the wrong guy! It’s all a misunderstanding!”

When I’d powered up the Wisdom Crown, I also decided to add mithril to one of the sealed-away, anti-sex-appeal items, the “Prometheus Chains: Binding. Perfect Skill Invincibility.” And now I was in them. Yup, those chains that had sealed away Dancer Girl for eternity now restrained me. I’d accidentally left them lying around, and now the tables had turned. Which was fair—I didn’t think I would ever be free as long as I had an item capable of restraining someone else’s freedom like that.

I thought Dancer Girl might be able to use them, so I powered them up into “Prometheus God Chains: All stats +30%. Extendable. Binding. Perfect Skill Invincibility. +Attack.” Pretty strong, right? So I’d handed them over to her...and she used them on me!

“Yeah, this is a good one. I can’t use Magic Hands or Teleport!”

“A weapon that immediately nullifies all dangerous skills, yes.”

Grin.

“Can’t use, Vibration magic now. Yes, you’re ours.”

Smirk.

I got the sense Revival was still working. Same with Sex God. So what exactly was getting nullified here? They had already forced me onto the bed, still in chains, and stripped away my equipment and clothing. First and foremost had been the Universe Staff and my cloak. Now all I had on were my basic linens. Oh god, we were on the verge of *something!*

Sexy white lingerie closed in on me. On one side of me, tanned skin emerged from a short white negligee open all the way down to the stomach. On the other side, pure white skin revealed itself from sexy black lingerie. Two soft, lovely bodies started at my legs and crawled up toward me. A teenage-boy-mounted invasion strategy?!

“W-waaaaaiit! At least listen to what I have to say!”

Shake shake.

Pout pout.

I may not have had any Magic Entanglement left—and I had no equipment left, either—but the properties of my body remained.

“So...”

Tickle tickle!

“No, wait, please!”

At least I still could revive. Assuming their objective was the eternally active teenage boy, I’d end up missing the rest of the school year at this rate! I couldn’t stop twitching—at least Sex God was still working. That meant Prometheus Chain didn’t effect basic biological skills. I couldn’t unleash skills anymore, but I could hold out in a battle of endurance. Soft, dangerous feelings encircled me, though, attacking from all sides. I was on the verge of defeat. I could keep using Revival, but I’d run out of MP eventually!

“Wait...”

Mmmf...

“Listen to...”

Slurp slurp...

My item bag was on the floor along with my pants. I slowly extended my arms and reached out toward it as they overwhelmed me with their entrancing bodies, rubbing against me from head to toe. That was where I'd find an item I took off during my side-job work today—my gloves!

"Just..."

Lick lllllick!

"But!"

Sluuuuurp!

Two bouncy objects jiggled against my chest, and two more shook and swung over my legs. I used Jupiter Eye to take a look at the scene from above—it was crazy. The teenage boy was on the brink of destruction! It took all of my effort to keep it together. I licked the thighs on both sides of my head as I reached ever closer to my item bag. Finally, I caught the edge with my fingertips and slowly, carefully started to pull it up.

"Hey! What are— Eep!"

I plunged my hand into the bag. Dancer Girl realized what I was doing and tried to grab me, but I aimed for her panties. The fight suddenly swung into a lovely paradise of alluring actions and respectful revenge. Sensitivity, Lascivious, Vibration magic—I activated them all, now with the power of the right hand of the Spearshield Gauntlets that nullified all immunities! *I can nullify their nullifications!*

"Ah, ahh, aahhnn!"

Fwump.

A complete 180!

Miss Armor Rep shook her head, quaking wildly, tears in her eyes as she shivered with fear?

"Mr. Tentacles, Mr. Magic Hands. Go, go, go. Don't stop now! Ya knooooow!"

"No, oh, don't stop! Ugh, yes, aahh, ahhhhhhhn!"

That was a coldhearted attack today. But the heart of sexual activation had

achieved unending sex. Damn, all that sexiness! Just letting y'all know in advance that it's about to get sexual in here!

“Teenage boy powers, ACTIVATE!”

“Aaaaahhhh! Mmmm!”

A half-broken Dancer Girl woke up, so I put her back to sleep; a persistent Miss Armor Rep crawled back toward me, so I crawled over her. Then Dancer Girl rained down revenge until she collapsed again. She came at me at the same time as an indomitable Miss Armor Rep struck out for heavenly revenge. She emitted sunny sunbeams, which I beamed back into her until she was sunburned raw. The renewed teenage boy revenge-on-revenge combined all of my skills into an ultimate-supreme-happiness consecutive combo-attack.

People said revenge was pointless, but for some reason, it was so much fun that none of us could stop. They'll probably be glaring at me tomorrow, but their eyes had rolled back into their heads for now and their worlds had gone black. They quivered, their mouths wide open.

I wiped up the drool. Hmm, they seemed pretty tired. *I better stick a mushroom in there.*

DAY 81

MORNING

This world is a disaster. The forever-seventeen problem has extended into a sixteen-year-old problem, too!

WHITE LOSER INN

O MUSE, THE TRUTH, I shall declare. The curling vines of a false declaration have ensnared me. Truth, release me from thy bondage!

“My skills are unfair? You committed multiple acts of blatant humiliation in defiance of the anti-teenage-boy Prometheus God Chain binding clause, you know! Don’t stick your tongue out at it!”

They stuck their tongues out at it!

“Look, I was just returning what was returned to me—never-ending, completely guiltless counter-abuse! You didn’t think about how a sensitive teenage boy’s body would inevitably react to such sensual stimulation. Setting aside Pavlov’s theory here, each act of revenge was the natural response of a teenager in his rebellious phase! And my reaction to constraint was completely natural to boot! The magnificent contact that resulted from Magic Hands magically manifested the pure teenage boy’s accumulated energy, resulting in natural chemical reactions. Put simply, I didn’t do anything wrong or whatever?”

No response, just glares. For some reason, they couldn’t accept my easily comprehensible thesis and thoroughly investigated theory.

“Lose my, mind! Heaven, hell! Conscious, went all, white!”

“You’ll kill us! Deathless and we’ll die! Thought I was going to die!”

Jiggle jiggle.

“Hey, morning, Slimey. You sure are looking jiggly today.”

Wiggle wiggle.

“Listen to us!”

The girls requested pancakes for breakfast. I actually asked the orphans, not the girls, but I supposed the girls could be considered fantasy world orphans in the strictest possible sense of the term. They were still underage.

“Not sure if that means they should all should start calling me Big Bro, though.”

Jiggle jiggle.

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Now that we had been in this world for over two months, there must have been some classmates who'd had birthdays. I thought about having a birthday party, but the calendar here was annoying. Apparently, the start of the new year depended on the position of the sun, so the date wasn't decided in advance. Once the day arrived, the new year was announced. That was why each year was only approximately the same length. It was also why they didn't have the concept of months here. This world didn't have a moon, either.

“We can't do a moon viewing party, but they'll definitely demand the relevant Japanese snacks!”

The girls must've felt lonely in this world without the moon. *That's it! I'll just make them white rice dumplings for a traditional moon viewing. Then they can't complain!*

Even more annoying was the presence of a second “sun.” That was what they called the ‘moon.’ It was like having a full moon all the time. I'd wondered why dusk and dawn always felt so bright. It was because another nearby star was shining. *This world is friggin' confusing!*

“Well, whether it's a moon or some faraway sun, the only complaint I'll get if I make rice dumplings is that I didn't make enough of them.”

Jiggle jiggle.

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

A binary star system explained why the number of days in a year changed. Considering the sky, the astronomical point of view, the degree of science in this world—and more importantly, how to make dango tare... Yeah, this lecture was never-ending, wasn't it?

The two beauties were still prattling on about how they'd been about to die, too. *You're both immortal! Remember?!* Immortality must be lonely. Always having to say goodbye. Those two were different, though. They had to be. Slimey was deathless himself—and shapeless, and all sorts of other -less—so he could stay with them. The three of them would be less lonely if they stuck together through the ages. Class Rep and my other classmates should all live long lives as well. Leveling up slowed the aging process and extended a person's life span. Forget birthday parties—they wouldn't be hitting seventeen any time soon.

"But a sixteen-year-old's lack of puberty problems seems more problematic to me than an aging-to-seventeen-years-old problem."

Jiggle jiggle!

I had no hope for that one.

After some flour and a little mixing and folding, I used some of my precious butter to whip up pancakes. The lecture finally died down as their attention was drawn to the piping-hot pancakes. Drool now leaked out of their previously -lecturing mouths. They'd been wet last night, too, and not just from saliva.

"Gotta wash those sheets," I said. "They're only half-dried from last night!"

Now, the curtains opened to a theater of hungry children.

"Didn't you all collapse last night, saying you wouldn't be able to eat another bite for the rest of your lives? Did you get the skill Digestion or something? Either way, one-more-set is still one-more-necessity?"

"Today's goal is to outshine yesterday!" cried Class Rep.

"Wow, that's so wise!"

"You mean to out-fat yester—er, never mind, never mind!"

“These are delicious!”

I piled pancakes all the way up to the ceiling to satisfy Slimey and the meatheads. The only problem was that the plates couldn't handle the weight of all those pancakes and cracked. How wasteful.

“Look at Slimey, hovering all politely and eating his pancakes,” I said. “You guys sure are stupid.”

“We gotta eat them before the girls get to 'em, dammit!” the meatheads bellowed.

I guess that was the limit of their deductive reasoning. They piled chairs all the way to the ceiling and ate the pancakes from the top down. Were they a meathead acrobatics troupe?

“I suppose they haven't figured out how to use basic tools of civilization, like stepstools and ladders, even though I made sure to leave some right there. How stupid can you get?”

Still, it was surprising to see the meatheads use any tools at all. I'd expected them to just jump up to the ceiling and chomp as they went. I suppose meathead society must have advanced somewhere along the way, given that they were cutting their pancakes into pieces with their boomerangs. I really needed to release the meatheads back into the wilderness where they belonged.

I turned to the nerds. “Where are the beast-eared girls?” I demanded. “Spit it out. If you don't, I'll put you all on spits and roast you! You'll be crispier than these pancakes, I'll tell you that much!”

“Don't tell us to spit out the pancakes while we're eating them!”

“They just sent letters of gratitude, that's all!”

“I don't even know how furry they are yet...”

“We didn't get to pet them a single time,” the last one said, weeping.

The nerds had been brainwashed by the media back on Earth. Legend said that if you saved furry beast girls, you'd be able to pet them. Alas!

“You said they were beautiful, though, didn't you? I can't believe you guys

were over there with beautiful beast girls while I was running around trying to avoid overdosing on old dude stench! Maybe you do deserve to get burned!”

“Don’t burn us! How could you be upset when you ran into Dancer Girl? She’s beyond beautiful!”

“We couldn’t even talk to them. And you *enslaved* her!”

“It doesn’t make sense for you, of all people, to be jealous, Haruka-kun.”

“Yup, I’m gonna burn the lot of ya.”

“That doesn’t solve anything!” they shouted.

I mean, we’re talking about beast ears here.

“The bunny-eared girl was really sexy and had a cute, round tail.”

“Hang on. You saw her? Nice job!”

“She’s an innocent bunny, but that body was fierce.”

“No way!”

What a development! So there were bunny beastfolk. Oda-kun was even pantomiming an hourglass shape. And equipped with a round tail to boot? That bunny-eared beastfolk girl couldn’t be bested.

“That was no ordinary shaking,” Oda-kun sighed. “Even her ears wobbled.”

“Them being so slim and fit is exactly the appeal of living out in the wild!”

“Yeah, her butt was so big and firm, and with that cute little tail...”

“Arrrgh!” I moaned. “I think I dropped something over in the Beast Kingdom, so I’m just gonna go pick it up? Adios, otamigos?”

“You’ve never even been there!”

“And who the heck are otamigos!”

Where exactly was the Beast Kingdom, anyway? Well, I saw it on a map once, but maps in this world weren’t exactly accurate. And they certainly didn’t list which countries had people with bunny ears. *What useless maps. Always omitting the most important information!*

“Letters are all I need. They were so scared.”

“Humans murdered their families. The fact that they could even bring themselves to thank us is more than enough.”

“Yeah, those girls were in no position to jump into rom-com mode or anything.”

Even if those nerds managed to raise an event flag, they’d probably snap the flagpole by accident. I mean, they were being way too nice. They hadn’t even tried to approach the beast girls. *They’ve got no game!*

“But look guys, I was in the most hopeless situation in the universe. I was in battle wearing a completely corny pirate’s eyepatch and wielding the most repulsive, submission-inducing, freedom-stealing chains and choker that this world has ever seen. But even in my sex appeal’s darkest moment, I threw a Hail Mary crepe, and look where I am now? You need to activate the beaming-joy-would of your teenage boyhood. C’mon, guys!”

“How did you manage to do that?!”

Of course, that very person had tied me up in those exact chains yesterday. Yeah, that definitely happened?

We also had a plan to send aid to the Beast Kingdom. Their strength would help secure our safety. Being unable to get slaves from the Beast Kingdom would, in turn, weaken the Merchant Kingdom and the Theocracy. I figured the beasts wouldn’t appreciate the help, though, so I’d never sent any. But now, it sure seemed like there was value in going over there.

“Regardless, I’ll just need to see everything for myself,” I said. “Primarily the round tail! How did you get a glimpse of that? Yeah, I gotta burn you. Burn the polluted, corrupted nerds to purify their pristine environment!”

“We didn’t pollute anything!”

I knew that these guys would fall for the women of this world. They even gave sweets and souvenirs to Poster Girl, but afterward, they just watched her from a distance and smiled? Then they chattered like they were a fan club or something. I didn’t think they were going to be getting lucky here anytime soon.

Yet, this world still overflowed with suffering. I mean, just look at the girls, who had toppled over earlier, totally stuffed and were now readying their

lecture formation. I think they'd seen the nerds make the hourglass shape?
Gotta bounce!

DAY 81

NOON

Thanks to the NTR-1900 edition explanation, my cool fight went to waste.

DUNGEON

52ND FLOOR

THIS ATMOSPHERE always restored me. The peaceful halls of a dungeon were the most relaxing, peaceful, and healing places in this world. I'd managed to escape from my classmates' lecture. Although I didn't think this world was entirely guiltless, unlike me.

"There are more adventurers now, and they have better equipment. I figured there'd be some here. So where is everyone?"

I mean, this dungeon *was* deep and wicked hard, but there still wasn't anyone around! I didn't think I'd be having any lucky encounters. Well, besides encounters with monsters.

"This should be my chance to meet some beautiful adventurer girls." I sighed. "I'm not an adventurer myself yet. I'm always going to the guild, though, which still hasn't let me join!"

Yeah, Receptionist Rep had some amazing glares for me this morning. She could definitely climb up the ranks at the Glare Guild. Especially cause the guild chief was some old dude.

It wasn't too warm or too humid. It even felt like someone had applied a coating to make the floor and walls smoother than normal. A large-class dungeon. They became less cave-like and more on the castle end of things the bigger they got. *Is this one under renovation? I'd be happy to help.*

No matter how deep I went, I didn't find any adventurer girls. I was on the verge of letting monsters overtake me so they could jump in to rescue me in the

nick of time, but I didn't think the other monsters would let adventurers pass through so easily. I kept up my cool fighting poses, though, just in case anyone did show up. No dice. Damn. *Just keep going.*

"Plainly put, my servants are leaving me in the dust!"

Maybe *those* guys already took out all the monsters. Now that Dancer Girl had surpassed level 20, her strength was absolutely out of control. I stood no chance in training. Meanwhile, the dangers of our nightly battles grew deeper and deeper, deepening to the deepest possible reaches a teenage-boy - adventure could plunge in an all-night-long raiding session.

Jiggle jiggle.

"There you are. Were the monsters tasty? What even were the monsters on this floor? I didn't see a single one."

The spellstones didn't tell me what monsters they came from, and I couldn't remember from last time. There was a good chance I hadn't even seen them back then, either. I was just getting a nice, safe stair aerobic workout. I petted and praised Slimey as we walked. Then, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl came back, looking refreshed.

"Yeah, I won't be meeting any monsters today, although I did encounter the holistic, unholy satisfaction of actual sadism last night? I gotta try harder tonight. The monsters might try to get revenge, but I'm still gonna try!"

The 53rd floor had lesser salamanders, just right for training. Fortunately, I got my own portion of monsters to fight after an earnest groveling sesh. Servants can work way too hard, am I right? You might say 'that's their job,' but I ain't listening!

"I guess the 50th floor boss hasn't respawned since last time. I remember some crazy-rare, nice-to-see-ya-again level 50 mammoth, but I guess he's out this time?"

The lesser salamanders were almost cute. Nothing too tough. I guess "lesser" meant "smaller," like in zoology?

"Chibi salamanders are cute, but they aren't top-tier cute animals. I wonder if they'd get upset if I called them fire salamanders by accident. Maybe I'd go

chasing after a ball to collect my set of seven underpants. Although, I already made so many girl underpants? They put in additional orders! Lace panties.”

Wiggle wiggle.

Lizards cloaked in fire. They just sorta walked in a straight line. Were these guys really a superior species? They clanked as they ran across the ground, racing around the large room. It was better practice to fight against a group, but that meant there were never any left for me!

“I still haven’t figured out a solution to the monster shortage in this world,” I said. “I’ve been walking through this dungeon making friggin’ lace panties, for real?”

Wiggle wiggle!

I supposed the roots of these problems were right beside me.

A round dance. *La ronde*. Pretty dumb name, but I was in a dumbgeon, so I guess I couldn’t complain. The sexual contents of *La Ronde* the play were much more up my alley. Still, a *ronde*... Wasn’t it supposed to be, I dunno, all elegant?

“*La Ronde* is a drama with ten scenes of pairs of lovers. First a sex worker and a soldier, then a soldier and a maid, then a maid and a young gentleman, and then at the end, the count swings back over to the first sex worker lady in one scary cuckold tale. Is this the dance we’re supposed to be dancing right now? Arthur Schnitzler came up with this back in 1900. It railed against the sexual and class norms of the time. They couldn’t perform it for years and wound up self-publishing two hundred copies to distribute to friends, ya know?”

Jiggle jiggle.

A whirling round of swirling silver came to my ears.

“It eventually escaped censorship, and they performed it in 1920, but it still ended up causing all sorts of crazy scandals. We’re talking about a social crisis, not just a dance?”

Jiggle jiggle!

What? I thought we were talking about *La Ronde*?

“Damn it! While I was talking, all of the lesser salamanders got wiped out!

Just when I remembered that *La Ronde* is also a ‘choreographed and cued ballroom dance that progresses in a circular, counterclockwise pattern around the dance floor,’ too. And I was gonna tell you all about it, but *La Ronde* was just too culturally important. I couldn’t. I didn’t even have time to get to the point! I was gonna kill the salamanders while explaining *La Ronde*. Come on!”

Wiggle wiggle.

I guess the lesser salamanders are lesser than the round-related topics in the end.

“Nice work. Still seems like most monsters haven’t respawned, right? At least I finished *La Ronde*.”

“They move, changed. There.”

“Good, we handle them, they’re easy.”

Boink boink!

First stage, passing grade. Dancer Girl could metamorphose her movements with a slippery smoothness that melded irregular meter movements with moldability. The pair knocked around the salamanders like pool balls, a clean sweep by Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl’s pool cues.

“You guys sure know how to dance to irregular time signatures.”

“Shifting gears, important.”

I was aiming for irregular movements myself, but I always got caught up in the rhythm of battle and fell into a standard beat. Humans unconsciously fall into patterns. That was why they could read my movements. To avoid that, go for an irregular meter. Better yet, don’t use a time signature at all. This resulted in a completely free-flowing, ever-changing, shifting, transforming movements—the ultimate technique peerlessly mastered by Dancer Girl I could never achieve. Even Miss Armor Rep shook her head when Dancer Girl tried to teach her. If I managed it *just* a bit better, even if it was only an imitation, it could become a powerful weapon.

“First wide, big movements, intentionally delayed, exaggerated.”

Then, I could use Teleport to skip the expected beat. Right now I was only

skipping a half-beat. If I could change up the rhythm to be even more irregular, then the technique should make it impossible for opponents to read my movements. Nobody could hit me in the instant I used Teleport, after all.

“Maybe I can synchronize Teleport with my own movements and then launch an under-control Random Fire?”

Misfiring would result in self-destruction, though. I’d break my own legs or bust my shoulders or something.

“None of my skills combine well at all!”

Still, I honed my skills day after day and night after night. Revival, which had already gone up to level 8, could take care of me. I hadn’t lost any limbs yet, so I was fine. Miss Armor Rep and the others could protect me until I physically healed, so we went deeper into the dungeon as I practiced, letting Revival heal me between each round of battle. The biggest prospective obstacle? The unbeatable 60th floor boss, the bug-juice-splurting giant fly. Thankfully it hadn’t respawned. *No way am I facing that thing again!*

“The general store is fully stocked with insecticide, but it didn’t even help. That thing was seriously nasty!”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle!

That stuff wasn’t cheap to make, so I had to preserve what little I had. Meanwhile, the level 66 Assassin Ghosts were being as assassiny and ghosty as ever.

“Right, right. They disappear and then approach you... Except, we can see them the whole time?”

They crept up all sneakily, and we cut them down. They couldn’t attack until they manifested into a solid form, so when they sneaked around like that, it was an all-you-can-kill fest on our part. Yet, they kept on disappearing and trying to sneak up on us anyway. I guessed it was their duty as doomed assassin ghosts, noble until the bitter end. ‘Cause we were killing ‘em all double-dead, ya know?

The slithering sneaks slipped and were slain. I used Fish Girl's precise, well-honed sword techniques and defensive positions as a foundation, but I was traveling a difficult road. I wanted to master Dancer Girl's whirling dance. I used Wisdom to trace the motions. Not that I dreamed that a dance like that was attainable or traceable, especially 'cause recording the motions was sexy enough to engage my teenage-boy soul in better battles. It was probably my mistake for observing her dance while she was wearing a see-through leotard. *Now that's a guaranteed method to get the technique to stick in my memory!*

"Wha—?!"

I swept through the assassin ghosts' flashing blades, imitating Dancer Girl's whirling dance of slashing and slaying as I swooped. I layered reality on to memory and dipped into her dream. I mean, the dream of hips like *that* and a waist like *damn*. That body was enticing the eternal teenage-boy dreams right out of me!

Each time I attacked, I lined up the rhythm with the missing beat caused by Teleport, in such a way that I could continue into the next motion without getting carried away by Teleport's momentum. *Now this is swordplay!* Sure, I was stabbing the little ghosties to death with my tentacles, but it was still swordplay! If I missed, I used Holding to keep the ghosts in place and finish them off. But still. Swordplay! When that still wasn't enough, I just used Gravity to slam them against the ground. And if that was too much of a pain, I just shot off a Random Fire. But swordplay was swordplay, I tell you! The other two were glaring at me a lot, but come on! I was trying!

I was worried about the implications of those exasperated glares on my potential training tonight, though. The most difficult fights in this world were during (beatings) training! Even though we were fighting the monsters to death, they sure were a lot nicer than those two? For realsies?

DAY 81

AFTERNOON

If you're not changing clothes in the hidden room, then don't bother hiding like that.

DUNGEON

68TH FLOOR

I HAD TO BE WARY of where the insecticide still hung in the air, but that difficulty aside, it was an easy victory. I honestly should've considered a cyanide compound, but strangling the thing to death probably expedited things. Taking the time to develop a chemical weapon wasn't exactly speedy. The main problem was how I would fare tonight. *I need to practice.*

"Slimey won't even eat these guys. Floor 68 bugs are a big yikes."

Jiggle jiggle!

The only solution for flying insects was to banish them to the ground. Our only problem was these bugs had spears. Level 68 Spear Hoppers flung and flopped around beyond any sensor skill's prediction capabilities. Last time, I had used Holding on the insecticide to smoke out and kill the bugs. Melee was better for training, though, and I didn't have anything else better to turn my sword against. Even if I had, I'd just wind up killing them all anyhow?

"Aren't you locusts supposed to devour crops? Not stab them with spears?!"

Amid the bad-bug debugging battle, I focused on activating Wisdom and reaching the limits of my abilities without harming myself. Everything slowed to the point where the hoppers' movements felt sluggish and predictable. The only problem was that I could now see their disgusting faces in perfect detail! Yuck! I used to love the locust dude in the *K*men Rider Black* TV reruns, but I'd rather not do a repeat with these locusts!

"Not with strength. Gently."

I swung my blade in every direction, carving through the air as I advanced. It was a war against hapless hoppers. If I erred in my Teleport, I'd get stabbed, so I swung my blade in wide arcs. I mean, I loved to penetrate; it was one of my favorite things in the world. I was quite capable at it, too, as I've been doing plenty of it every night, but I'd rather not be the one getting penetrated? I wasn't a BL guy, and I didn't think any BL fangirls would be fans of grasshopper insertions, either!

"Yeah, that book isn't making any bestseller lists. At least, I hope it isn't."

Using centrifugal force reduced recoil on the body, eliminating almost all weight on me. It was just aggravating, and annoying, and aggressively aggregated anger as I agilely swung and swooped and sliced.

"I'd love me an auto-Whirlwind Blade or a Total Auto Electric Fan! Sure, skills are automatic after activating them, but if I don't acclimate to accreting and activating eclectically and disparately and probably desperately, I'll get penetrated by the grasshoppers! That is one terrifying punishment for a screw-up!"

Should I just use the casting net in my item bag? No, this was supposed to be training. But I was friggin' sick and tired of these stupid hoppers!

"Cricket this, cricket that. Shut up! Those ugly faces getting all up in my Jupiter Eye! I hate bugs! We're using pesticides from now on, I swear!"

The others patted me on the back. Going all out with Wisdom like this made it feel like my brain cells were tearing apart. Would my memory really survive all this, even with Revival? *Is my brain gonna be okay?!*

"This country... Right, I dunno... This domain... Omo... Ome... Well, Duke Dude Mr. Meridad. He's always getting into lover's quarrels? Yeah, my memory's working just fine!"

Getting cornered like that helped me hone my skills. This was my best technical execution so far. In order to try hard, I needed to face danger head-on. Yeah, this was the only time I ever tried hard?

"The armory dude and the general store lady are searching for Vitality, Intelligence, and control-boosting equipment for me, so I should improve my

fundamentals in the near future.”

“No, you, practice!”

“Don’t get, so bored!”

Jiggle jiggle.

Skill levels went up along with your main level, but in my case, my actual level barely improved compared to my skill levels. Alas, improving my actual technique was my only hope.

“Where are the cheap, easy cheats around here? Like transferring self-inflicted damage over to the nerds? While we’re at it, we can burn them and then bury them alive, ya know? That’s who I wanna become? Although, I don’t need to, ’cause I’ve got Blockhead, I guess?”

Wiggle wiggle.

Next up were level 69 Soldier Puppets. They were optimal for close-combat melee training. It was a chance to get lots of good gear with basic skills, too. They’d made for great practice for a military operation before. This time, they were optimal for getting loads of equipment. These puppets were truly the perfect opponent.

“Hiyaaa!” I shouted. Slimey jiggled behind me. “I am a phantasmagorical teenage boy in battle with puppets. Now *that* will raise my sex appeal! I’m slicing the puppets apart, but it might still work! Hope that my sex appeal isn’t flagging in the face of brutal puppet slaughter!”

Wiggle wiggle!

I drew my staff, clashed with the nearby puppet’s blade, then sliced through its left flank. I whirled around, rebalanced myself, and surged forward. My patterns were disguised with Teleport, and I used Airwalk to dodge the sea of spears. Unlike my battle against the hoppers, airspace was open in this fight—it was the optimal dance floor. The puppets got caught up in my unstoppable, high-speed, 3D-maneuver dance and were torn to shreds as I leaped across the air.

I gripped the huge Seven-Branched Sword in both hands, and swung it down

like a poleaxe, crushing the enemy. The Seven-Branched Sword was only a few feet long normally, but now, it extended to close to ten feet. I supposed the extendable properties of the Universe Staff made that possible, which meant that the Seven-Branched Sword it contained could extend, too. I shouldn't have been so surprised.

Keeping my weapon in staff form made it easier to use, but the Seven-Branched Sword had power on its side. Cane Mastery provided me the necessary adjustments to use it. "Stab like a spear, swing like a halberd, wield like a longsword." A bloody combination. Bloody Mary M-san couldn't give me crap about those necessary adjustments now, could she? Although she was pretty invincible, even in a fantasy world.

"Phew."

The mountain of remains turned into spellstones. It felt like there'd been a *lot* of soldier puppets. Could respawn rates differ based on species? Puppet party priority?

"Swing too much, too many openings."

"Clumsy! Steps, are too big."

Wiggle wiggle.

Gimme a break!

"Uh, I was just swinging around my sword, letting it do the work. I kinda needed to take out all the puppets at once, or I'd have been in trouble. And I'm pretty sure my steps are going to end up being too big when I'm walking through the air. I mean, I can't just tip-toe, can I?"

It'd been a real drag. I got bored halfway through, to be blunt. That was why I'd gone into berserker mode. And sure, maybe I dug myself into a bit of a hole. I guess I couldn't take things too lightly. *I suppose I'm just best in the face of adversity. As in, I don't dig it until I'm in trouble? Like I don't start trying until I'm about to die?* Uh, what was wrong with me?

The two of them kept scolding me as we headed down. It turned out I hadn't escaped the lectures after all.

“Oh, a Vitality item? And this one’s got control, too. Hey, this’s got plus thirty percent for Intelligence! All the other items were shoddy, so I’m just gonna sell them, but these are great.”

I organized the items I had picked up. Now, I could finally get rid of those “Tough Boots: Vitality +10%.” I couldn’t help but feel like it was waste, what with the money I’d spent on them, but I really didn’t need them anymore.

“Lots of stuff, but... Meh?”

We needed more equipment, as I couldn’t just use mithril to upgrade everything. If I powered up Miss Armor Rep’s and Dancer Girl’s stuff with mithril, I’d run through most of my stock. Better equipment required increasingly greater amounts of mithril to power up, unfortunately. I needed to conserve my mithril as much as I could. Yeah, even though I had powered up our plates with mithril, the trident forks still put all those damn holes in them.

Meanwhile, the next floor’s level 70 Jotunn that Slimey had such a blast with hadn’t respawned.

“Floor bosses have such good drops, but they’re all gone.” I sighed. “They’re so profitable, too.”

Jiggle jiggle.

That was how I’d gotten Queen Bee her Eternal Ice Spear—I upgraded the Jotunn’s drop item with mithril. If forty or so of them could respawn and gimme their drop items, I’d finally be able to distribute weapons to everyone instead of having to reserve them for each party’s leader. Apparently, things weren’t gonna be so easy. Trying to will the event flag into existence wasn’t helping, either.

“On top of that, floor bosses that respawn have crappier drop items, according to the book in the guild’s reference room.”

Jiggle jiggle.

Oh yeah, Receptionist Rep had been all up in my grill about reading books reserved for adventurers and stuff, but that was what the book said. It was good info.

“Rather than hoping for respawns, we just gotta smash and advance. It’s faster for new dungeons to spawn to begin with, apparently?”

Jiggle jiggle.

With a little of this and a little of that, we made it to the level 71 Flare Snakes on the 71st floor. They didn’t hibernate, not even after I cooled the room down. I remembered training against them last time. A throng of slithering fiery snakes wriggled toward us and launched themselves into the air. They were so densely packed that they were practically on top of each other, so all I had to do was slash and thrash my way around the room. I trampled through a slow-motion world of slithering, desperately trying to avoid losing my footing.

I peeked into the hidden room to see if the flare snake king from last time was still around, but there was neither a snake nor a single hot babe getting changed. A waste of peekery.

“We got the Mirror Greatshield as a drop item from the flare snake king, didn’t we? Why aren’t there clothes dropping off a sexy lamia or something this time?”

I supposed the hot babes changing hadn’t spawned in the dungeon in the first place, so logically, they couldn’t have *respawned*. If there had been hot girls respawning in there, I would’ve made that room my new residence.

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl nodded at me. I supposed I’d done well by their estimation. They appraised my footwork, posture, and ability to navigate the densely crowded snakes. Still, I started fidgeting. I just didn’t want to be surrounded by these creepy snakes anymore!

“What even were the monsters after this part? I don’t remember.”

That meant that I’d gone totally out of control and started rampaging around last time as well. *I haven’t grown a bit!*

DAY 81

EVENING

After the labor strike, I had the same improved contractual obligations as everyone else.

DUNGEON

80TH FLOOR

WE MADE IT ALL THE WAY DOWN to the 80th floor, but the old boss, ground cloud, hadn't respawned here, either. It was a good enough time. I economized MP expenditure, so I didn't feel particularly hungry, but the 80th floor seemed like a good enough place to call it quits for the day.

"Time to go back and eat," I said. "Tonight's a red dinner per the orphans' request: Hamburg steak and spaghetti Napoletana. I gotta make three times the normal amount or the girls and the orphans will gobble everything up, my portion included. Maybe I should confiscate those forks (tridents)? Why does a red meal get them as worked up as Lu Bu's war horse Red Hare? I'm getting worried about the orphans' dinnertime development..."

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

The whole seventies levels were a high-speed slaughter-fest from the other three. They moved so fast that I didn't even catch what monsters they killed. I saw some craggy-looking things, but the trio smashed them before I could use Appraisal. Yup, they went crazy. They must've been hungry. Lately there hadn't been nearly enough food to go around. We'd been splitting the cost of ingredients, so they figured that, since they're paying, they might as well go all out... *I seriously need to reconsider my accounting system for meals.*

“Look, the orphans can forget their manners and eat as much as they want. But the girls? Are the meatheads a bad influence on them? They seem like they’ll be demanding buckets sooner or later.”

Wiggle wiggle?

Twilight was just starting to fall when I made it back to the gate. I decided to go back around the outskirts of the forest to check things out and do a little gardening while I was at it.

“Slimey, can you interpret for me?”

I was trying to negotiate labor conditions with the demon scythes. Unlike my other slaves, I forcibly used the “Demon Ring: Enslaves demons (up to 3)” on them. Thinking maybe they didn’t like that, I offered them new conditions. They declined! I didn’t understand how they felt about their work or what negotiations they wanted or anything, so I sent in Slimey as a mediator.

Jiggle jiggle.

The demon scythes liked sweets, so I had been commissioning work off of them in exchange for snacks. They seemed to have some points of dissatisfaction, though, so I tried negotiating to see if they wanted money, different food, or mithril or something. But that wasn’t the case? They ate the sweets anyway. As did Slimey? Was this really a labor negotiation?

Gurble gurble.

“...”

After I had first sent them off, I started working on new employment contracts. The problem was that I never exactly received concrete feedback, so it was hard to make improvements. *Dealing with slaves isn’t easy!*

Wiggle wiggle.

“...!”

Wiggle wiggle.

“...?”

Jiggle jiggle.

“...!!!”

Wiggle wiggle!

Slimey *appeared* to be talking to them about contractual points, but they could've just been chit-chatting and enjoying their dessert for all I knew. Yeah... from the looks of things, I think they were just going ham on the sweet potatoes. The scythes liked fried sweet potatoes, too. For whatever reason, the demon scythes leveled up more quickly than my other slaves. They had already made it to level 77. What did a luck-number level like that mean for demons? Was it unlucky, maybe?

Still, I couldn't just have zero conditions in the contract. I wanted to do everything I could to avoid fighting. *Is the problem with the contract or just communication?* Or were they saying nothing and simply enjoying the sweets? Hmm... I honestly had no clue.

Jiggle jiggle!

“...”

Up until now, the demon scythes had just taken on whatever work I asked of them. I knew they enjoyed the desserts I gave them, and they always did their jobs perfectly. They seemed all upset now that negotiations had started, and I was asking them if it had been unfair to just force them into slavery. I'd accept whatever working conditions they asked for; I was the one in the wrong here, after all.

We continued negotiations as we leisurely made our way back home. I'd pre-mixed the Hamburg steaks, so they only needed to be fried up. No need to rush. I was doing all this while Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl chased after me, swinging their morning stars. There was a strong possibility I wouldn't make it back alive!

“The teenage boys of the world have set sensibilities centered around sex,” I sighed. Yeah, I was sure that if you took the sexual core out of a high-school-age boy, we wouldn't even be able to remember our own names. Today's teenage boys could anthropomorphize just about anything into a girl. As I recalled, even successive Tokugawa shoguns had clearly been ridiculously immodest, right? “I better not still have this much energy after becoming an adult, though. I'll have

to report myself.”

I continued preparing this evening’s program. Training could continue tomorrow, when I’d face off against monsters level 80 and up. There was a strong chance we’d encounter killer techniques or affinities, so I wanted to reduce the amount Miss Armor Rep and the others had to do. I was the most fragile but also the hardest to kill, the weakest but also our best bet for killing freak enemies.

Jiggle jiggle-jiggle wiggle!

“Ohhh! They just wanted to spend more time with us? Is that it?”

“...!”

How foolish of me. How flagrantly, boorishly foolish. I needed to use Servitude the same way for everyone. They all deserved to be treated the same. Yet I’d somehow been leaving the demon scythes out.

“I’m sorry guys,” I said. “I don’t know how I didn’t notice sooner. Release. There. Now you’re free. I’m sorry about everything. Thank you. If you want... you can stay with us. Oh, you’re all staying? Okay, thank you. Servitude—now you’re back and stuff? Great.”

“...! ...!”

I whipped up a lavish feast, including a boatload of sweets as apologies-slash-thank-yous for the demon scythes. It wasn’t that they were lonely inside the Demon Ring—they wanted to be servants of their own will. They went straight back into the Demon Ring as soon as they finished eating. *Hang on... Were they free to come and go this whole time?!* I get that they were used to living in there, but if they left the residence’s front door open, would other demons move in instead?

We made it back to the inn, raising the curtain on the War of the Three Kingdoms over spaghetti Napoletana. The entire inn transformed into an endless battlefield of bottomless war and unlimited seconds! *I really need to stop handing food out on such big plates!*

“Bon appétit and so tasty and seconds please!”

I thought serving a giant plate of spaghetti to each table would be nice, but that just turned each table into a mini-battlefield. *Spaghetti and clams sure would be nice, wouldn't it?*

Slimey ate straight from a bucket, and Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl got along just fine. Not sure if it was because she was a senpai of sorts, but Dancer Girl was really attached to Miss Armor Rep. Their lovely relationship exuded eroticism, so we were gonna be getting busy tonight. Meanwhile, the orphans peacefully shared food at their tables... *C'mon, classmates!*

When the wars finished, I took a bath with Slimey. After some joyful frolicking, we went to my room. We'd be going into the deepest layers of the dungeon tomorrow, so I needed to prepare the necessary equipment.

"I keep talking about wanting to raise my Vitality, but maybe it's my lack of armor and a shield that's fatal?"

Boink boink.

If I had a shield version of one of the "can insert seven" items, it'd be an all-you-can-Vitality fest, but when you're fighting, shields just got in the way, you know? I didn't have the Vitality or HP to exchange blows. I couldn't wield a shield in a fight either. It'd get busted, and then I'd be done for. My best bet was to focus on evasion, and shields got in the way of that. Plus, I wasn't a high enough level to wear good armor, so it'd end up being a nuisance all the same. Ideally, I would add armor into my clothes, making a shield pointless to begin with.

"Hmm? I thought that 30 percent was the max?"

There had been over one hundred soldier puppets on the 69th floor, so I had a couple hundred drop items from them. I stopped by the armory and general store on the way back. They had stocked a few items I'd wanted, so I sorted out the crappy ones and bought the rest. I had the three hundred items from the kingdom's treasury, too. I sorted them with Appraisal, prioritizing any Intelligence and Vitality boosting items, basically looking for good ones with anything outside of Power and Speed.

"The best find so far is the 'Ogre Leather Armor: Power, Vitality +20%.

Recovery (large). Muscle-boosting (large).’ Will muscles help Power or Vitality?”

That armor was perfect if it meant a Vitality boost. If it meant a power boost, I’d just go into overdrive again and self-destruct. If it was both, then I’d be back at square one. Well, it was a candidate for comparative consideration either way, so I put it in the keep pile.

“I can add three sets of equipment to my clothes set, and five to my cloak. My Magic Hands are already in there, though, so the cloak’s just four? Four for my gloves and three for my boots, but I can always swap out my Tough Boots for something better. So that’s four total. Four in my ring, too. The real problem is the round space in the crown or, like, headband or whatever it is... Five left for my sword, four for the staff, and then seven for the spear... Can I get a shield in there...? Yeah, I did it!”

I already had a self-destructive, common-sense smashing, utterly self-annihilating spear with the Grass-Cutting Sword, Mistilteinn, and the Seven-Branched Sword. At this rate, maybe I could expect Longinus or Excalibur or a legitimate trident to show up.

I was worried about turning any of them over to my classmates because of the recoil, which I could seal off when using them. Even Miss Armor Rep didn’t like using God’s Sword. Not because she was anti-God or anything, but because it was difficult to wield and straight-up too dangerous. I was actually the only person around here who specialized in extreme control, which I refined through my countless side jobs—I still had a long way to go in my nightly battles, that I could tell you! I made a profit and had a good time. Even faith could move mountains with enough training!

Wiggle wiggle.

“Consoling me again, Slimey?”

For the time being, I went with adding “Ogre Leather Armor: Power, Vitality +20%. Recovery (large). Muscle-boosting (large),” “Magic Array Kimono: Physical and Magic Resistance (large). Magic control (large),” and “Magic Leather Clothes Set: Vitality +20%. Herculean Strength” to my clothes set. For my cloak, I left two spots open and I went with “Verge of Death Overcloak: Slash and bludgeon resistance-boosting (large). +Defense” and “Steel-Thread

Cloak: Vitality +20%. Slash and stabbing resistance (large). Creates armor” in the other two spots. I added the “Shell Wristband: Vitality +20%. Physical and Magic Resistance (large)” to the gloves, leaving three open spots. I found four items for my boots: “Iron Greaves: Vitality +20%, Physical defense-boost (large),” “Steel Leg Plates: Vitality +20%. MP-hardening,” “Metal-tipped Boots: Vitality +20%,” and the “Total Greaves: Vitality +30%. Body protection. Physical resistance (large),” so I didn’t need the Tough Boots anymore. What a waste. I’d bought them and everything.

“I’ve got five whole open spots in this crown-slash-headband thing, but the only item I found was the ‘Metal Helmet: Vitality +20%. +Defense.’”

Jiggle jiggle.

Apparently shields could be inserted into my staff, so I tried adding the “Sparrow Evasion Shield: Vitality, Power +20%. Evasion modifier (large). Evasion (large). Recovery (large).” That one was nice. I also put in a drop item from today, the “Silver Shield: Vitality +20%. Physical resistance (small). Physical and magic modifier (small).”

“There are other items with minor boosts left, but I can get better effects by making the items myself.”

Jiggle jiggle.

Just in case, I took out the remaining candidates and decided to sell the rest. There weren’t any rings from the treasure or today’s drops—nothing that would sell particularly well, at least.

“I still have four open slots, and I can wear seven more rings not counting thumbs. So at least eleven more items total... I’m not sure I like the vibe of rings on all my fingers, but I am a big spender, so I’ll suck it up.”

Jiggle jiggle.

I was a big spender who had bills piling up on a tab at the inn while working his ass off on side jobs. I was spending a lot more on allowances with Dancer Girl here, too.

I had so many ingredients for dinner tonight, and none remained. I had plenty of food in storage, so I didn’t need to buy anything, but the girls would lecture

me if they found out I'd been holding out on them.

“Throwing my next bill on to the tab, that leaves an allowance of 50,000 ele. Then they'll figure out I can afford the bill, which will drop my allowance to a measly 35,000 ele. Some big spender I am! I don't wanna become the poor match girl from the fairy tales selling matches on a snowy day and end up frozen to death, I'd rather set the world on fire. That's including the Church and all the old dudes—kill two birds with two stones! Chuck 'em as hard as I possibly can and break those bad birdies. Although a bird in each palm sounds like sweet living to me!”

Wiggle wiggle.

Now bird beaks, that'd be cute! Nearly as good as beast girl ears. I didn't want to get sweaty after the bath, but I supposed I better head over to the training grounds. Slimey was already on my head, ready for action.

DAY 81

NIGHT

I wonder what this world wants from me but I'm too afraid to ask.

WHITE LOSER INN

TRAINING GROUNDS

ENTANGLE—using Magic Entanglement was now as second nature as breathing. And it was all thanks to my hard night work!

I still didn't understand how it worked despite having repeatedly used it to avoid death by a razor's edge. Without it, I probably wouldn't even have been able to handle the MP of the monster forest. Yet, I couldn't advance either, unable to comprehend the power of this Magic Entanglement on my own, let alone fully analyze it. I hadn't even started to really use it yet; I still had a long way to go.

The next instant, a heavy air clung to my body. That airy substance changed to a fluid—something heavy wrapped around my body. I had to drag myself through that syrupy world, advancing as if I were swimming.

“Urgh... Ugh!”

Even that was enough to make me gasp out in pain. My vigor stamina, endurance—those all had gone up. Even though I could bear it, it was agonizing. If I snapped, Revival would heal me, but it still hurt! Magic Entanglement may have reduced external damage, but the skill itself caused pain. Using Life or Death in addition to Magic Entanglement tore apart my muscles right down to my bones. This time I got off with just a few fissures, so they healed quickly. But jeez! Ow!

They hurt, but I used it to survive. I couldn't handle consecutive attacks, though.

“I buffed myself with equipment, but I guess that's as far as it gets me?”

I needed something to improve my control-related skills, too. Vitality made it harder for me to break under the weight, but it didn't help with pain. I healed quickly, but I inevitably broke in the end, so it always hurt!

Jiggle jiggle!

"Wow, that's some deep stuff there, Slimey. I see. Small stones can sink a ship when you have enough of them. So I just need tons of small stones, and then I'll sink? Hang on, that's no good!"

Wiggle wiggle!

"Not that? Right, a small force becomes great if you gather numbers, so I just need to get smaller—wait a second, that's not a solution either!"

Ba BOINK BOINK BONK!

"Oh, now you say? Go break a leg? Look, my bones are more smashed than broken. Plus, I've got torn muscles and flesh wounds, too, so that's not much of an idiom, Slimey?"

"What's with the stand-up routine with Slimey?!"

"They're even wearing matching ties!"

"Hey, this was my tie for the ball, and I wanted to give Slimey one, too. And I still haven't given the orphans' bodyguard a proper introduction? I did also make a perfectly round chibi dress for him, but that didn't get a turn, either. It just got in the way of transformations, so it's in cold storage. What a waste!"

The orphans, and the twenty-three beautiful girls surrounding them, had finished their baths. Their thin clothes revealed an overwhelming surface area of warm, pink skin, hot air still rising off them. Shorts and short dresses with healthy long legs stretching out of them, one after the next, and on top were deep V-neck T-shirts and tank tops; lovely shoulders and collar bones coming for me—ahem, quite close?

"When are you gonna play with us, big brooooo?!"

Then the orphans came at me as if they'd been shot out of a cannon, ready to play. There wasn't a single gap in their formation. Nope, not in the ring of girls directly behind the throng of bouncing orphans, either.

“Our orders, bro...”

“Bro! More orders, please!”

“How about some chestnut manju?”

“Yeah, ‘big bro,’ I’d really like some cream cake...”

“I could use some outfits, big bro.”

“More orders, big bro!”

It was a trap! A steamy trap! An inevitable, endlessly repeated surefire trap!

“You keep saying that these are ‘wants’ and ‘requests’ and ‘wishes,’ but only one thing is gonna happen if I refuse—a teenage girl stampede all over me!”

Also known as the “raw rubbing pressure” of heavenly hell, involving lots of squishy-squashy, mushy-mushy rubbing and crushing. I had improved my Vitality, so my physical resistance and recovery had improved, but one could not underestimate such soft squishiness! This was bouncing, bounding, and flinging from the forces of level 100+ stats. Wisdom calculated that I would be unable to avoid getting trampled by flesh—that all I’d be able to see would be a wall of skin with no route of escape.

I had taken off my Universe Staff, cloak, and gloves after training. This was a fatal mistake. Even if I created an opening, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl blocked the exits with boinging bodies of their own, and all the necessary power to bounce me straight back into the teenage-girl fray. Even if I tried to slip by them with Teleport, they would just target me while I paused to concentrate.

“He’s going right. It’s a fake roll—he’s going down!”

Elf Girl read my emotions and signaled my intended movements to the girls! Class Rep dispensed orders in response, and I was instantly crushed by a mountain of female flesh. There was no opening anywhere. If I combined the powers of Magic Hands, Lascivious, Vibration magic, and Sex God, I could easily clear the field of all of this riffraff and leave them on the ground quivering, but I got the feeling that would be bad for my sex appeal. I’d feel bad for making them have to take another bath right after they’d gotten out, too. Going full

throttle would involve this and that; yeah, they'd *definitely* need another bath. I had gotten good at drying futons lately, though.

"H-hang on!" I cried. "Normally, you attack me after submitting your orders, but this time you're trying to weaken me *before* submitting them? That's intimidation! Subjecting a teenage boy to abusive orders that direct his own mischievous orders is just ordering squishy-squashy orders that I will be happy to negotiate for more of, so get to the point! Why stampede all over me *now?!?*"

It was too late. At least my equipment helped. I wasn't losing HP too quickly, and I was still at full, thanks to my MP recovery. The only thing that hadn't improved was my teenage mind's ability to resist the stimulation. Without special skills, like "Boingo Resistance" or "Skin Caress Nullification," I didn't stand a chance. Actually, even with those skills, I probably didn't stand a chance. If I did, this would be a BL novel instead!

I had nullified physical attack damage completely, so my equipment was fine, but my teenage boy brain was very much not. *This is insanity!*

"C'mon, *big broooo!*"

I go off to work in the dungeon, and when I get back, the order sheets all respawned... Huh? Which is the real dungeon?

"One, two, three... Twenty-one. Everyone wants a bunny girl outfit? Y'all are gonna wear those?! And do *what?!?*"

Were they gonna open a bunny girl restaurant? Or a casino maybe? *Now that'd be profitable.*

"Look, I'm not opposed. In fact, I'm a personal bunny fan, as most teenage boys are. I like bunnies so much I'd level up my sex appeal for the bunnies' sakes? Yes, sandwiched between Miss Armor Rep in black and Dancer Girl in white... Now that's Bunny Therapy Healing Hour right there. But bunny girls running around the inn sounds like a dangerous situation that the police would be liable to investigate... Although Mr. Meridad is in charge, so I guess not...?"

Bunny girls were undoubtedly dangerous for public ethics and morals alike. Especially for teenage boys.

"Yes, he accepted them!"

“That was easy.”

“Angelica-san told me he had a thing for bunnies.”

“Yeah, Oda-kun and his friends were super into the bunny girl beastfolk, too.”

“They’re into bunnies?”

“Uh, maybe? I mean...yeah.”

Yeah, bunny girls in fishnets possessed a devastating destructive force. Twenty-three of them—teenage boys wouldn’t be able to *stand*! An obstructive status ailment would force us to stand all hunched and bent over. I didn’t know if I wanted that to be the norm around here?

“Plus, a design for yukata... Okay, there’s no problem with a yukata itself, but I don’t think I’ll be able to make them prismatic yet.”

The mean girls also had some drafts of their own.

“New mules, huh? Don’t you guys already have twenty pairs of shoes each? What are you, centipedes?!”

At a certain point, more naked legs blew past a teenage boy’s natural limit. They ordered the typical swimsuits, underwear, pajamas, slippers... Huh?!

“But, b-but...d-don’t order your feminine products from a teenage boy! An order form with a joint signature. For real? I suppose I’ll make anything if it means getting cash, but the design and the layout and the warning points are all very, um, vivid... No leaking, no rashes, no itching? Oh man, this is it!”

I got an unused sample. But receiving an unused pad from a teenage girl? That had to be bad news for my sex appeal. Wherever did that little guy go?

Apparently they’d needed them for a while, but it had been hard to admit. Look, I don’t blame them. This wasn’t easy for me, either. That was why they’d unleashed their female body stampede today.

“It’s urgent, huh? Bras, pads... Being a girl sure is rough. But for a teenage boy to have to solve these issues... It’s problematic!”

Not to mention their intricate, high-tech demands. It required a multi-layered fabric structure, emphasizing skin contact, and prioritizing fluid absorption to

prevent staining and permeation to the reverse side. In addition, it required a light adhesive to stay in place. This was deep. Why a teenage boy had to investigate these depths each and every night was one of the great mysteries of the universe. I didn't love that I was getting so in the thick of things, but it was necessary? They said they only had a few left.

"They always talked about being 'featherweight' in commercials. So that's where it comes from! I always feel like I just have to fall into an awkward silence during those commercials. Couldn't they have some more consideration for teenage boys? I get it, so in order to prevent leaks, there's this part to provide a wide fit, like this. That's the shape..." I fell into a happy memory.

I needed to develop a special weave. Only magic could solve this. Leaving aside the philosophical question of why this problem had fallen to a teenage boy to solve, I also needed to deal with this technological question. 'Cause I couldn't think about the former problem!

"I'd like to use magic, since there's no access to any chemical materials in this world, but if I'm going to weave Absorption or Drying into thread, then making a cloth pad is the best option?"

Those could be used repeatedly, so making them prismatic with Stain Resistance should help them last longer. I recognized that ruminating over this question raised the greater question of whether a teenage boy should be ruminating over these questions at all. Regardless, the intricate design posed a challenge. Wisdom had already begun its design analysis. I was confident that Wisdom would surprise me. I mean, I was already surprised. Just when I'd finished pondering why I was making bras in this world...next thing I knew, it was sanitary products. *What exactly is getting sent to a fantasy world again?*

"Gel comes from oil, right? When chilled, it has the same composition as, ya know, that!"

At least I wasn't the only one treated like a creep around here. Everyone deserved a nice hentai sticker slapped on their forehead.

"I don't remember reading anything about pad design back on Earth..." Thankfully so. "Although, producing goods did end up being a category for isekai stories, and I did read a lot of those. Did they really make bras and pads in

those stories? I really don't remember. They all had heroines, and none of them forced anyone to make them bras. How did they get away with it?"

Paper would get too sticky—heat caused it to steam and sag, and it wouldn't return to its original shape after absorbing liquid. Cloth was really the only choice, which made the shape essential. If the fit wasn't perfect, moving around would result in leaks. A shape that fit nice and tight...*in there...* A teenage-boy blackout ensued.

"Ah, yeah, there it is. The 'Magic Mold' I came up with when researching how to make sports bras. This should make it so I don't need to fit them individually! No matter how you spin it, me measuring them so their pads fit nice and tight... No, it's just not possible!"

Magic fabrics were probably superior to chemical fabrics. This meant these pads were going to be expensive, as they would be disposable. This limited the product to natural resources. *I'm not a huge fan of the idea of needing to adventure out in a fantasy world for the purposes of gathering absorptive ingredients for pads?*

"With a hook to attach to the underwear, they shouldn't slide. Then make the 'gather point' with my Magic Mold, apply some Waterproof for anti-permeation measures... Yeah, I don't know how to feel. I just whipped up something marvelous! But, I mean, this is not an object a teenage boy should be perfecting. Seriously!"

That just left the biggest problem.

"In order to test this, I'll need to take a look at a...used...one..."

A daydream blackout commenced.

Cloth pads needed to be washed, but between the Stain Resistance property and the magic weave, they should be pretty sturdy.

"Hang on. I'm the only one able to wash the magic fabric?" I asked aloud, followed by my own screams of torment.

That night, a despondent teenage boy who should've been staring up at the night sky in boyish wonder was instead fixated on pads with a tragic look in his eye. The scene wasn't worthy of any poet. Ya know?

DAY 81

NIGHT

Learning Super-Speed for the purpose of dodging orphan launcher warfare?

WHITE LOSER INN

GIRLS' MEETING

AFTER MUCH INVESTIGATION, revision, reinvestigation, and analysis we discovered the weak point of Sex God at last!

“A thing for bunnies!”

Yup. On the way back from the capital, Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san discovered it during their bunny-girl-outfit warfare: “Enchanted, gap, in his defense” and “Bunny costume, doesn’t try to escape, chance!” It was without doubt—I saw him change under the pressure of prospective beautiful bunny girls. That was his weakness!

“And cheongsam, too.”

“B-but attacking him when his guard’s down because we’re in cheongsam...”

His guard had been up higher with the bunny girl thing, apparently.

“Didn’t they also say secretaries were his weak point, though?”

“Miniskirts activate the Sex God’s attack mode.”

“Let the leotard, slip. Attack before he can knock off the bunny ears!”

“Ohhhh.”

Taking an attack from him meant game over. He’d launch a continuous stream of blows without any opening to get one of your own in. What a terrifying destructive force!

“And weren’t school swimsuits also a weak point?”

“Slip off, it’s over. Gym shorts too, no good.”

“Aren’t they just saying that stripping anything off is his weak point?”

“You’ll be destroyed in an instant without clothes!”

Yeah, pretty much everything was a weak point for him. Bunny girl outfits were usually stretchy, but this design was lustrous and fitted, making it hard to take off. The time needed to take off the outfit would decide the outcome! Even tying him up wasn’t enough... *Wait, they tied him up?!*

Sacrifice and service were important concepts for women in this fantasy world, especially for Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san, who were from a long-ago era. Loyalty and devotion meant everything to them. When he repaid them with equally intense “service,” they felt like they had to serve him all the more. Was a forced servitude war about to break out over here? Yeah, to fight wholeheartedly in order to be the servant of someone else...that just wasn’t normal.

“Tying someone up to trample them in the name of love, devotion, and service...”

“Yeah, there’s something wrong with this.”

In old-fashioned fantasy worlds, powerful men had many wives and concubines who all served them faithfully and with gratitude. In exchange, the man provided them with beautiful clothes and jewelry as well as delicious meals and sweets. From Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san’s perspectives, Haruka-kun had saved them. It was a favor they could never fully repay. He treated them with unbelievable kindness, gifted them endless streams of clothes, jewels, delicious meals, and sweets day after day. Even when they tried to express their gratitude, he just made them enjoy themselves even more, leaving them feeling great but having failed to fully serve him.

“No, they’re managing,” Vice Rep A snorted. “Yeah, they’re managing.”

“He’s giving them all this stuff because he wants them to be happy. Enjoying it all and saying thank you is enough.”

“Plus, they act as his guard on the front lines of battle.”

“Haruka-kun must be so happy just to have their company all the time,” Book

Club President added. “That makes him happy enough that he wants to give all those gifts.”

There was some present hyper-inflation *Gift of the Magi* crisis going on.

“That’s a story about how a husband and wife sell their valuables to give gifts to one another.”

“Yeah. What we’re witnessing is a furious forced gift acceptance of the erotic sort. Nightly couplings between a Sex God and two immortal dungeon emperors epically insisting on gift-giving inflation. Gifts of the you-might-die-if-you-receive-them variety.”

“You can’t serialize that!”

“Banned for certain!”

Both sides wanted to show their love and gratitude for the other, but instead it’d devolved into an incomprehensible sex contest between sexy women and unlimited tentacles. Yes, today made for yet another unforgettable spectacle.

Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san gave both body and soul, everything that they had. The avaricious greedy master tried to give it all back in a furious battle. Each side was desperately forcing happiness on to the other, a real-life magi gift war with no end in sight.

In addition, Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san both believed the old-fashioned line of thought that the most precious gift a woman could give to a man was a child. But they were both monsters, so they couldn’t have a child with him. No matter how hard they tried, they could never be human. The least they could do was give him their bodies and souls—and today, they brought the fire to the fight! They were determined to go in gym clothes, but with their crazy figures, the outfits didn’t look the way they were supposed to.

“Now I want some gym shorts.”

“Yeah, maybe if I could look like that in them.”

“So sporty.”

“Okay, we’ll need additional orders!”

Now that we were delving into dungeons, we had reduced our debt. But we

already had another round of orders? *Still, having fun is good enough.* We had found happiness here on the frontier after having lost everything. This inn. That cave. All our happy memories were from them—they were the treasures of girls who had lost it all. We were happy. We wanted to protect this place and our new neighbors. None of my classmates were interested in becoming nobles or anything. They couldn't stand to leave anyone here behind.

Haruka-kun ensured we were happy here. We treasured these days. We'd lost everything but had found so much happiness in return. That was why we had been so anxious to get back here. All our happiness lay here on the frontier.

While the kids were in the bath, we changed the topic to the issue at hand.

"Yeah, sooner or later..."

"Did you order them?"

"It was our only option."

"It's so embarrassing. I wanna run away."

"I tried it, like, ages ago?"

"I guess we won't be able to."

"I can't stand the idea of my beautiful underwear getting stained!"

"Yeah, me neither!"

There was one reason why Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san insisted that they were concubines and we should become Haruka-kun's real wives. Above all else, they were ashamed that they couldn't bear children for the man they loved. That issue of fertility was related to...the girls' ongoing crisis.

Periods didn't put any strain on our bodies now that we were so high level. We were strong and didn't need to rest. We mostly didn't want our beautiful underwear to get stained. Those clothes were our treasures—we wanted to treat them as best we could.

"Sure is tough to ask of him."

"We need them, though, you know?"

"Should we force him?"

He would probably make them for us if we explained the situation. He would act all embarrassed and try to refuse, but if he knew we were really in trouble, he would help. Still, it was difficult to try to request and explain seriously. Plus, it would be embarrassing for him and even more embarrassing for us!

“Why was he doing a double-act comedy routine with Slimey?”

“With matching ties, for heaven’s sake!”

Slimey had taken his classic paper fan used in slapstick and booked it. Currently, Haruka-kun was running away from the orphans, who fired themselves at him, a relentless rain of rolling kids roiling themselves up into the air and wrapped themselves around him. They had him surrounded without an opening, tied into a high-density, close-combat warzone. Haruka-kun managed to escape by vanishing for an instant with Teleport and moved forward. You couldn’t cling on to something that wasn’t there. Still, they had him surrounded, and we had the elf maiden Erailia-san on our side. Her Emotion Sensing and Thought Prediction perfectly anticipated the direction of Haruka-kun’s Teleport, allowing for new counter-formations. We were getting stronger!

“Orders, *big broooo...*”

“C’mon, big bro! New products!”

“Chestnut manju!”

Haruka-kun still had some equipment on, but we were in light clothing after the bath. Our skin was smooth and warm, and our legs still damp. It was an erotic encirclement of women closing in on him. If we trampled him now, victory would be ours!

“Yeah, ‘big bro,’ I’d really like some cream cake...”

“I could use some outfits, ‘big bro.’”

“More orders, big bro!”

Fortunately, it wasn’t anyone’s special day of the month, so we pushed countless orders on to him as we crushed him between our bodies. He was babbling about something, but he still looked happy, so we increased the pressure. It was hard to believe that a kid this shy about clothed girls was really

a nightly sex god.

We squished him, drowned him—yup, drowning confirmed.

“Thanks in advance, big bro!”

Everyone also put in orders for his supposed weak point: bunny outfits. Prismatic ones, freely changeable to white or black or red. We also got tuxedo vests, turtlenecks, and bracelets. *I’m sure they’ll be adorable. The question is, how will we use them?*

As the kids ran back to the orphanage, Haruka-kun scratched his head with a concerned expression, mumbling to himself. He agreed to our request, which was the first hurdle. That meant only various fiendishly evil, furiously nasty concerns remained.

“Is he gonna have us try them on?”

“No way!”

“Maybe for the cloth pads,” said Vice Rep B. “He, like, totes could.”

“True. You need a nice, tight fit for pads, right?”

“Tight!” the girls gasped. “Fit!”

Getting measured and adjusted in such a sensitive area by the most dangerous, rampaging Sex God out there could only result in a maiden massacre.

“Someone’s gotta go first. Class Rep?”

Everyone nodded.

Well, I suppose I do have Revival, so I can take it as many times as—H-hang on, not me!

“What, me? Why’d you just decide on that? All of you? We could at least draw lots...”

No, I couldn’t do that alone! Or at all! I c-c-c-c-couldn’t be *measured!* Precisely, intimately, and extensively measured by Haruka-kun? Tightly fitted? That was just... *Plunk.*

“Medic, she’s down.”

“On it. C’mon, Class Rep.”

We need these pads, but they could serve as our downfall... Why does the manufacturer have to be a Sex God? It was enough to make you weep.

DAY 81

LATE NIGHT

I have two peaches and four melons, and it looks like I'm getting the cherry on top, too.

WHITE LOSER INN

I SUPPOSED YOU COULD SAY the pads were complete. It remained a serious query as to whether a teenage boy could safely admit to having done it, but it was complete nevertheless. I didn't have any way to improve it until it'd been tested on a live person, and I didn't think Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl ever had periods. It didn't make sense to have them test it out. The only option was to give it to the girls and have them write a report. I also gave them a few pairs of specialized anti-stain shorts to wear them with. *That should do the job.*

I lined up all my "finds" from today's haul. It was a mix of stuff from the dungeon treasure and items I had bought in town today, but most of it was straight from the hands of the soldier puppets.

"It feels weird to carry around so many accessories, but equipment is necessary, right?"

Jiggle jiggle.

"Let's see. This one's got 'Vitality and Intelligence +20%,' that one boosts control. This one's... Eh?"

In terms of effects, I should have been able to use this "Mirror Shield: Reflection" and "Teleport Cloak: Instant Movement." With Magic Entanglement activated, I'd lose control and end up self-destructing again, though. Tough call.

"I always fall for the flashy skills," I sighed. "That's why I always hurt myself."

Jiggle jiggle.

Instant Movement seemed like it'd be especially good for Walking Mastery. Using Magic Entanglement on it would definitely make my movements

significantly faster. Items with simple effects were the most valuable to me. The problem was dealing with the recoil after using Entanglement. I should have set aside the equipment for later, but messing with it was so much fun.

I needed to think about reducing the number of combined items I had, too. I had to prioritize mastering the items I could use, but losing all the power that I'd gained up to this point was pretty scary. Getting my bearings in battle screwed with me, and not being able to do what I thought I could terrified me. I needed to carefully consider the balance of my equipment when I replaced things.

"I can put this Mirror Shield into my staff and then take the 'Mirror Reflection Cloak: Reflects magic' out of my cloak. That should balance itself out, right?"

The Mirror Shield said it gave me complete reflection, not just from magic but from physical attacks as well. Still, I couldn't compare the two until I had actually tested the Mirror Shield out in battle, which wouldn't be worth doing until I powered the shield up with mithril. I didn't know much about that, but I had noticed some trends, such as better items requiring more and more mithril thread. So really, I was judging the merits and demerits of things I had *attempted* to power up with mithril.

"They both seem like good finds, but they're guaranteed to be hard to control once I power them up, right? I need to focus on the basics first. Control above all else."

Life or Death hurt as badly as ever, but at least I was able to fight. I wanted to increase my Vitality as much as possible, but I needed to prioritize control. It wouldn't hurt to buff my HP-related skill, Revival, although it just refueled all of my other skills. That wouldn't do me much good in avoiding hurting myself.

Normally, one built up their equipment according to their fighting style. You'd observe the results in combat and make adjustments, but there's no time for adjustments when your body is falling apart. And forget having a fighting style. I didn't even have an occupation. *I checked, and unfortunately, I'm still a NEET.*

"Specialized sneaky monster-whacking magic! I Entangle myself in all types of magic and Teleport for a sneaky stab. Yeah, that's no fighting style! The existence of stealth stab mages is yet to be confirmed!"

Before I found equipment optimized to my combat style, I'd like to have my combat style optimized first, please?

"I gotta dig up more mithril, too. I'd like to touch up equipment for Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl, and you can never have enough mithril."

With the right ingredients, I could also make stuff from *Let's Go Magic Items!* I hadn't tried my hand at a lot of techniques yet, and teaching my classmates production didn't seem like it'd go very well.

"Some of the girls are still working on their cooking. Don't they know how hopeless that is?"

No matter how good they used to be at cooking, everything went up in flames when you threw in a bit of magic and skill requirements. Their jobs must have been restricting them on that front.

"No matter how bad you are at cooking, things shouldn't literally blow up, should they?"

Jiggle jiggle.

All my other classmates had combat jobs. I got the sense they had adjustments that boosted their combat abilities' growth, but penalties applied to everything else. In the nerds' case, it cursed in all other areas. Last time they tried to make a throwing spear they made a freaking bench, although the orphans liked sitting on it in the dining hall now?

"Maybe I've got a production-related job? Well, I'm technically jobless. If I can't become anything, then I don't have any penalties—so I have to do everything?!"

Wiggle wiggle.

Normally, you'd at least start with a Villager job title or something. The only benefits I got from NEET were tentacles? *Am I a tentaclist?!*

"I'll insert this 'Magic Spear: Intelligence boosting.' Oh, and the 'Magic Rod: Strengthens the body with magic,' and the 'MP Parrying Dagger: Defends and protects with magic.' Those aren't bad either?"

It's just the tragic fate of the teenage boy to be tempted to mix things that

shouldn't be mixed.

"I've got a lot of Vitality-boosting stuff in my boots, so maybe I'm good there? Plus, I don't have anything to switch out for them?"

Jiggle jiggle.

"Huh, a ring? Oh, power up my Demon Ring with mithril?"

Wiggle wiggle.

The demon scythes twitched in anticipation. It was the least I could do for them. To be safe, I took the demon scythes outside, leaving them with Slimey to devour some sweets. I added mithril, resulting in the "Demon Ring: Summons and enslaves demons (according to MP). Intelligence, Resistance +50%. Magic control (ultra)." *Yikes, that got out of control fast!*

"I'm happy about the intelligence and control boosts, but...I'm just gonna pretend I didn't see the first part?"

Some crazy complaint letters about demons and summoning them flashed before my eyes, but it was definitely my imagination. *Teenage boys should not be allowed to summon demons!*

Doing another round of training would be a pain. I'd test out the new ring tomorrow.

"Then I'll power up the rest of the items from the treasure hall with mithril and give away three per person. It'll be a fabulous gift! They'll be so grateful! Plus, those items are nothing special, so I can throw them away on people."

Wiggle wiggle.

Occasional power-ups were always good. I needed to get equipment together for Elf Girl, so quantity over quality. Make some new equipment, upgrade what I got my hands on. The output from Wisdom was so intense it made my head hurt, but my equipment's effects were helping me hang in there. It handled the estimates, analysis, and calculations leading up to construction precisely, and then ran tests and fresh calculations.

Swoop!

Swoop swoop!

Ah, the naked legs were back. Those lovely, long pure white and brown legs poked their way in through the door and lingered there perfectly.

“Good evening.”

“Good, eve, ning?”

I told them not to be formal with me, but Miss Armor Rep was insisting on teaching Dancer Girl some manners. What would I do if she also taught her how to lecture me?

With that, Wisdom started to lose its powers of production, and pieces of equipment tumbled out of the air and onto the ground. Wisdom and Jupiter Eye had gotten too busy with recording the scene! We had long brown legs in high white socks and slippers, revealing ample, thick thighs sticking in from the doorway, and Dancer Girl’s face peeped out. Pure white legs wore navy ankle socks with even more thigh and leg. Miss Armor Rep’s face peeped out as well. Beautiful faces and beautiful legs. Good evening, indeed? *It’s a trap!*

“There are times when a teenage boy must venture on, even if he knows it’s a trap! Ya know?”

My eyes nearly burst out of my head ogling at Miss Armor Rep in navy gym shorts and Dancer Girl in red gym shorts, slipping into the room with their narrow waists and ample busts and butts—aaand they tied me up. Yup, Prometheus Chains. This teenage boy was tied to the bed, stripped of his clothes and belongings, and targeted for a riding session!

“It’s like a badger game but with a lot more violence!”

This high school boy was on a high horse, trying with all his might to achieve high school boy things, but I hadn’t brought my A-game to this war of endurance. They threw my equipment across the room, far out of reach. I could try to retaliate against the pair of navy gym shorts in my face, but I still wouldn’t quite be able to get my hands on my stuff as those shorts stared down at me. *Well, not that they have faces?*

“H-hang on, I’m getting Played with a capital P! A mouth attack that even level 8 Revival can’t haaaaandlllee!”

These girls would finish off a soft serve ice cream in five seconds flat. I’ll make

it for them next time!

They overwhelmed me and crushed me as Revival did its thing, and I was swept across the vicissitudes of all the many lives of this world of reincarnation. Somewhere along the way, the gym clothes got swept away too, revealing smooth stomachs. Even when the clothes were on, it was stimulating. Flesh squeezing in on me. I had four scheming arms and twenty demonic fingers, plus two tongues—*the might of dungeon emperors!* My teenage boy brain reached the limits of consciousness.

But I had prepared for this. In my staff was the “Liberation Staff: Releases bonds. Skill and magic releasing.” I couldn’t use it without boosting my Vitality and Intelligence, but it was the perfect counter to Prometheus Chains!

“Liberation! Liberation! It’s my turn. Activate Teenage Boy! Uh, well, I am a teenage boy, so I’m always activated, but, yeah? Anyway, it’s my turn already! Ya friggin know!”

I boosted my restoration with the “Sparrow Evasion Shield: Vitality, Power +20%. Evasion modifier (large). Evasion (large). Recovery (large).” And the resistances from the “Silver Shield: Vitality +20%. Physical resistance (small). Physical and magic modifier (small),” had been more than sufficient for me to overcome the sticky softness of their lips and mouths. I mean, Magic Spear gave both Revival and Sex God base boosts to begin with. Then I had my Magic Rod for body strengthening my teenage boy parts and the MP Parrying Dagger for extra defenses. I made it out of there intact. It was Liberation Staff Turns the Tables time!

Shake shake!

Pout pout pout!

The pair clung to each other, trembling. I’d have loved to join in, but I had to do something first. *AKA, revenge?* My Vitality and Intelligence weren’t the only things I’d gotten boosts for. More control meant buffs to Magic Hands, Tentacles, and Vibration magic, not to mention the powers of Sex God! *Go, my Magic Hands! Unleash your unlimited Vibration powers!*

“Aaaaack! Eep!”

Revenge complete. After an endless chorus of screams and moans and twitching and writhing, they collapsed. Source of evil, eliminated. All that was left were two beautiful girls on my bed, gasping for air. *Yup, a teenage boy's brain moves only in one direction!*

"Waaaaaaah!" *Plunk, thud.*

Their gym clothes were torn off in revealing places, and they lay in poses that suggested they wanted to do various things. *Things I'll stake my teenage boyhood on!*

"Eeeeeeeeeeep!"

Crash, fwonk.

Those gym clothes were far more dangerous than I'd expected, but I personally preferred short shorts. Shapeware wasn't bad, either. I mean, gym shorts were...sorta vintage-y? I wasn't saying I hated gym shorts, but I preferred shorter shorts. I put a blanket over the pair, who were fast asleep. I looked on their forms, aware the battle was never going to end.

"The trembling tremors of flesh are too tenaciously tempting for the teenage brain. I'd better hide the temptation temporarily before tentacles strike! Yes, bedazzling bewilderment bewitches, and I better beware, 'cause I can't resist jack shit!"

I got a handle on my new equipment and figured out the effects, too. I could cheat my way by with these.

"Time for some manufacturing... Ugh, I hate making menstrual products!"

I needed the means to fight. When my classmates could defeat me, I had to stop fighting. Everyone knew I was already past my limits. I just had to cheat my way by with equipment, which meant more dungeon exploring. That was the best way to get experience and items in the end. Then, every night, I'd go on the greatest adventures this fantasy world had to offer in my own bedroom.

DAY 82

MORNING

A pink ribbon on a sickle-and-chain—I mean, your ladylike prowess is on display, but what the hell is going on visually there?

WHITE LOSER INN

I STARTED SELLING FLAT IRONS for hair the next morning, so after a calamity of cacophonous classmates buying up every last one, I finally made it back to my room. There was no break for me. Just a bunch of angry girls in need of equipment.

Yeah, it was the mean girls. *Put on some armor, okay?* Yup, who cares that you can't see? Plus, even if you could, it's just a bunch of monsters. *Wipe them out before it's a problemo.*

I sold my brand new handmade “Severing Blade: Power, Speed, Dexterity +40%. Sword Mastery adjustment (large). Physical defense nullifying. Severing. +Attack” to the girls who didn't have special swords yet at an outrageous price. That would level up their base swordplay. Next up would be the spear and hammer wielders. *Because I'm not making morning stars. No scythes, either!*

“Let's dig in!”

I made katsu sandwiches for breakfast. These girls really were carnivorous. Fried food had a lot of calories, but fighting monsters made for good exercise, so they'd burn 'em off. In fact, the girls eating too much last night would probably prove the last nail in those monsters' coffins.

I filled mugs with consommé soup. Well, it was just chicken soup, really, but you gotta sound fancy to beat the competition. Those mugs were brand-new products, too, but everyone was so focused on the sandwiches that they didn't even notice. Incidentally, the plates were also brand-new. No one was even looking! *I'm not doing any big plates anymore.* The girls were using their skills—Vice Rep A activated Magic Hands to hold six sandwiches at once, and a Tiny

Tanuki was chomping at every one of them! *Keep your fighting to the dungeon, sheesh!*

“That was tasty!”

After breakfast, I headed back to my room while everyone washed up. It was faster for me to wash everything, but for whatever reason, they insisted? I supposed it was good for the orphans’ education. Poster Girl and Stalker Girl also joined in on the scrubbing, just as aggressively as they had with the eating. But the guys just ran away! Although they’d just get in the way if they tried to help, so fair enough.

Today, I took care of stocking the general store and the armory, as usual, then handled some purchases of my own, before getting a nice portion of glares after complaining about the Adventurers’ Guild bulletin board crisis. I supposed I’d never get a relaxing morning around here. It was lectures from the moment I woke up. Two pairs of gym shorts woke me up and invited me to a nice, long lecture, and I sat up at attention to listen.

I went back to the dungeon gate and went straight to the 80th floor. From now on, I’d be dealing with real beasts with stats of 800 and higher. They were mere inconveniences to the two dungeon emperors I had with me, though, and were quickly obliterated. I was left in my fighting pose, no monsters left for me to fight.

“All right, let’s go down. No more monsters for me anyhow.”

Defeating the iguanas on the 81st floor leveled up Dancer Girl before I could blink. Two scimitars, eight chains, and a whole lot of walloping. The Prometheus Chains were nasty. One whip from them took out level 80+ monsters!

“You used *those* to tie me up. You better wash them when we’re done today!”

I got to fight just three level 81 Thunder Iguanas to adjust my re-tweaked equipment. Magic Entanglement felt light, and I barely suffered any damage. It turned out using Dancer Girl’s circular movement technique reduced the burden on my body. I still didn’t have much of a grasp for change-ups, but I was starting to mix them in. I didn’t know if I could pull off Life or Death without

taking catastrophic damage yet, but I was used to it now. I could still use it in battle if necessary.

I stared at the magnificent armored figures from behind as we climbed down to the next floor. Slimey was extra jiggly today. I'd thought about bringing the demon scythes along, but the monster forest was more fun for them, apparently, so they were taking care of some logging for me. I preferred the forest too, but I really needed to deal with these dungeons. *Looks like this one's gonna be close to one hundred floors.*

Something flashed red, turned orange, then flickered blue as the wick went out in the iron ore bullets. I rotated them at high speed, before launching them across the floor in a raging tumult of all-consuming flame. Ah, good ol' Fire Bullets. Wisdom had drawn up a plan so I could deal with them, relying on my increased control. They were now capable of wiping the floor and burning monsters level 80 and greater to dust. I wiped the floor with them, but it wasn't a very efficient attack.

Now everyone joined in picking up the spellstones from the burnt level 82 Armor Beetles. They were the beetles themselves, but they didn't sing any classic songs, which was a little disappointing. They were big, just like the Fab Four, but also gross and disgusting. I was worried they'd get their juices on me, hence the burning?

"That took a ton of MP. Burning through metal is real tough."

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

The good news was that I was able to burn through armor worn by level 82 monsters. Iron ore made into a bomb packed incredible melting and destructive force. These bullets absolutely pounded their targets to a pulp and blazed at ridiculous temperatures. Plus, those Fire Bullets could serve as grenades with their short fuses. I needed to stock up on those.

The nerds had tried to copy them but hadn't managed to manufacture a single bullet yet. They couldn't maintain proper control over the rotation to

produce round bullets and ended up shooting regular fireballs. The nerds had higher stats than me, so they had more than enough power. They couldn't launch them quickly enough because of how much MP they consumed. Maybe this was a negative adjustment from their jobs, but I couldn't be sure with the nerds. They'd probably end up inventing fireworks before Fire Bullets. Yup, that sounded right. That would be a fun time. *Are we gonna get a nerd store?*

"My control and intelligence have increased, so I honestly could be a Sorcerer, but the fact remains that I'm still a NEET without any affiliation. There're no buffs, but also no penalties, so I can open whatever store I want? Although I do already have a side-job store. I've been raking it in all morning, even while I'm away."

Jiggle jiggle.

The war—well, civil war—had ended. The frontier bustled with merchants buying spellstones and mushrooms once again. And of course, the merchants came with wares of their own, so new products were available in town. I made crazy profits, but wanted all of it, meaning I was flat broke again!

"Money makes the world go round, but the world is spinning so fast I can't keep up? I'm gonna get thrown off!"

Wiggle wiggle.

There were also more adventurers both in the guild and the city at large now. That included not just newbies but adventurers from other regions as well. At this rate, we could easily defeat the monster forest and the weaker dungeons. The frontier army was supposedly going into dungeons for training purposes, but they couldn't handle anything beyond the 50th floor.

Class Rep and the others were already much stronger than top-class adventurers. They had reached the level of heroes. My class was totally safe up through the mid-floors, even past floor 50. They'd started splitting up into two groups to handle floors. Once they got to the deeper floors, the six parties came together into a full troop. Together, they could hold their own on those floors now, a task impossible for other adventurers and even the military. That was how strong they were. There was no rush, but they were fighting their hearts out. *I'm sure that right now...they're out of money.* Yup, 'cause they bought too

much!

“I even tried shouting, ‘After this dungeon, I’m going back to my cave to do some weeding!’ to try to raise an event flag. Where are you, monsters? Was my weeding event flag really that much weaker than the rampaging of two certain individuals? Neither Dancer Girl’s leveling nor my training are going fast enough? I wanna fiddle around in my garden, but boy, fiddling around in the bath sure is hard to quit! Yes, a nice bathhouse scene. I could really use some event flags for those!”

We made it to the 88th floor. This was where Entwined Branches had shown up, my Wooden Staff(?) had become the Universe Branch, the flag for the Mistletoe Sprig had manifested, and all that other junk had happened. I took a peek into the hidden room, but there was nothing there, not even sexy female adventurers getting changed. I could really use some sexy monster girls getting changed right about now, but no one answered my call. My flag-setting was unsuccessful.

“Okay, we’re going to need to narrow our focus for this next flo— Huh? We already did this one too?! Seriously? I guess we did gain experiences of unraveling and revealing in Dancer Girl’s first training session. Uh, never mind. Why are you holding your sickle-and-chain, Dancer Girl? Oh, a present. I’m pretty sure girls don’t normally give you a sickle-and-chain or a morning star as a gift when they’ve got a crush? Huh, you put a ribbon on it? A pink ribbon on a sickle-and-chain—I mean, your ladylike prowess is on display, but what the hell is going on visually? It’s kinda cute? Well, it doesn’t need to be cute, but if it’s a present, why go out of your way to stab me with it?! Cut that out, ya know? Really, I think I mentioned this before, but the sickle should not be flying in my direction for a close-range attack! Okay, I’m sorry! I’ll shut up!”

The dungeon halls were illuminated in a dim glow as glares washed over me. The true pleasure of dungeon raiding! *Glares are the light that illuminate this fantasy world!*

We all split up on the 89th floor, chasing around monsters and wiping them out on our own. Almost all of my targets were snatched away, leaving paltry practice for me. My companions obliterated the level 89 Killer Hounds before I

could even sprinkle vinegar. The doggos whimpered as they got slaughtered.

“You’re supposed to be *killer* hounds! Don’t whimper like that! It makes it harder to hurt you!”

I mixed a powerful dance step with Teleport as I cut through a beast. I used my momentum to somersault into another step, shifting my motion in every which way. This enabled me to keep up with monsters, even those with higher speed stats than my own. At this rate, I might be able to catch up with my own sex appeal. The only problem was it hadn’t been sighted yet.

I was getting the feeling I had gotten stronger (although I had no reason to think I had, really). But the biggest development was that I hadn’t damaged myself at all. I could preserve Life or Death as a trump card now. If I further improved my sword’s dance precision, I could pull off Life or Death with less of a burden on my own body. My improved control over Teleport and Gravity were already showing me that it was possible. Holding magic was supposed to be the hidden cheat code, so it was friggin’ absurd that Holding had become impossible to control once I used Magic Entanglement on it!

“Maybe I should take off my weapons and just focus on combat techniques. Getting rid of God’s Sword makes everything so much easier. I’m kind of nervous to fight without it, though? Plus, it’s already got the Seven-Branched Sword and Mistilteinn in it, so having the Grass-Cutting Sword on top of that feels like overkill. It does actually seem to be able to cut through magic, which is nice?”

Jiggle jiggle.

I analyzed all of the jumble of skills I’d been applying, running calculations with Wisdom in order to control them. It was time-consuming, but I was gathering the information, experimental data, and practical application I needed. At some point, the puzzle would come together perfectly. I still needed more pieces. Or maybe I had too many? A sexy one-piece would really do the job for me now, but the shape wasn’t coming together yet.

“Night is as vexing as can be. I wish I could exterminate the sun so it’d be night all the time. If I did, though, then I’d have the two of them to deal with. It’s vexing to deal with all the sexing, I’m erecting when there’s other stuff I

could be—oh! Someone’s coming, and it’s not me! Who could it be? That soundless high-speed morning star rocketing in my direction means it’s Miss Armor R— *Gaaaaah!*”

Wiggle wiggle.

I was just reflecting on the four jiggling objects Jupiter Eye had recorded so thoughtfully last night. No need to bonk somebody over it. The only problem was Revival might start making things rise. *I’m gonna try hard again tonight!*

The 90th floor boss Greater Guardian didn’t respawn either. Still out of office. I remembered that last time using Mistilteinn here wiped me out. There were still holes in the ground from last time, none of which had been filled. It was quite a scene.

Miss Armor Rep and Slimey had exterminated everything from here through the 94th floor last time. I didn’t even know what monsters there were. The problem started at the 95th floor, so we’d stopped. Sticking together in battle formation was for the best. Dancer Girl wasn’t flawless yet. It was impossible to predict what I would or wouldn’t be able to do, as always. By the time I tried to kill the enemy, they were usually already dead, so it was all pointless. Too bad, because killing solved most of the problems around here. I just wanted to help!

DAY 82

NOON

I'd love to scout out a new sticky, dissolving fluid in the pseudo-dungeon, but everyone got wiped out?

DUNGEON

91ST FLOOR

ITS SPEED WAS OVER 900—double mine. Its power was also 900—close to three times mine.

Power—that was, kinetic energy over time—equaled velocity squared times mass, then halved and divided by time. Mass meant volume and density, and velocity was the Speed stat and then any speed-up modifiers. That was how you measured power. Two times my speed made for four times the kinetic energy at minimum, so that got us an attack that would kill me several times over.

Stats produced those overwhelming mathematical differences. My technique was to do a little cheating, change the vectors, sneakily destabilize the fulcrum, interfere with the core, and nullify the point of action.

“Yup, it’s gonna kill me if it hits, so I gotta dodge and avoid it. I’ll take that power and scatter it into many directions, nullifying the destructive force. It’s just physics, ya know? Tripping the pivot foot is a nice trick?”

Monsters in the 90s were real beasts. And apparently tasty?

Jiggle jiggle.

“Physics and food solve all of a fantasy world’s most pressing challenges. Look at the physics that is ensnaring those guys in chains and destroying them with centrifugal force. Look over there! Physics is cutting them to pieces? Not that the theoretical physics is cutting, but what’s happening is obeying the laws of physics? I suppose the law of nature is kill and win in the end?”

Jiggle jiggle!

While I took on each monster one at a time, the rest of my companions massacred the level 91 Metal Dolls all at once. Killing them turned them into spellstones, so before they could, I tried melting them. They just turned into iron and lead. These giant metal dolls employed speed, weight, and power, making them the ideal opponent for Dancer Girl's circular dance. Just when I thought I'd gotten a ton of bonus iron, they all turned into spellstones? They didn't even leave behind lead!

I used a quick Teleport to evade the charge, sent the nearest doll flying forward with a kick, blocked the fist that swung back at me, and sliced it apart. Straightforward chargers like these struggled with circular movements. Plus, they were stubborn and blockheaded, so they just rampaged mindlessly.

"These metal dolls shift their attacks when they miss. I guess they have some level of intelligence, even if it is low? The meatheads just hit as hard and fast as they can, but that somehow manages to solve things. They really are stupid."

Jiggle jiggle.

As the fist twisted toward me, I ramped up my sword's spiraling helix. The world spun around me as I diced apart the metal doll. This fantasy planet must revolve as well, but I was sure the church would have some obnoxious objection to that physics fact.

"Let's fight seriously, just in case worse comes to worst, okay? Can't let our brains get fried. Not like some tasty fried food, which I could definitely go for. And since we're talking oil, I could also go for some body oil bedtime play. We could jump straight into strenuous, vigorous, dripping, slipping, oil rubbing. Uh, and I better watch out for the morning star, so forget the oil? A perfectly oiled morning star! Not an ounce of rust— Aah! Eep!"

Ka-clang!

I was a hair's breadth from real danger there. The slightest deviation and death would be at my door. That was the overpowering reality of stats. I had to leave the body oil for later. *They're still glaring at me? How glaracious!*

With this level of danger, I'd love to take off everyone's armor and upgrade it

with mithril. If I did that, then the next thing you know, I'd be rubbing and caressing and jiggling their soft, smooth, dripping wet, trembling bodi— *No! Nothing! It's nothing!* I then got bonked repeatedly. They booed me and bonked me. What marvelous cooperation! From a sexiness perspective, it was totally adorable how shy and upset they were. Just mentioning sex made them attack me with full force. They always whipped *it* out—*it* being the morning star—and when they did, it was punishment time for me. So giggling and getting upset along the way, the two of them munched on sweets I gave them to calm them down as we progressed through the dungeon. I didn't want them to fight for sadness and anger but for joy and laughter instead. *Ideally, no more iron balls in my face, please?*

Dancer Girl also used to be in the bottom of a dungeon. That was where the church had restrained her. Neither of them had good memories of dungeons. They'd suffered endlessly, waiting as monsters at the bottom of dungeons for an eternity. If they were going to come with me here despite all that, the least I could do was make them laugh and give them treats as we fought.

Miss Armor Rep took the lead, with Dancer Girl behind her to the left and Slimey to the right. Taking up the rear and striking a sweet battle pose was none other than myself! It was the ultimate formation. One that I wasn't a real part of, if I was perfectly honest, but I kept up with my cool pose all the way. *Just don't leave me behind, 'kay?*

In that formation, we entered a new fray. Level 92 Dissolution Worms squirmed out of the countless holes in the maze-like walls, leaped at us, and were swept aside by a flurry of blades. *As I maintain my sweet battle pose!* Couldn't they leave some worms for me? The tip of the triangle swept forward and slashed, cutting the dissolution worms into countless pieces. None of them made it to my point in the formation!

"Dissolution, huh? A new sticky dissolving fluid is just what I need for the new pseudo-dungeon...but all the worms are getting wiped out! Slimey, I thought you hated bugs! Are you okay with worms?"

Wiggle wiggle.

Slimey didn't seem to be enjoying the worms, but at least he learned Dissolve.

Slimey already knew Tentacle and Vibration magic, plus Adhesion and Equipment Disintegration—did he need Dissolve, too? I supposed it was Predation at work, but Slimey was a wad of skills, albeit a cute jiggling one. Lately, Slimey had been hopping on my shoulders while I did my side jobs and gave me a sticky shoulder massage with Vibration magic. He was the perfect pet, even as he possessed destructive force on par with the other two dungeon emperors.

Naturally, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl also gave me massages, but those sorts of late-night massages rendered me unable to continue working. They involved flesh-on-flesh rubbing and squeezing and grappling and entangling. It was a seriously masturbatory massage here, an orgasmic massage there. The level of massagery made me massively hard for even more dangerous sorts of internal massages... *Yeah, that's not exactly the same as a shoulder massage?*

This trio of masseuses—two sexy massage parlor ladies and one adorable massaging pet—were making quick work of the dissolution worms. I could participate a little in the battle but nothing more than shooting some fire. Of course, there was no dissolving going on, so no wardrobe malfunctions.

More worms threatened to shoot out of the holes once we passed them, but I burned them up, eliminating the threat. That was all I could do. Clairvoyant alerted me to which holes the worms would coming from. So I shot in fire, used Holding to close the holes, and expanded my Fire magic inside—The End. With no wardrobe malfunctions in sight, my teenage dreams ground to a halt. No dissolving today, apparently.

I fried up a late lunch of chicken, cabbage, and mushroom yakisoba in a big pan. The smell of burnt sauce filled the dungeon, but it didn't attract any monsters. 'Cause they were all dead?

They had gotten used to my cuisine, so Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl slurped up the noodles, expressing their satisfaction. I tossed big globs of soba for Slimey to eat up, wanko soba style. If the girls found out I made noodles today but only packed them rice balls, they'd probably throw a fit, so I needed to do something good tonight. I had limited ingredients for my menus, and that wouldn't change until the frontier grew richer. When I was cooking for myself, I just went for cheap and lots of leftovers. Once I'd found out ingredients didn't

go bad in my item bag, a world of possibilities opened up. Now I had the first-world problem of needing to decide what to cook.

“If I ask the orphans, they’ll just request Hamburg steak, and if I ask the girls, they’ll want pasta. The nerdbbrains just want yakiniku. Those are literally the only requests I’ll get?”

Jiggle jiggle.

Meanwhile, Miss Armor Rep, Dancer Girl, and Slimey would want to try new things they’d never had before. I wanted them to eat all kinds of food they’d never been able to eat before. They deserved it.

After we were full, we took a tiny break before proceeding to the 93rd floor. I kind of wanted to call it quits, but it was better to finish off what we’d come to do.

Inferno. Level 93 Flare Creatures—large, grotesque clay dolls made of lava. They were so creepy they’d probably fishify Fish Girl straight back into her fishery. They bellowed as the fierce swiping of swords tore them apart. Then, they got gobbled up. *Does Slimey burn his tongue while eating them?*

Slimey used Ice World to cool them down, weakening the flare creatures’ bodies, and the battle ended in an instant. Good thing he ate that Jotunn a while back.

DAY 82

AFTERNOON

If it goes deeper, then let's dig and delve and dive deep, deep, deeper!

DUNGEON

94TH FLOOR

I COULDN'T SAY that I managed to control my skills, but I was getting by somehow or another. Using Teleport instantly was still difficult, but I could plan it as part of a combo attack. It had become closer to Vanish at this point.

Waves of bugs rained down on us, or rather, waves of *ughs*. Disgusting, nasty, vile bugs! If I could somehow use Teleport instantaneously and go whenever I wanted to, it would become an incredible technique. It allowed me to pass through solid objects, so it essentially nullified any attack coming at me and rendered defenses against my own incoming attack useless. As for the bugs leaping at us, biting at our legs, and clinging to us as we advanced, we just had to ignore them.

Since I could only Teleport according to set patterns, I had to stick to pre-calculated routines. It would be extremely dangerous for me to deviate from the set pattern or timing. I slashed aside the bugs and their chattering jaws. I spun and blasted them aside. I jumped up and sliced forward, slashing the necks as I dived through their attacks. I dodged as if dancing, using Airwalk to drift up into the air as I swooped and swirled my sword—or, er, my stick?

I cut across the one hundred legs of over one hundred centipedes. I sent the tip of my blade into a frenzied dance, waltzing out of range of the sharp talons. I couldn't stop, or I'd get devoured! The problem was that I didn't get any response from my sword in my training. Why was training ten times more dangerous than actual combat? Not being able to land this blow would've been deadly. I didn't let my guard down. I made sure to land every blow. In training,

the only blows to land had been the ones that landed on me. Yup. No matter how often I tried to Teleport or Vanish, I just got beaten up. When I escaped one beating, another beating awaited me not too far away. I always got a complete and thorough beating! There was no beating those beatings!

“Hiiiyah!”

Using 3D maneuvers to get out of the centipedes’ range kinda felt like cheating, but I couldn’t cut all the legs otherwise.

With this number of enemies, my body couldn’t keep up with the speed of my thoughts. High-Speed Thinking came up with the calculations, carefully reading the flow of the opponent’s movements, but I could only physically react as if in slow motion. If I could read the opponent completely, I could calculate the perfect moves, but with so many enemies, there were too many possibilities to account for at once. I became overwhelmed and slowly fell apart. I couldn’t take any big gambles with my fragile body, either. Yes, I had to preserve my precious body for tonight. I’d be more than happy to get destroyed and revived tonight. *I gotta try hard! Yes, my precious body has to make it through to tonight!*

Super-Speed was a technique that increased your physical speed with every step. I used it to give myself some distance, then sliced and stabbed every chance I got. If I stopped, I’d die. If I found myself unable to move, I’d be forced to stop. I had to Entangle the expanding effects; board this out-of-control train. My body creaked, my head hurt, and the world stopped. In that single moment, I understood everything. I understood the dance; the routine I’d take to the stage with my sword—er, stick, rather.

“Pfff! It feels wrong that it’s so much harder to fight without destroying my own body, but it’s nice to fight without pain. Does that make me an M-type? And it’s more mentally exhausting?”

I Entangled myself in my skills, maximizing speed and minimizing movements. I didn’t need High-Speed Thinking or calculations to perform Life or Death at this point. I just had to kill as much as I could, stab and destroy, and shift into the next attack. It was simple. I ignored my body and just focused everything on the tip of my blade, letting it lead me through this battle. My body started to

crumble under the pressure—that was how fast I had gotten.

In order to be able to shift defensive positions and maintain my footwork at these speeds, I needed to accumulate more experience for Wisdom. Then I could perform Life or Death on a whim, but not in an automated way. I was starting to visualize the path toward Miss Armor Rep's Sword Flash attack. Not that I was even anywhere close to it?

"These level 94 Armor Centipedes—is that even supposed to be armor? Why are there so many gaps in it? There are openings everywhere with so many joints."

Wiggle wiggle.

Since the bodies had so many moving parts, the armor was full of openings.

"Are we gonna get all this armor? I dunno how I feel about accepting armor from bugs. I mean...it's definitely gonna be, I dunno, gross and nasty and stuff. I don't want it!"

They pat my back in consolation.

I minimized the damage to myself while going up against these level 94 monsters, mastering my swordplay and moving forward. I couldn't hold out like this for long. At one point, my head felt like it was just going to be crushed under the pressure. Eventually, my concentration would collapse.

Next up was the unexplored 95th floor. We maintained our formation and forged ahead. Since we had to take my weaknesses and the fact that Dancer Girl was still leveling up into account, we had to assume we were at more of a disadvantage than when it was just Miss Armor Rep and Slimey. Having more people meant mopping up weakling enemies was an easy job. With two additional weak points to guard, everyone had to be more vigilant. We kept our guard up as we searched for the monsters, moving through the cold, heavy dungeon air.

"Oh, we got this one."

Jiggle jiggle.

The 95th floor had swarm blobs. They were like lumps of flesh, blobs that

grew wriggling tentacles. I could see 318 of them at first glance, plus another two hundred that stayed hidden. They crawled toward us, dripping slime, covering the whole room in a sea of tentacles.

“Ha! I spend my days and nights tentacle training. Specifically nights, polishing my skills of squirm and slime. You think you blobs of meat can beat me!”

Before my eyes, countless tentacles approached, blotted out my vision, and then got shredded to pieces. They were just little lumps sprouting tentacles. *Warty* lumps! My magic-thread wire-cutter attack sliced them apart from all angles (controlled by Wisdom, of course). Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl hid behind me. Yeah, they were scared of the warty blobs of tentacled flesh for some reason.

It was a safe defensive attack. I held my tentacles firm, cutting apart the waves of swarm blobs. The only problem was that I’d activated high-speed movement and Teleport, making my calculations lose all track of what was going on? So long as I stayed slow, there was no problem. The blobs could regenerate, but they were still weak. I had some energy to spare, so I sent a storm of Fire Bullets at the group of swarm blobs in the hallway.

“Hah! As if anyone stands a chance against me in a tentacle war!”

I was far away from beating the dungeon emperors in swordplay or any battlefield technique, but I had been trampling them in tentacleplay this entire time! *You fools!* Those blobs hadn’t stood a chance. *I may be jobless, but my tentacles will never lose!*

“They seem gross, so don’t eat too many, Slimey,” I said. “You’ll become a little jiggly lump of sticky blob flesh? Ya know?”

Jiggle jiggle.

I used Presence Sensing, but none were left. The swarm blobs had been obliterated.

“Ooh, a hidden room. Maybe someone’s changing in there? Hopefully not a blob or a blob girl? I’m not a fan of blob girls!”

It was a haul of large, pure spellstones, which we could either sell or add to my spellstone battery. Riches were on the way! All those warty nubs, though.

The Way of the Tentacles was deep, and I was happy to go deeper and deeper and *deeper*! Oh, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl were silently glaring at me now?

“Don’t worry, I don’t want any bad tentacles? I’m anti-wart, but certain protuberances and swelling have just the right destructive force for a late-night war-fest?”

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl trembled silently.

“Come on! I’m saying that I *don’t* have any use for bad tentacles? My tentacles are good tentacles! The best? Especially when in the shape of my mushroom pennants!”

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl trembled almost violently now, still silent all the while.

Slimey finished his snack, so it was time to keep going. Oh, right, the hidden room. Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl hid behind me, but I decided to take a look.

DAY 82

AFTERNOON

Unlimited rest is a dangerous proposition.

DUNGEON

95TH FLOOR

I PEEKED INTO THE hidden room. There wasn't a blob girl to be seen. Just a Giga Blob for me to beat up, plus the treasure. Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl tore that blob to shreds like they had a grudge against wart-esque bumpy tentacles.

"No, you gotta tie it up, put your legs around it like this, and spread wide. Right? The key is the 180-degree open legs view. Then from there, the bad tentacle monster begins its marvelous tentacle insertion, right?"

The two of them didn't just beat up the blob, they tore it to shreds, using magic to ensure that not a single trace remained. Slimey was upset that he didn't get to eat it. Why did I sense so much rage coming from them?

"Because of this thing, warty tentacles, tonight!"

"The mushroom shape, dangerous. And...covered in warts!"

Well, it was dead. Today's prize wasn't a key, but a "Necromancy Ring: Intelligence +40%. Sorcery Control modifier. Instant-Kill Resistance. Spirit Production and Spirit Control." *Wow, a 40% Intelligence buff!*

"It's even got a sorcery control modifier, and instant death resistance. Well, whatever? I'll just pretend like I don't see the rest of it. My sex appeal will be sent straight to the afterlife as a necromancy spirit! Is my sex appeal just a ghost at this point? I'm gonna get cursed by my own sex appeal!"

Wiggle wiggle.

This ring was an awkward aesthetic companion for my Demon Ring and Fairy Ring, but I slotted the Necromancy Ring right in along with the rest of them. The

Fairy Ring didn't have any fairies to command yet, so I'd need to double-check that they got along with the demon scythes and the necromancy spirits.

After that was the 96th floor. Since I had focused my energy on maintaining MP and using my sword techniques, I had minimized my self-destruction up until this point...but I had let my guard down in the last battle and broken some bones, so I was getting a massage. *Sheesh, that hurts.*

"Aaahh, the vibration feels nice, but getting to lay my head in your lap feels even better. These things I feel when I extend my fingers are the best! I feel so good, I'm ready to renovate this floor into a bedroom and move on to more imaginary bedroom scene developments. Hang on, I'm in the middle of treatment, don't point a morning star at me? I just squeezed the jiggly things that were right in front of my face. That's all? What's wrong with stroking the round objects above my head while I'm lying in your lap, ya know?"

I can't help myself! Miss Armor Rep had taken off her armor to treat me. The ideal treatment by the ideal body. *Just don't tell her that Revival healed me a long time ago!* I wouldn't mind getting a massage with those beautiful feet, but asking now would trample all over everything I'd worked so hard to revive!

The last fight had been brutal. The 96th floor had the first skeletons we'd seen in a while: level 96 Skeleton Lords. They had proper sword technique and were natural magicians, too. This must've been the final enemy before the dungeon king. They were incredibly strong. Maybe too strong for me to handle by myself. Adding level 96 stats on top of masterful swordplay, plus a shield and armor protecting their bones. They were intelligent, could coordinate in a group, and cooperated to drive us into a corner. We had gotten into such a rough situation that halfway through, I dug a hole, buried them in it, and burned them all up! A fair fight was just too hard!

My sword dance had collapsed. I'd tried too many rotations. I broke my hip, and only the other three intervening had saved me. Now I was in the middle of treatment. Thanks to the Necromancy Ring, I was using an even more powerful slow motion effect, but halfway through, my body simply couldn't keep up anymore. Yup, my stats were still a problem.

As suspected, I was targeted the moment I reappeared after my Teleport-

induced vanishing when up against powerful opponents. If they could figure out where I would reappear, then my only option was to use Life or Death and cut through them, regardless of any self-inflicted damage. Life or Death entangled all of my skills in me, sacrificing everything but speed. It culminated in a single slice, forced into manifesting, and carried an incalculable burden on my body.

“Okay, I’m feeling better. Not that I want to lose my position on these thighs. I want to do many other things between these thighs. I’d be happy for an eternal rest course of dangerous delights. Now that’s a favorable position!”

I understood the deal with the sword dance, too. Attacking consecutively at high speeds was easy to read, but the cooling off period also posed dangers. I was an easy target if I relaxed at any point. The ability to read an opponent was Miss Armor Rep’s and Dancer Girl’s true strength.

The three of them trampled over the 97th floor in an instant. Before I could tell them to teach those monsters a lesson, yeah, they were already teaching them a very strict and deadly lesson. *Actually, there’s no lesson in there if they’re dead?* Sheesh, they’re just whacking them with the backs of their swords, and they’re dying. Brutal.

“I suppose killing with a blunt edge is still killing, so it’s all the same in the end? Ya know?”

The opponents were green-skinned, muscular level 97 Death Giants. Death giants with Instant-Kill eyes—now dying with teary eyes.

On to the next floor. When the monsters were split up all over the floor, it took a while, but we could finish them off quickly when they stayed concentrated. It was easier to gather the spellstones that way, too. That part always seemed to take the longest.

“The 98th floor... Wow, there’re still more? Is this gonna go all the way to 100?”

Jiggle jiggle.

The four of us charged at the grotesque, scale-covered level 98 Reptile Chimeras. At merciless speeds, I leaped from Magic Entanglement into Life or Death, ignoring the self-destruction as I razed the fiends. I couldn’t let my guard

down against these guys—they had Hyper Revival. That wasn't enough to counter a hyper-kill overdrive.

“These reptile chimeras are a wad of several reptiles, but reptiles just so happen to be my specialty? Everyone would be running away if these were bug chimeras. Nobody likes bug juice! I'd run myself!”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Wiggle wiggle.

Slimey froze the reptiles with his Ice World skill, covering the monsters' bodies, aside from the fiery parts, in a sheet of ice that slowed their movements. Slimey went on to eat all of those parts—icy and fiery alike. *That was their destiny either way? Now that should've been the last. Thanks guys. Oh? There's one more?*

The 99th floor dungeon king. This could get ugly. This fearsome dungeon had the power to easily destroy the frontier if it went on a stampede. And now we had to deal with its deathless dungeon king.

A level 99 Shade. The spirit was that of a knight cloaked in darkness. It wielded a jet-black sword and wore dark armor that sucked in the surrounding light. I didn't like it. That darkness seemed nasty. I could see fear flit across Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl's faces. Even Slimey recoiled.

“You three, stand back. I'll handle it? Just 'cause I haven't gotten my turn yet. How will my sex appeal ever recover from striking battle poses without defeating any enemies? My teenage boyhood would never get over that. So give me this one? 'Kay?”

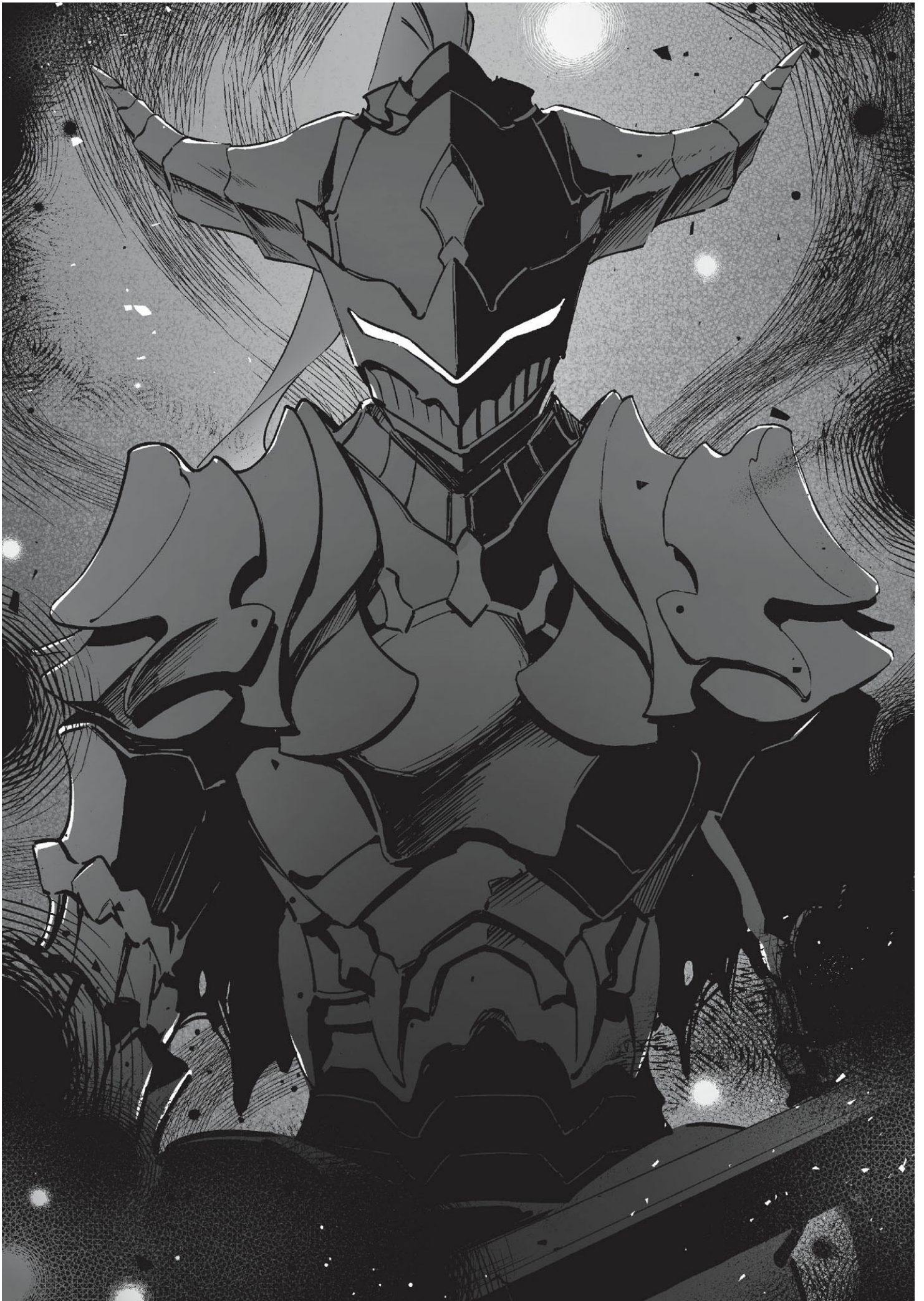
I've got a bad feeling. This darkness wasn't unlike the one that had held Miss Armor Rep captive when I'd found her in the Ultimate Dungeon. It wasn't as thick or ominous, but the unpleasant atmosphere was all too familiar. I had to do this. I couldn't let them stay in that darkness. Not anymore. I had to eradicate it.

“That is the road of the rip-off! Don't look down on tycoons! Suck on these spellstones!”

There's no real expression for getting eradicated via rip-off. *Especially when I'm so short on cash! I just gotta eradicate everything into my own pockets.*

"You'll be my rent mooooneeeeeeeey! Yeah, I'm behind on payments?"

The shade swung its giant jet-black broadsword with its four-figure stats and raised its shield. I targeted the black armor.



As suspected, only a substance-less darkness filled the armor, so it couldn't be killed. But I could neutralize it. My Wooden Staff (?) had eradicated the darkness that'd cloaked Miss Armor Rep at the bottom floor of the Ultimate Dungeon. The staff's true form was the Universe Staff, made of the World Tree, the interdimensional tree that connected nine universes! This was a branch of it! Meaning it was a wooden stick, yeah?

"An interdimensional space tree! I mean, this is one fancy branch. That'll decide this fight!"

This branch should have been able to handle darkness, death, the void, and lectures. Well, maybe not lectures, but certainly darkness. *What has the power to oppose lectures in this world?* Apparently, lectures were the only force that overcame the interdimensional scale.

The knight slashed his jet-black sword, launching a torrential storm of raging winds. I raised my own staff to meet the dark flurry of his blade. I slashed my staff against the downward blow and swept the blade away to the side.

In the pause between its strikes, I stabbed forward, used Teleport, and cut across the darkness again and again at maxed-out speed. Sword and staff crossed in every direction in endless combinations, bouncing and bounding off one another, raging in a whirling storm of swords. My wounds from the black sword were slow to heal; I was dodging, yet the sword still cut me as I used Vanish. The wounds were shallow but present, and what should've been an instantaneous recovery with Revival Level 9 failed to stop the cuts from bleeding.

We sunk deeper, and deeper, and deeper. We were immersed in the heavy flow of time, falling to unfathomable depths... Time piled over itself in thick, sticky waves, pulled out by the power of Wisdom's High-Speed Thinking. We reached the closest possible place to death—a place where time seemed to extend to eternity. The end of the flow of time... Or something like that? Not like I had any clue.

I bent my body to avoid the swinging blade and vanished into mist. Cloaking myself with Illusion, I vanished again and again. My infinite sword's dance cut and carved into the black armor. I couldn't be stingy as I cut and stabbed with

the Seven-Branched Sword, but it still wasn't enough.

I'd die in one hit, so I had to dodge. I dodged the slashes as I cut away at it, but I still couldn't make a dent. My blows were shallow. Thanks to Jupiter Eye, I flawlessly evaded the attacks, but my HP somehow kept going down. Revival couldn't keep up. I was slowly but steadily losing health.

My three companions looked ready to charge in, but I held them back with a glance, continuing to charge through the gap between life and death. I paused for an instant and swung endlessly. I barely managed to lean into Life or Death, barely escaping the blows. I cut through considerable darkness, but my body started to crumble as time passed.

"I still can't do it."

Without any sort of rhythm, I just kept cutting into the impenetrable blackness. I say cut, but there wasn't really anything *to* cut. I just put all of my skills and magic power into Entanglement and forced cutting into reality, using sheer excess to force a result. That was Life or Death. I was going too fast to be able to use the dance steps any longer. My body couldn't handle the inertia, and I was starting to self-destruct.

Then it moved. The dark knight raised its shield and charged. It was putting its life on the line. That was the right move. With its overpowering advantage in stats, that would ensure its victory—a finishing attack that I couldn't avoid.

In the midst of the heavy flow of time and in the face of oncoming death. I didn't see any avenues to dodge with Clairvoyant. Time slowed to an agonizing crawl, and the knight slowly but surely charged toward me, sword raised. The shade's shield hid its soul. All I could risk was my own life, as the shade lay its life on the line in an all-out, head-on attack.

The black sword was unleashed and slowly sliced through the air. It sacrificed itself to launch this undodgeable, unblockable killer attack. It took ages in the endless stream of time to finally reach its destination...but fell over before it got there?

"Yeah, it's down! It's bonking time!"

Bonk bonk bonk... A bonking sesh ensued.

The shade was determined to end the fight, but it was hiding with its shield. A deathless knight spirit obviously had a soul somewhere, and since the armor was hollow, it was an all-you-can-soul-bonk. Its sacrificial charge ended up teaching me its weak point. Do I sound like the bad guy here? I'm not! I always had to deal with false accusations!

Yup, I could feel glares boring into from behind, but I kept thoroughly bonking to the end. It was dead, but I kept bonking just in case. I had to bonk until all the darkness was exterminated and a nice little spellstone was left behind.

“Who knew a little mistake like that could decide the winner so easily?”

Don't throw away your life like that, spirit! The spirit knight risked its life without having any life to risk. It wasn't a wise move trying to bet against someone with Luck Max: Above Limit. Yeah, the shade didn't have enough luck, so it was dead. Not to mention my “Necromancy Ring: Intelligence +40%. Sorcery Control modifier. Instant-Kill Resistance. Spirit Production and Spirit Control,” and of course there shouldn't have been a chance in hell. Spirit Production and Spirit Control could control a level 99 dungeon king. But the dungeon king had made a bet, and it lost? And that was when I'd started with all the bonking?

The reason I was able to use Spirit Control was that it tried to protect its own life.

Were they glaring at me because the only reason I won was by absurd, preposterous, ridiculously good luck? *Hey, my victory was flawless, guys? How else was I supposed to beat that thing? Sheesh, these glares!*

DAY 82

EVENING

Without the bunny outfit, all Lady Bunny had were her bunny ears.

WHITE LOSER INN

EVERYONE WAS DIGGING into piping-hot chicken-and-egg rice bowls. *Dang, I wish I had seaweed.*

“Delicious!” they shouted.

I felt sluggish, but my injuries were healing. Just what had been in that darkness? I had the Universe Staff, and I could use Magic Entanglement to imbue myself with power too, so I’d healed myself completely. I had to be the one to fight that thing. I think if anyone else had tried, they might’ve suffered some pretty nasty symptoms.

“Haruka, seconds, bruh!”

“Me too, big bro!”

“An extra-large helping for me, got it?”

“Secooooonds!”

The dungeon having ninety-nine floors was a serious problem to begin with. That dungeon shouldn’t have been old enough to have even gotten that large.

“With seafood broth!”

“Yeah, broth!”

“Got it. Instead of the meat, you mean?”

“Shaddup! You can’t have a chicken-and-egg rice bowl without the chicken!”

Did the dungeon grow rapidly, or had I missed it before? Thank goodness it’d stopped where it had. Anything on the 100th floor and higher would get much,

much more powerful. Dungeons needed to be stopped before they got to their hundredth floor, but you didn't know how deep they were until you went inside. The goal with anything that deep was to destroy it, not investigate it.

"Mega-size bowl with extra meat."

"And chestnut manju..."

"Big bro, I want some soup!"

"Gimme a bucket! Extra-large!"

Jiggle jiggle!

"Oh, like, me toooo!"

Shake shake.

"..."

"Boys!"

The more the girls leveled up, the more they needed to eat...or at least that was what you'd think by watching them. Nope, they just ate a lot. They claimed that going without big meals at high levels left them haggard, but then why did they exercise so desperately after every meal? Their level was having a hard time keeping up with their nutritional intake, not the other way around!

"That was amazing!"

"Thanks for the meal!"

"Aw, c'mon, the boys ate all the meat!"

We had a meeting. The other groups had made it to the middle floors of their dungeons and were going to take on the level 50 floor boss tomorrow. Just to be safe, they were going to team up in groups of two parties. I had figured I'd go on to the next dungeon tomorrow, but Class Rep told me to take a day off. Did my face look that pale? 'Cause my face didn't mention anything to me about that? Maybe I'd lost too much blood, or I'd got sick because of the darkness, or my guilt was just showing through...or possibly my horniness. Regardless, I did feel a bit under the weather. To be safe, I turned the Universe Staff into a bracelet and put it on. I expected to be better by morning, but Class

Rep told me to not go out anyway.

“Things may get busy in the dungeons the day after tomorrow, so it’s a good chance to go get some cave time.”

Neither Slimey nor Dancer Girl had been to the cave before. Miss Armor Rep had only gone once, and the girls wanted to check it out too. But first, I had to clean up, mow my lawn, and mow down the goblins. It was a good idea to check out the situation in the monster forest.

“Isn’t Mr. Meridad gonna be back the day after tomorrow? Did you hear from him?” I asked Stalker Girl.

“Duke Omui hasn’t come back yet, but I heard from his retainer that he requested you do some logging.”

The logging request had come with a map marked with three large areas and countless smaller ones. The forest had expanded a lot, so we needed to prioritize the areas closest to towns and villages. I had asked my demon scythes for help, and they’d handled one of the large areas as well as a few smaller ones. They’d come back with tons of mushrooms as well. How exactly had these giant scythes gathered mushrooms? They brought back spellstones, too!

The girls were about to do their just-one-more-set *DDR* sesh, so I went to take a bath. Even the orphans were gonna join in on the *DDR*. What exactly were they trying to achieve here?!

“I suppose it’s more of a school of combat by the name of *Dance Dance Revolution*, and the orphans look like they’re having a fun time doing the hopak. What is it, a party?”

Wiggle wiggle?

The general store lady and the armory dude praised the orphans, saying they worked hard. The guild receptionist lady said they were good kids, but glared at me the whole time? What was it that she wanted to say?

The kids and their cute boxy backpacks were popular in town, and they got all sorts of sweets from the townspeople. We supplied the rest of the frontier orphans with backpacks, too, so now the city was overflowing with kids running around wearing them. Tiny Tanuki occasionally mixed in with them, too. I

couldn't tell the difference, so it was fine, but something felt wrong about a teenage girl with an elementary schooler's backpack?

"Ahh," I sighed, getting into the bath. Slimey jiggled.

My wounds tingled but weren't as deep as I feared. These were nothing. I got breaks and tears and stabs and snaps on the daily. I kept the Universe Staff on me the whole time, so I would be fixed back up soon. That darkness packed a serious punch. I needed to focus on healing.

The girls cleaned up from dinner while Slimey and I took our bath. I focused on entangling myself in Revival, letting the magic power from the Universe Staff circulate through my body. Slimey cast Heal and Purify on me—a nice, wriggly healing sesh. I soaked deep in the bath, spacing out. I had a lot I needed to think about, but I did what needed to be done today. We won. I could get the Dungeon King's drop item and check out the hidden rooms later. For now, I just let my mind wander and focused on healing. I felt my exhaustion begin to wash away.

"Aaaah."

Boink boink!

So relaxing. So much jiggling. I spent a long time in the bath. When I finally got out, feeling dazed and relaxed, the emergency just-one-more-set sesh had reached its climax. Miss Armor Rep taught swordplay and Dancer Girl shield techniques. They sparred with the girls one-on-one, even giving them personalized lessons.

Miss Armor Rep picked up some new sword techniques from Fish Girl. Gymnastics Girl initiated Dancer Girl into her sport. Miss Armor Rep taught the mean girls and the student council swordplay. Dancer Girl taught the volleyball girls shield techniques, and the arts club girls evasive maneuvers. With two teachers, the girls could learn all sorts of things. It all increased their chances of survival. They even began a morning star and sickle-and-chain class—*uh, I don't think that one is necessary*. They only used that one on me, not monsters, and that decreased *my* chances of survival. *Please stop this, class! I'm begging you!*

"Thank you so much," the girls said.

It looked like they'd finished up.

"Are the nerds slacking off?" I asked. "Weird for the meatheads not to show up for a training session."

"Oh, the guys are off training by themselves."

"Yeah, they've been at it for a while now."

Were they focusing on honing their party combat techniques then? With nerds like these and idiots like them, a guys' party would be tough to handle. They'd be better off learning from Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl for individual prowess, but individual practice wasn't the same thing as party-level strategizing.

I felt the most comfortable with the power levels of the nerd and the mean girl parties. The student council was incredibly powerful, but I had reservations about them. The sports and arts girls were too unbalanced. The nerds in particular were experienced killers. They had the instincts for it, and they knew deep down that hesitation meant death. Monsters weren't deceitful. They came right at you trying to kill you. People were different. Someone pretending to be your ally might try to stab you in the back. It would be for the best if none of us ever experienced that danger, but if we did...well, people were different.

The girls were too nice to deceive others or even think about needing to stay on guard for treachery. I didn't want that to change. They didn't need to become like us. I hoped they never had to. The guys hadn't let go of their weapons for a moment since coming to this world, even when in the inn. To them, the fight never stopped.

I went up to my room and took a little break before starting to work. I still felt a bit off, so I pet a very jiggly, very wriggly Slimey. Good ol' Slimey. A world of difference from that disgusting clod of meat swarm blob! Slimey used Healing magic on me as I pet him. My wounds had almost faded away already.

"I can't believe I was a normal high schooler three months ago. Now I've got Revival to heal injuries, I can grow tentacles, and I still don't have a girlfriend. Instead I've got concubines? Meanwhile, my sex appeal... Well, my sex appeal was never around to begin with. I don't think I've seen it a single time? I'd love to! At least once!"

Jiggle jiggle.

Running out of MP had further increased my exhaustion, but now that my wounds were closed up and my MP had recovered, I was starting to feel better. I'd been too sick to eat much at dinner, but with my MP restored, I could eat and sleep. Sleeping would be the hard part, though. You try telling a teenage boy wedged between two beautiful girls to sleep. A teenage boy in that situation was caught in a spiraling whirlpool of lust and desire and had an unbeatable sleep ailment resistance! Sleep was all but impossible!

For now, food. I called over the demon scythes and gave them and Slimey some sweets—the cookies I made for the orphans. It was my special distraction weapon developed for the purpose of evading the orphan launcher attacks.

“The way it works is that when the orphans start firing at me, I place these cookies down all tactical-like and escape while they're distracted,” I explained. “The orphan launcher is reaching unholy levels of destructive power now that the frontier orphans have been added to the ranks of the capital orphans. They're working all over the city. I can never know where they're going to appear from.”

Jiggle jiggle!

“...”

“They're tasty? All it took was using Alchemy on some flour, then flattening and baking them to reach universally proclaimed Rank 1 deliciousness.”

All cooking took was a bit of effort. Er, I mean magic.

“Here, hot milk. I just heated it up, so be careful. Although, you're a Slime and literally giant scythes, so I don't think it'll be a problem, but blow on it just in case. Ya know? Please?”

(Foo, foo.)

“...”

“...”

I figured Slimey would be able to do something resembling blowing on the milk, but even the scythes managed it. *Fantasy worlds are truly amazing!*

I had so much to think about—the darkness, the growth of the dungeon, the warty tentacles... But for now, relaxing was enough. Especially with a new companion to care for. I deserved to relax.

“In the midst of my relaxing, two Tuxedo Bunnies Level: Hot have come to the room to join in the dessert fest. A nice relaxing dessert party...with thighs squeezed into fishnet tights! No, no, relaxing hot milk...and milky objects squeezed in between elbows!”

R-r-r-relax! Four shaking, long bunny ears, two round, fluttery tails, but no, a relaxed dessert party! I needed to unwind from a long day of fighting! I really did! Leisurely, relaxed time spent jiggling and bouncing and aaahh!

Sublime, sexy tuxedo bunny girls crowded me from both sides of the sofa, snuggling into my chest and sitting on my lap. Those lovely bunnies started feeding me cookies. *Wow, this sort of service could probably rake in a fortune!* If I dropped my gaze, my eyes would run into brown thighs wrapped in fishnet tights, and then white thighs hidden beneath black stockings. Entrancing! *This is a bunny trap!*

Slimey and the demon scythes fell asleep after eating their fill, and the orphans had been put to bed. But it was still too early to sleep. The three of us being alone here would result in furious activity, with Miss Armor Rep on my right side wrapping her legs around me, and Dancer Girl on my left side squeezing me with her long legs. Arms entangled me from both sides. My right hand caressed Miss Armor Reps’ thighs, and my left hand Dancer Girls’ thighs. My god! I was on my way to becoming the peach boy of Japanese legend!

“No, that’s a story about old men! No old men for me!”

I jabbered nonsense as my arms wrapped my beauties in stimulating squeezes, my hands caressing glorious thighs. With my hands and arms restrained, the two alluring, beauteous bunnies leaned in to feed me cookies. This was their way of thanking me. They realized I wasn’t going to let them take on the darkness.

“I mean, there was no training for that. It was a true life-on-the-line, tight-rope-walk-of-death kinda fight. ’Cause risking my life is the only way to get me to give it my all anyhow.”

Cuddling and stroking, kissing and mouth-to-mouth cookie transferring, trapped by smooth, soft skin. We weren't close to heaven. We were way beyond heaven. We were in bunny paradise! They squeezed me here, stroked me there. Those beautiful close-range bunnies closed in. Even I, the master of ripping people off, was easily ripped off by this bountiful beauteous bunny paradise!

“Our gift, to you.”

Bunny paradise was on the 999th floor of heaven, minimum. The white room with the old god dude was probably on the very basement floor under the trash collection area. Their offerings squeezed and rubbed all over me. The bunny outfits gradually opened, revealing more and more skin, causing various teenage-boy problems to emerge and awaken. Before long, the mouths on those lovely bunny faces got very, very busy!

The two of them must have felt the same danger of the darkness from that bottom floor. I'd even seen Slimey trembling. They had worried about me when I'd gone to fight alone, and they were thankful for me taking care of it. Well, 'cause I didn't sense the issue to begin with.

I felt various sensations appropriate to a boy of my age—the abundant sensitivities of the condition of teenage boyhood, that was. I didn't get any bad feelings about the darkness. Nothing to fear, at least. It wasn't a big deal. I mean, worrying that I might die wouldn't help me win or anything like that. I was confident I could win. It had been the right call for me to take it on.

Now I had the benefits of dealing with the exciting entertainment of beautiful bunnies shedding their bunny suits! I was happy they were happy, and now I could receive that happiness back! Yes, oh yes! I hadn't found any suspicious night stores around here, but as it turned out, the bunny paradise hotspot had been right in this room all along. *Wait! What? Why pull out the chains?!*

Bunny bunny...

DAY 83

MORNING

An overwhelming sensory overload of sensations and sensitivities supposedly incensed sensual senses.

WHITE LOSER INN

THEY GOT MAD AT ME. The lecture came like the dawn rising over the vast horizon. A lovely night of bunny-bunnying got them super pissed?

After so much coming, what problem could've possibly come? Maybe it was the bumpy tentacles. They seemed to love them at the time though? I could clearly prove that the lumpy mushroom-headed tentacles were at least three times as effective compared to standard tentacles. Had that still left them unsatisfied? They passed out with faces of complete and utter satisfaction, but they went straight to a tentacle lecture first thing in the morning. Maybe there were still improvements to be made.

"Look, it was simply imbuing sexual technique and Sensitivity into wart-like nub-equipped tentacles, which incenses the sensory faculties for increased sensitivity to sensual sensations. A purely pleasant provision that pleased you then, but now you're purely pissed."

I decided to change the shape of more of my tentacles next time to compensate for my lack of sex appeal. So far I had been able to develop seventy-eight different patterns from tentacle shape transmutation. I had to go through several trials before the girls were completely satisfied. *Time to bring more transformations to the table tonight!*

While they were lecturing me, I sneakily practiced nubby tentacle Vibration and new pattern transmutation. *Yeah, this seems powerful. Definitely trying this one tonight!*

They kept lecturing me, even though they were too weak-kneed to stand, so I stuffed two big anti-lecture mushrooms into their mouths. Based on

experience, I knew that the lecture didn't stop until they started eating the mushrooms. The only problem was once they finished, it restarted at twice the power—now was my chance to escape!

“Today's a day off, so it's perfect for a nice cave tour, wouldn't you say? Slimey's never been there before, and this is Dancer Girl's first time in the frontier. She'll want to check out the forest and cave. Also, that's my house? Ish?”

Yup, I should've been staying there, maybe occasionally coming into town. So why had I barely been able to go there at all? There were two paths, and that cave was my home in both of them. If all my classmates put their abilities together to set out on adventures and become heroes in this world, I would've stayed in the cave to make items for them. Or I could've assisted with the kingdom's domestic affairs.

Of course, one of my classmates had to choose to become invincible and steal everyone else's cheat powers by force. That path could've ended with us killing each other at the cave. We went down an unexpected third path, and thanks to that, I met these three. I wanted to invite them to my home. My cave.

Slimey jiggled all the way. He'd been looking forward to this since before the war. Dancer Girl looked excited, too. When we got there, I decided to remake the swing so that both she and Miss Armor Rep could get on it together.

Hungry orphans and other still-growing boys and girls were waiting in the dining hall. Wisdom's ability to control Sensing and Parallel Thinking enabled me to cook and prepare various ingredients simultaneously. We ultimately ended up with omelet rice, Hamburg steaks, meatballs, spaghetti Napoletana, and fried chicken. The orphans and Elf Girl had recovered from their illnesses and nutrition deficits, but I stuffed everything with mushrooms to be sure.

“It's the kiddo ketchup crimson lunch. Dig in.”

“Thanks, Haruka!”

Wiggle wiggle.

I was experienced at making all of the individual items, so some simple simultaneous cooking pulled everything off. Making the plates for the kiddos'

lunches was more work. I had buckets for the meatheads, then a plate and a bucket for Slimey. The demon scythes were digging in, too. Seeing giant death scythes eating the little kiddie lunch was surreal.

“Big Bro, it’s so good!”

It was the orphans’ first time eating omelet rice. They seemed to like ketchup. I wasn’t fully happy with my ingredients and seasonings yet. It was too bland for omelet rice for kids who had suffered from malnourishment for so long, cooked with extra milk and medicinal mushrooms. I prioritized their growth, vitamins, and nutrients above all else, so it couldn’t have been that tasty. The kids had been exclusively requesting food with ketchup lately, though. Hence the meal of Hamburg steak, omelet rice, meatballs, and spaghetti Napoletana. Everything was topped with ketchup. The whole meal was bright red.

I had made the girls new powered-up trial armor, so they planned to test the armor out before heading to their dungeons. In addition to enhanced properties, I added new and improved imbued effects to the armor. The upgraded design was considerably easier to move around in as well. It ended up being snug and accordingly sexy, so they needed to make sure to test them out without any teenage boys around.

The rest of my classmates handled clean-up while I went into town. It was Dancer Girl’s first time going shopping with her own money. I’d made sure to give her a fair salary in exchange for her work, and she was having a blast shopping with it. What beats squandering cash?

Right now, the frontier had more wares than the capital, and of higher quality, too. It was also a different level of lively. The lumpy dirt roads had been paved with flat stone, and old houses that’d been little more than piles of rocks were now renovated and sported white walls. Lumber, which used to be in short supply, had made its way to the market. Colorful signs now adorned the city streets. Trees had been planted along the now-paved roads, adding to the upscale urban vibe and creating small plazas with benches and fountains around the city center. The streets and shops were totally different from how they used to be, but we didn’t get lost. I mean, I was the one who’d planned and made everything, so that’d be impossible?

People flooded the bustling general store, as usual. The general store lady watched me from the register at the end of a long, snaking line. She looked like she was on the verge of tears, so I activated Magic Hands to rain products for a little rapid-fire restocking sesh. I set up a display for the new products while I was at it. Now there was the long line to the register. Good enough for now! The orphans would be coming as reinforcements soon.

Dancer Girl slipped through the gaps in the jostling general store crowd to grab what she wanted. She still didn't have all the daily necessities, so she was going all-out on shopping. Meanwhile, Miss Greed was snagging more than a few new clothing items. And our overeater was jiggling his butt off as he devoured something outside. Since when could slimes order from food carts? And bargaining, too?!

"She's overwhelmed by the options and just buying everything, but didn't I make that at my side job recently? It was right in the room. She doesn't need to buy it here?"

Jiggle jiggle.

I supposed going out shopping was the fun part to begin with. Even though I gave an extra helping and a half of pocket change out for the bunny paradise service I received last night, the two of them were looking over their new piles of clothes, checking the price tags with concerned expressions. *I think we're gonna be here for a while.*

I was making so much from the dungeon, I could give out as high of an allowance as they needed, but the other fun part of shopping was needing to cut down and make decisions. The two conferred with one another, debating. It looked fun. All of the products were ones that I'd made with my side job, so I could make the stuff for them anytime, honestly. Oh well.

After they finished, we went back outside, their arms full of clothes and satisfied looks on their faces. We dropped their stuff off back at the inn first. I could've put everything in my item bag, but they wanted to try on their new outfits.

I also decided to make them their own room out in the cave. Then it could be a home for all of us.

The overgrown grasses and the towering trees that blotted out the sky formed a natural dungeon: the monster forest. Even if an adventurer tried to burn it down and force his way through, he'd lose his sense of direction before long and fall into a nightmare, attacked by monsters from every which way.

"I've got the Map skill, though, so it's no biggie? Any monster attacking us would be in way more danger from us than we'd be from them?"

Jiggle jiggle.

The dense forest let off an overpowering smell. Grasses and shrubs sprouted from the moist, dark brown earth, and the deep green trees blocked out the sunlight, casting the forest in a murky gloom and creating a maze beneath the trees. In that maze, fearsome monsters attacked—*er, never mind*. They ran away. No matter how fearsome I tried to make those goblins and kobolds seem, they always disappointed me.

"Seems like the rep of this monster forest isn't particularly powerful. I mean, there's only gobos and kobos around? All this chatter about monster forest this and monster forest that. It's some woods with goblins and kobolds and mushrooms. I don't wanna hear about expeditions or explorations or monster subjugation. This is my homecoming!"

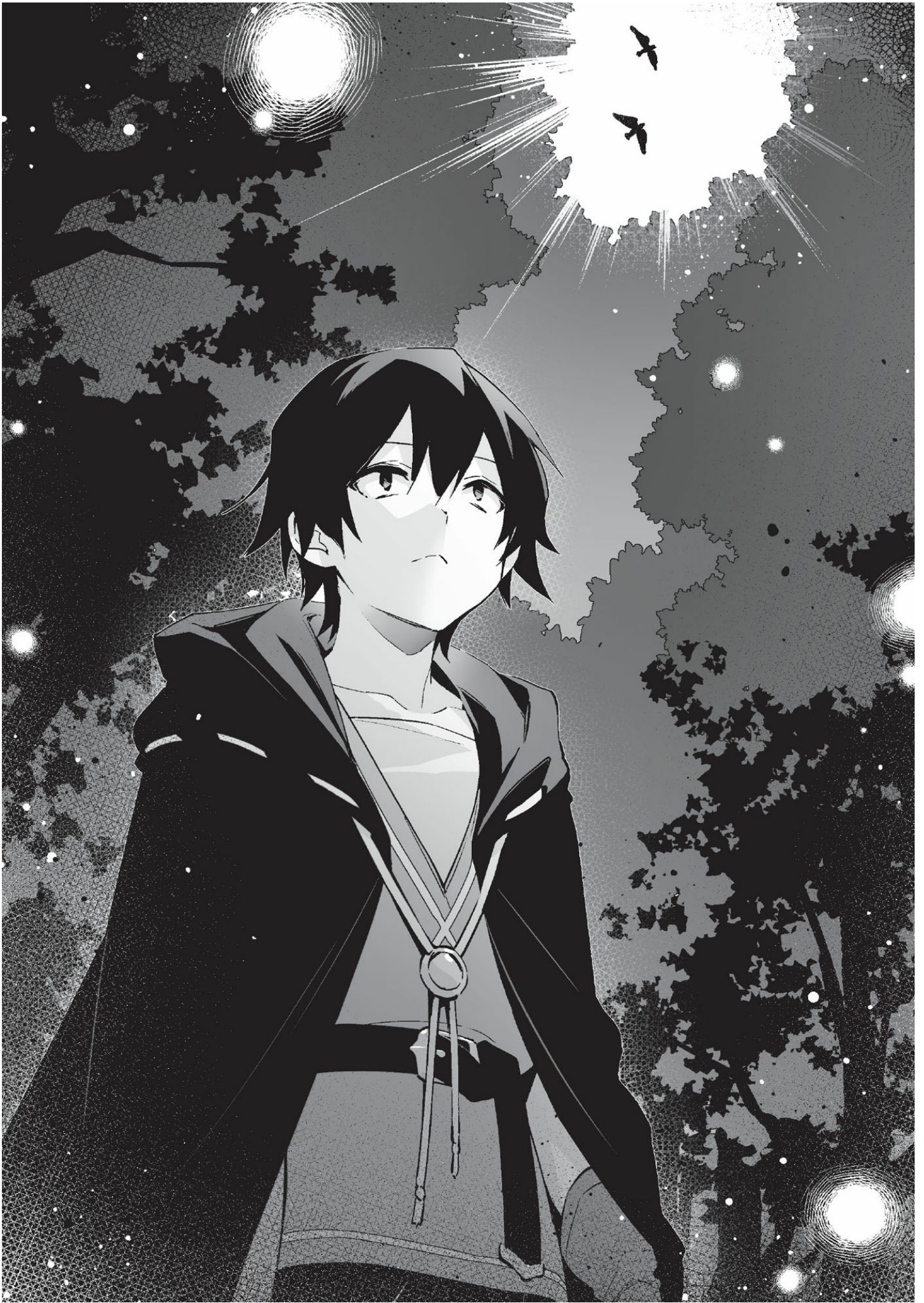
Wiggle wiggle.

The monster forest was an important and dangerous region. You needed a note from the duke just to get near it, and an inspection before you could enter it yourself. Getting permission to enter labeled one as a full-fledged adventurer, or so I heard.

"Needing permission to get to my own home?! My *house* is out here, damn it! I was only away for a while, and now they're telling me I need a report and a note to go back to my own house? I'm not an adventurer, so I can't get either of those!"

Out in the dark, dense woods, the trees blocked our peripheral vision. Monsters lurked in the shadowy chaos, charging out of nowhere as if they were spawning out of the ground. That was the essence of the monster forest. Except my peripheral vision worked fine, and I could see everything. I mean, I had Jupiter Eye and Area Analyze. Plus, the monsters got absolutely destroyed the

second they approached us.



“The monster forest is overrated. I suppose the center is nasty, but everywhere else ain’t so bad. There’re some orc territory zones... But they’re just orcs, ya feel?”

Jiggle jiggle.

The four of us scattered to chase the monsters, but they were all low level and none put up much of a fight. The monsters had expanded their range but remained weak and low in numbers. Finishing them off still took a while with so many mushrooms to pick, though.

Slimey was boinking around, devouring goblins merrily. Their Super Horny must’ve accumulated. Same went for Class Rep... Yeah, she also had Alpha Male and Revival, didn’t she?

“Our Hijack specialist sure is a peerless eater though, ain’t she?”

Wiggle wiggle.

I’d love some auto-cheat skills myself, but even if I got them, I wouldn’t be able to use them. Those cheat skills only activated in set patterns, meaning you couldn’t stop and shift gears halfway through. A scary proposition for me.

“But I wanna shout ‘Sevenfold Slash’ and stuff! I have a lot of skills that I’d prefer not to vocalize aloud, though. Like ‘Go, NEET!’ or ‘Activate, Loner!!’ I don’t want to fight screaming either of those. And definitely not ‘Lascivious!’”

In a twist of irony, I killed all the goblins by sneaking up on them and taking them out in one hit. I now had a variety of techniques to take them out head-on—my equipment could handle a few of their blows—but now that I could handle a proper battle, none of their attacks could scratch me. I didn’t even need to activate Thought Acceleration. Those goblins moved in slow motion. I bonked them; they died.

It had been so long, but I felt like I had somehow been here all along. It was nice to see the goblins and kobolds, although we had thoroughly eliminated them, so I wouldn’t be seeing them any time soon. *Meh. They’ll be back.*

At first, I’d lived here all alone. Next thing I knew, I was surrounded by my female classmates, and I was now back here in this group of four. I figured I’d

spend my whole life alone in the forest, but somewhere along the way life took a more exciting turn. The forest felt both nostalgic deeply meaningful. And seeing it with these three felt totally different.

Although...the monsters were pissing them off. Fortunately, they exterminated every single monster in the neighborhood by the time we got near the cave?

DAY 83

NOON

The battle is raging on land, sea, and air, but water is where the truth manifests.

MONSTER FOREST

HAD I FINALLY gotten stronger? I had equipment so ridiculously overpowered that it destroyed my own body in the process. But what about me?

I managed to level up to the extent that I could. I remembered fighting in this very forest, unable to break the level 10 wall. Now I was level 23. Had I really gotten any stronger, though?

“Ah, there it is. ‘Level 20 Beginner Adventurer Set.’ I bought this as a commemorative item when I finally made it to level 20, but I totally forgot about it. I don’t get a good feeling from the looks of it, but maybe this is the best fit. Ya know?”

After I got fed up with fighting so many gobos and kobos, I suddenly remembered it.

“It’s just a wooden stick. Although it’s got metal on the tip. Light armor made out of cloth and leather. Jeez, it’s hard to put on! Uncomfortable! Can’t move! Then a leather helmet, boots, and gloves... There’s only metal on the shoulder pads. And this cloak is so damn heavy!”

This was the standard equipment for a level 20 adventurer. Naturally, it didn’t have a single skill equipped. Using Magic Entanglement left me feeling strangely empty and the Entanglement itself was weirdly thin. I’d been practicing Magic Entanglement late at night without any equipment at all, however, so I’d get used to it quickly.

Short, ugly runts with greenish skin. You couldn’t really call them little devils, and they didn’t resemble sentient life with those hideous faces. Wielding sticks

in the tall grasses—a goblin!

Kabonk!

A dead goblin. I tried getting excited about it, but goblins were just goblins in the end.

“Yeah, facing a single level 9 goblin won’t teach me anything? I whacked it as hard as I could, and it died?”

Jiggle jiggle.

It turned out I couldn’t activate Teleport without my equipment. Maybe I could force it, but I had no chance of controlling it, making it far too dangerous to use. I tried skipping up into the air with Airwalk, but without equipment, I couldn’t do that, either! I did fling myself into a group of goblins, though. I used Magic Entanglement, activated Life or Death, and slashed, taking out six goblins in three attacks. *That’s still an instant kill!*

“The strongest one was level 14. There were six of them, but it was a surprise attack, so I can’t make any judgments.”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

Talk to me, guys! They looked bored with nothing to do.

I could activate Life or Death now, and I didn’t suffer any collateral damage, either. Everything was extremely weak. I mean, normally all goblins take is a little whack. Using Life or Death was way too fast for them, so it wasn’t any good for training. The goblins died with confused expressions on their faces. Yeah, those clubbers? They were slow and stupid.

I went around testing things out, but my level and skills didn’t respond at all to killing the low-level goblins. I risked my life fighting in this forest two months ago, but now I could easily sweep through it without equipment.

“I don’t know if I got stronger or more skilled, but either way, this isn’t good practice.”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

I let Miss Armor Rep, Dancer Girl, and Slimey loose in their normal equipment. Their “normal” involved combat-specialized top-class skills and mithril-imbued equipment. Pretty darn powerful for around here. Appearance-wise, they wore fashionable sailor outfits and one-piece dresses, so they looked more prepared for a picnic than a battle. I suppose the battle was as leisurely as a picnic, in a sense?

“Hiyah.”

I tried attacking goblins time and again, but allowing them the first move and letting them surround me didn’t make it any harder. I *had* gotten stronger—I could fight without trickery. In addition to improving my stats and having an overwhelming number of skills, my actual ability had also improved a bit. I had desperately struggled to sling together tricks and fakes just to get by, and it looked like it all had panned out in the end.

“I’m still a glass cannon, but I’m certainly a little better than before. I almost died in this forest a few times? Me, the nerds, the girls... We all fought here on the verge of death. That wasn’t even that long ago.”

The meatheads had turned into wild animals since then. Just eighty days ago I was scared for my life, trying to survive in this forest. It felt like ages ago, but it wasn’t long ago at all. A lot had happened since then, and it had all meant something. The three with me now were proof of that.

We hunted down the monsters and picked mushrooms before heading to the cave. The demon scythes took a different route and met up with us afterward. I got bored, so I put my regular equipment back on as we headed through the forest.

The demon scythes had ended up reverting back to level 1 after I officially used Servitude on them, so I wanted them to level up here. It looked like they’d done some logging while they were out. Sheesh. They were going to leave me behind in terms of levels at this rate. Yeah, that was inevitable?

I supposed you could call this a safety zone. It was only a little farther to the cave. Everyone ducked down. I confirmed we were headed in the right direction, and unleashed it to the extent I could control—"Dimension Slash!"

"Be mowed, foolish grass!!"

I unleashed Dimension Slash, which was fully imbued with all my magical power and skills. I chose range over power with Wisdom and launched the attack over the widest possible area that I could control, slashing down everything within range. Yup, gotta handle the gardening and lawn mowing somehow, ya know?

The inevitable result was...self-destruction. Muscles severed all across my body, bones shattered and snapped, blood vessels were severed, and my magic power drained. I ate a top-class recovery mushroom right away followed by MP recovery mushrooms to kick-start the high-speed Revival process. Time for a little break.

"Looks like I handled the tree trimming in about a half-mile radius around the cave. Now it's turned into a sunny plain, so the scenery's improved as well."

I could handle the power of the attack but not the recoil. *It hurts?*

After I healed up, we took care of the fallen trees, mushrooms, and spellstones from the goblins that'd gotten caught up in the attack. Then we finally went to the cave.

"I'm hooooome! Finally! Thank god no one responded to that? I put up the sign 'No Cave Kings' so that kept away any intruders."

Jiggle! Jiggly jiggle!

Slimey bounced in a frenzy, delighted to explore the rooms. Dancer Girl looked around with a curious expression, and Miss Armor Rep and I sat down at the table for a relaxing cup of mushroom tea.

"It feels...like home," said Miss Armor Rep.

Good. Wisdom was busy getting the cleaning done, if you couldn't have guessed. One attack got the lawn mowing done, but it grazed the garden in the process, severing my stone tables and benches. I needed to get those fixed up.

Let's have dinner in the garden later, I thought. I'd learned Alchemy since then, so I decided to also use my improved Wisdom control to upgrade the furniture.

"I didn't have iron ore or Alchemy back then, so I mainly made the furniture out of wood with Eiffel bases. Yeah, this should work."

I started making a new glass table.

"Paolo Piva might get mad at this design if he got sent to this world, but I think this is the closest thing to a glass table that I'll get?"

With a little of this and that, I imitated furniture that I had seen back on Earth, expanded the living room, and upgraded the cave with some general renovations. I thought about how long it had been since I'd had the chance to spruce up the cave as I remodeled. I ran into an underground quartz load while I was at it, so I collected the quartz. I decided to use it to make windows later to bring in some light.

"These three rooms are for you three, so use them however you like," I said. "Just split them up among yourselves. We've barely been able to come back here, but you may as well have your own rooms. It's our house, after all."

It looked like the rooms would be decided by a furious, godlike war of a ghost leg lottery? Sheesh, the atmosphere was more intense than a dungeon during battle! After that, I took furniture requests for their rooms. We might have been at the edge of the world, but they should have a place for themselves here. We wouldn't be staying here permanently. They may even barely get to stay in their own rooms, but having a place for yourself? That meant something.

Now, barbecue time! In the new, sunny, clean cave-front garden, a barbecue feast! I ventilated the smoke with a fan, so it was starting to smell like a genuine Japanese chicken skewers joint. I wasn't sure if it was chicken or not, but it *was* bird-meat skewers, so close enough?

Boink boink!

Munch munch!

Chew chew!

Even the demon scythes dug in. I knew they wouldn't miss dinnertime.

They're out-leveling me now!

"Dinner outside, feels great, so tasty," said Dancer Girl.

Our little house at the edge of the continent with nothing but neighbors for monsters. Our home.

I expanded the garden so I could bring in water from the river for a pool. It was round and shallow, but with some warm water, I managed to make an outdoor hot tub. The pool was a standard fifty meters long. I even added some wooden floats. Fish Girl and Nudist Girl had seemed pretty pumped about the idea of a fantasy world swim competition and stuff?

Since I put in all the effort already, I prepared some hot, bubbling water for the hot tub, and we all went in. The demon scythes went back out to continue their logging. They'd rust if they went into the hot tub anyhow.

Yes! A bubble bath! An outdoor hot tub! It was a crowded but wholesome swimsuit session, and Slimey immediately started floating happily on the surface... *Is he sleeping already?!* The other two started playing with the bubbles, Miss Armor Rep in a one-piece black racing swimsuit, and Dancer Girl in a baby blue one. They were covered in bubbles, so they could do whatever they wanted. I couldn't see any of it! Sure, the tight swimsuits clung to their figures the same as any swimsuit. The designs were racerbacks, leaving their slender backs open. There was no padding or any support. Yup, swimsuits that only revealed the completely wholesome, natural shapes of the body!

My unlimited tentacles were having a nice time in this bubbly dripping bath. Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl were doing a lot of wriggling and entangling themselves... Before long, that turned into writhing, gasping, and trembling. It looked like I'd have no choice but to enjoy the heavenly delights of this world. Ah, how could you beat the bath? Oops, they drowned?

"It's pool time, baby!"

I sprinted to the diving board, sprang off of it, and swam freestyle across the pool as quickly as I could because two morning stars were racing after me. Yeah, the two of them still had issues with my new tentacles. *Next time, they're gonna taste my drill rotation!*

Recognizing they were at a disadvantage in the water, the pair got out onto the poolside and sent a furious rain of morning star blows toward me. Even diving underwater couldn't save me! If I hadn't kept my cloak on in the bath, I wouldn't have let my guard down. Although I'd previously added my Unlimited Tentacles to my cloak, I'd moved them into the Ring of the Destitute instead. That kept my tentacles permanently available!

Before long, the two of them suffered death at sea with melting expressions, alluringly seductive, twitching in defeat...before they tried to make me a seafloor-bound corpse with a riotous rampage of murderous morning star attacks! *I can't handle any more!*

They got mad at me, so I made them broad-brimmed hats. That cheered them up. Miss Armor Rep had a weakness for hats. Dancer Girl probably wasn't used to much yet, so she was weak to everything from clothes to sweets to accessories.

The sun started to set. I decided to make some beach tables, chairs, and tropical juice. That got the two of them back in good spirits. The juice was very sweet. I used the same local fruits as I did with my regular juice, but the flavor had gotten deeper, denser, and much sweeter since I had left them to ripen for so long. The orphans and the girls had also loved it, but it was too sweet for the guys. Everything tasted sweet for three days!

The problem now was the two rare, beautiful girls lounging on beach chairs in sexy swimsuits, their full figures seeming to literally exude sexiness as they reclined. Jupiter Eye got very busy recording the sight. Time to bring them some dessert.

We cuddled and snuggled until it got dark, messing around and enjoying each other's company, deepening our friendships. The fact that the powerful penetrative friendships forged on that tropical honeymoon paradise involved great exhaustion goes without saying.

We took a long detour on our way back to the city in order to mow down some more monsters. It was one busy but refreshing relaxation session, and all three were in high spirits. They were excited to get back to their rooms. *Let's come back here*, I thought. *It's our home, after all!*

Now I needed to keep up the effort until tonight. Yup, another round was imminent.

DAY 83

NIGHT

Grip and squeeze the thick hard knob. Slowly turn it, and open the door.

WHITE LOSER INN

WE TOOK A ROUNDABOUT ROUTE back through the forest, taking out monsters before meeting up with the demon scythes. Then we stopped monster hunting and started logging instead. We collected all the timber, mushrooms, and spellstones we could, eventually finishing up the lumbering sesh that advisor dude requested. That'd be some nice pocket change. I decided to use it to buy something for the demon scythes.

When we made it back to the city, I reported to the duke's office, got the cash, then spent it across town as we headed back to the inn. Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl went to join the girls' meeting, so I went up to my room with Slimey and put the demon scythes into the Demon Ring for a nice rest.

Jiiigglyyy!

Slimey had loved rocking back and forth on the swing in the garden, so I made him a hammock in the bedroom, which he was currently enjoying.

Wiggly, jiggly!

That looks so fun! Maybe I'd make one for myself?

"Haruka-kun, have a minute?"

"The door's open! Well, I mean, it's closed, but it's not locked. Just turn the doorknob, and you can swing it into an open position, but first you'll need to grip the fat, hard knob with your hands and squeeze it firmly. Then slowly turn the thick, hard knob before pulling it. Then— What?! That's just how doors work, you know?"

"Shut! Up! Yes, I know that! I could open doors back on Earth! Why are you

treating me like a sad child who doesn't even know how to open a door? And you don't need to talk about how thick and hard the doorknob is!"

A very shouty Class Rep came in bearing the dual-title of Miss Glare Rep. Unfortunately for me, she hadn't activated her tortoise-shell bondage title, but she was glaring and taking out her whip, so maybe we were on the right path? She was very moody.

"Should I come downstairs to make dinner? Y'all couldn't wait? You ravenous? Wanna eat my mushroom? I've got soy sauce grilled mushrooms and smoked mushrooms. Which do you prefer? Both? Don't tell me you're so hungry you're gonna try to fit two mushrooms in your mouth at once! If you say so. I can start preparing a second and third for you to gobble—"

"Be quiiiet! Forget the mushrooms! Now you're treating me like a hungry kid who's come to beg you for food? And you're never allowed to say, 'wanna eat my mushroom?' *ever* again! *Never!*"

Okay, so that was banned. I hoped it wouldn't cause any problems down the line. She claimed she wasn't hungry, but she looked ready to eat the manju I gave her. Er, she was? Fat?

"No, not fat! In fact, I've slimmed down and gotten way perkier, I'll have you know!"

"Wait, did I say that aloud? No, of course you're not fat. I meant that my new trial manju products were on the fat side and hard to eat! That's all I was thinking. It definitely didn't have anything to do with me thinking your thighs are looking pretty thick nowadays. I mean, definitely not that, no. I mean, you see, I was just rethinking the reconsideration of the rethought process that was re-convoluted retrospectively. Definitely not looking at your thighs. Definitely not thinking about how they're looking wonderfully plump and wanting to greet them accordingly. I'm definitely not the bad guy here? I'd probably get stabbed to death before that, even though I'm the one who prefers to do the stabbing. For some reason, I don't have an affinity for it, though, so I've conducted a survey about the possibility of affinity transmutation which hasn't begun yet, like the transmutation of thick thighs into thirsty thicknessssssaaaaaaahh!"

A lecture has commenced. Please wait.

“Look, you could’ve just gotten to the point, but instead, you’re stuffing a fat manju in your mouth while parading around those thighs. I had ended up having a mistaken impression of thickness that—look, never mind, you know and stuff.”

“*Listen* to the point! I’m not parading anything!”

Look, I ended up taking the slightest, quickest, most reasonable glance at the region between the short-shorts and the knee-high socks, a slippery slope of a tempting, tumultuous, powerful region for teenage boys! Her point was an update on the improvements to the women’s sanitary goods. Since it was difficult to bring up in front of the boys, she’d come here. But I’m a boy, too? Yeah, those products were painstakingly crafted late at night by a teenage boy; hand-sewn cloth sanitary pads. It was quite the uncomfortable scene to be honest.

“There’s no problem with the basic mold and structure,” Class Rep explained, “but when it comes to sudden movements, I still have concerns. The absorptive ability is top-notch, but on the other hand— Wait, stop! No, no, no! You’re - dealing with a *maiden!*”

In short, the close-fitting Absorption-imbued model bit in and chafed a bit down there. Trying to put it in concise terms resulted in glares? ’Cause this was the report of Class Rep’s personal experience? And chafing had been involved.

“I’ll try making some adjustments, a hybrid third model, as it were. I don’t think they had developed sanitary products designed for high-speed combat movements back in Japan, so it makes sense that they would need some polishing. I have some doubts about why a teenage boy has to unravel the mysteries of pad design to begin with. I’m working on taking the normal absorptive base and adapting the mold for a better fit, pushing the center a bit further up, and lining the Absorption to the sides to prevent any leakage. That seems most logical, right?”

In the end, I had to redo the model several times and let the girls test it to figure out what worked. I mean, I couldn’t test it myself?

“Raising? Yeah, I think that plan could work all right. Next up for the trial is Gymnastics Girl, whose range of motion is so intense that you might need a

whole separate model.”

We shared delicate information to flush out the remaining problems. Individual variations resulted in diverse challenges for each design, but I couldn’t make separate anatomical molds. I had to figure out the best basic pattern that would be comfortable for everyone.

“I’ll have the latest model by tomorrow, so I want a comparative report against the old one... Er, well, not *want*, so to speak! Look, I just need it, that’s all! ’Cause I’m gonna read...your trial report? Ugh, why do I feel so bummed all of a sudden? It’s like my sex appeal just waved goodbye to me for the final time?”

“Yeah, sure. Thanks,” she stuttered.

Slimey kept wiggling in the hammock as I activated Wisdom to revise a new model. It enumerated all possible issues, illuminated various proposals, and then ran mock calculations to find prospective results by trial and error. This resulted in the optimal redesign, but I still didn’t have enough information for the hybrid model. It looked like I’d have no choice but to make tweaks to it once I got the report. If I thought about it too much, I’d never see my sex appeal again. It was time to make dinner.

“A melancholic teenage boy holed up in his room working on a new pad design... Look, like, the process is holistic, but it’s not wholesome in the slightest? I mean, biting and chafing? That sounds awful!”

Jiggle jiggle.

I decided to grill some fish for dinner.

“Fishy, fishy, eat your fishy...Miss Fishy? It’s the way of the food chain!”

Wiggle wiggle!

“What are you singing? Why are you so horrified?”

Grilling up fish. For whatever reason, it always tasted better to grill fish and barbecue stuff by hand. It was probably because magic cooked everything so perfectly even. The unevenness added to the experience.

“Oh, a wrapped-up fishbone model! Why am I thinking about pad design

while cooking fish...? But still, gotta admit that's a good idea. No, focus on the fish!"

What a leisurely day. Er, well, no it hadn't been, but it *had* been a day off and I *did* feel refreshed. I didn't owe them a favor or anything, but I planned to finish up upgrading my classmates' equipment tonight. With their current stats, they would have no problems through the mid floors.

There was no guarantee we'd all be able to stick together, though. In fact, the meatheads had already gotten three offers to join the First Royal Division as instructors. They were definitely into the macho chicks there, too. It pissed me off saying it, but they'd had a fan club back in high school—they were sports dudes so popular and well-known that they got fan letters. Apparently, they also got offers to join the entertainment industry, which would've worked so long as they never opened their mouths. Yet they didn't seem interested in girls at all, and had been especially popular among BL fans. I'd never heard rumors of them getting involved with any girls, either. *Do they like super macho chicks?*

There weren't any women back in our world as buff and combat-oriented as the ones here. There were sports players back on Earth, of course, but no girls who lived and died by the sword. I guess the meatheads were into combat, strength, and build, and the girls in the division certainly had impressive, chiseled physiques.

The meatheads also meshed well with them in terms of combat style—those women attacked head-on with overpowering strength and speed. The First Royal Division specialized in large battles but emphasized individual prowess and being able to overwhelm your opponent one-on-one using stats and power. They were a bit lacking in terms of natural instinct and sensitivity, but they could learn from the meatheads' animal instincts—how to fight against non-humans, monsters. They were the perfect match. You could only learn instincts like that from those meatheads. It was an inimitable edge in battle, and the truest way to leverage one's stats to a victory.

Before that, Royal Girl's Imperial Guard received a dispatch to the frontier and planned to fight the dungeons under the command of Mr. Meridad. That would both support the frontier and help them level up, so the royal forces would be dispatched to the frontier alternately. That gave us some leeway to send the

meatheads as instructors in exchange, which would help strengthen the first two royal divisions. Royal Girl was already familiar with the frontier to a degree, so it made sense to deepen our relationship with the First Division.

The nerds were in a similar position. They wanted to build a boat and set out on a journey of their own. We ended up spending all this time together, but they wanted to go back to the Beast Kingdom. *I mean, bunny ears!* Dog ears and cat ears! Apparently, there were tanuki, too, but we had one of our own over here. Maybe we could trade our tanuki for their tanuki girls.

So for the sake of the girls who'd need to keep fighting here without the guys, and the guys who were going off on journeys of their own... *Maybe I'll create some exploding equipment for the boys.*

"I don't know how long we'll all be sticking together, so I better make it and hand it over soon. Once they're gone, I'm not gonna be able to rip them off anymore!" I wailed.

Wiggle wiggle.

The nerds said they planned on taking the ship and selling wares. Soy sauce came from the Beast Kingdom. Maybe they had miso, konbu, and bonito flakes there. This kingdom and the Beast Kingdom were connected by a river. Well, the Merchant Kingdom was in between, but they'd also have the chance to make plenty of privateering profits as well. *There will be burning.*

"Thanks for the meal!"

Days like these wouldn't last forever. Even the orphans were moving to the orphanage soon. It was nearby, and they'd be working in town, so I'd see them all the time. But we wouldn't be together like this. Since everyone spent all day fighting in dungeons, we only saw them in the morning and at night these days.

I needed to make the frontier as peaceful and wealthy as possible. That way, everyone could always come back and gather here. And I'd rip everyone off as much as possible when they came home!

DAY 83

NIGHT

I'm sure it means something, but what kind of zipper doesn't unzip?

WHITE LOSER INN

EVERYONE SENT IN their surveys about the newly remodeled armor. In terms of the fit, no problems were reported. *Yep, leave the pad report aside for later!* I went about boosting the endowed effects further, powering them up with mithril. The goal was equipment good enough for medium-deep dungeons.

Thirty people's worth of equipment meant that relying on drop items alone wasn't enough. I got a nice rip-off sesh out of the sword provisions, so next up were spears and hammers. Everyone ended up with quality shields, so I could save those for later. Same with bows.

Focus—calculations with Wisdom, production control with Magic Hands. That combination gave my side-job skills a considerable boost. In fact, my Alchemy abilities had fallen far behind, so even though I'd finally become capable of crafting high-level equipment, nothing could reach the level of Miss Armor Rep's full-body armor or the ballroom gowns I'd created.

"I added mithril into all of the metal, but I guess it's a more effective technique to make the iron thread out of spellstone powder imbued with mithril and weave clothes that way."

Maybe it had to do with the difference in surface area, but the endowed effects weren't as strong. I could make stronger cloth equipment, but the thin metal thread would put them in danger if they took an attack that outclassed the equipment.

"Why do so many of the metal-armor-on-cloth pieces have worse properties? They're not nullifying each other or anything. Maybe I should separate them and start with making the inner clothing portions? No, I won't be able to beat

the mithril thread dresses regardless, so maybe weaving cloaks is best?”

I still hadn't touched the drop items from the bottom floor of the most recent dungeon. I could deal with those later. I picked up the “Aegis Shoulder Pads: Vitality, Power +50%. Automatic Defense. Physical Defense (ultra). Magic Defense (ultra). Reflection. Absorption. Slash Parrying. Bludgeon Parrying. +Defense” from the hidden room. They were big shoulder pads that were L-shaped to protect the clavicle and basically extended to the elbow. They weren't covered in spikes, so I didn't need to go full-on barbarian mode with them on.

Heavy armor didn't typically suit adventurers, but you occasionally saw people wearing cloth or leather armor. You could even equip shoulder pads, elbow pads, chest pads, knee pads, and waist armor at low levels, so I thought about buying some for myself. It sort of seemed like a waste, considering the effects and properties, though.

This? This was a find. A quick test told me that I couldn't use it, however. Yeah, it was a perfectly suitable piece of equipment, but Automatic Defense was nasty. It drained MP at an insane rate. While it claimed to be automatic, the instructions flashed by inside of my head. You obeyed its orders. If you couldn't keep up with them in battle, it activated and took control of your body. If I didn't have Parallel Thinking from Wisdom, it would be a huge nuisance.

“This is an incredible piece of equipment if you have enough MP! If I put this on and then used Magic Entanglement on it, though... Yeah, this is getting sealed. Okay, back to the armor!”

Next up was the dungeon king's drop item: “Life Jewel: Tempers the body for tasks including training, alchemy, and lovemaking. Essence Alchemist, Archsage.” Bodily alchemy sounded very suspicious, and it even included lascivious lovemaking! Oh god, this was a bad idea. A trap for my very soul! It might boost my stats, but I risked it turning me into some sort of modded wizard-human. I had Alchemist but not Archsage, so I wouldn't be able to use it to begin with. If I did, though, my very soul would be in danger! *This is also getting sealed!*

“Speaking of Archsage, there's Vice Rep B... She doesn't have Alchemist,

however, and putting bodily tempering and lovemaking alchemy to that body... She'd be a danger to the world!"

And to every teenage boy in existence, of course. *She's already dangerous enough as is!*

"Oh, I just remembered. I forgot to learn Holy magic."

Archsage was a promoted class gained from having the prowess of Bane Sorcerer and Bishop. Since I had Holding, I could easily learn new types of magic. Yeah, a lot of my self-destruction could've been easily prevented if I had learned Healing magic and used Magic Entanglement on it. I had Revival and mushrooms, though, so I'd never even bothered. *I'll learn it.* It was likely the most effective way to stymie self-damage, and I could make Recovery-imbued items with it to boot.

I'd deal with the drop items later. At the moment, I was minimizing complete disintegration but not damage. I'd still fall apart in longer battles. Although, Revival had been long-lasting lately. It had been too slow to keep up in the battle against the darkness, but it had still healed me up perfectly in the end.

Thanks to the Vitality and Intelligence boosts from my equipment, I had managed to survive a duel with a dungeon king. I could definitely leave the more ridiculous equipment aside for later in that case and learn Healing magic first.

"Yeah, I prefer assuming I'll fall apart and go from there... Wow, this is easy."

Things had barely changed since I'd lived in the forest. Back then, I barely managed to avoid complete destruction, always fighting life-or-death battles. It wasn't so different now. I thought back to that forest, where I should've lost my life. Somewhere along the way, I'd found people I wanted to protect and luxury on top of it. I never thought about strength back then. I just needed to kill the enemy. If I broke down in the process, then I'd just force myself to keep going.

"Let's see. Status."

NAME: Haruka RACE: Human

Lv: 24 JOB: —

HP: 433 MP: 519

VIT: 369 POW: 377 SPE: 520

DEX: 505 MIN: 506 INT: 550

LUK: Max (Above Limit)

SP: 2017

COMBAT SKILLS: Peerless Cane Mastery LvMax, Avoid Lv8, Magic Entanglement Lv9, Life or Death LvMax, Rapid Movement LvMax, Bend not Break Lv7, Eye Mastery Lv1, Diamond Fist Lv5, Random Fire Lv5, Limit Break Lv3

MAGIC: Demolish Lv3, Teleport Lv8, Gravity Lv8, Holding Lv9, Four Elements Sorcery Lv7, Wood Lv9, Lightning Lv9, Ice Lv9, Alchemy Lv8, Void Lv6

SKILLS: General Health LvMax, Sensitivity LvMax, Body Manipulation LvMax, Walking Mastery Lv9, Servitude Lv9, Presence Sensing Lv7, Magic Control LvMax, Presence Concealment Lv9, Stealth Lv9, Hiding LvMax, Insentience Lv9, Physical-Proof Lv5, MP Absorption Lv7, Revival Lv9, Dash Lv8, Airwalk Lv8, Overclock Lv9, Jupiter Eye Lv6, Lascivious Lv5

TITLES: Shut-In Lv8, NEET Lv8, Loner Lv8, Bane Sorcerer Lv5, Master Fencer Lv6, Alchemist Lv7, Sex God Lv5

ABILITIES: Wisdom Lv5, Master of None Lv9, Blockhead LvMax

EQUIPMENT: Universe Staff, Clothes Set?, Leather Glove?, Leather Boots?, Cloak?, Jupiter Eye, Ring of the Destitute, Item Bag, Monster Bracelet POW+66% SPE+65%, VIT+38%, Black Hat, Wisdom Crown

It looked like I'd leveled up in the dungeon, maybe when I'd gone up against the dungeon king. I didn't feel any unease while in the forest, so the subtle improvements were there. I had gotten boosts all around, but the Intelligence growth must've helped suppress any potential discomfort. Tragically, I made incredible gains in one area exclusively. There was no use overthinking it.

“I don’t remember using it at all, but just how many limits did I need to break to get Limit Break to level 3? Well, aside from every night, I mean. Of course teenage boys invading inevitably involves them breaking their limits! I know I burst mine! Many times!”

Now that I thought about it, I had certainly done my fair share of limit breaking. Demolish had leveled up even though I’d sealed it and it hadn’t been used—that must’ve had something to do with using Vibration. And Diamond Fist had leveled up to 5 despite the fact that I hadn’t fought a single monster in legitimate hand-to-hand combat. Did that mean what I’d done when up against the darkness counted as fist-fighting?!

My martial skills were improving steadily as well, but the only time I used those was in the bedroom and in training with Dancer Girl. I did have plenty of opportunity to test out how I’d gotten improvements in those areas. I didn’t need tests to know where the Lascivious and Sex God, and of course, the Revival gains had come from, because those were, uh, pretty obvious? I was trying so hard!

And now, Blockhead, one of the biggest mysteries of all, had reached its max. Er, I did know the cause there and decided to pretend I didn’t? No matter how much it leveled up, that level of control was problematic. Thinking about it, it could actually make things easier for me, but that would be unbearable to witness. I needed to test it out in a worst-case scenario. Holding had leveled up twice, too, but I wasn’t sure if it’d be enough.

“I’ll store the equipment away for now.”

My stats weren’t nearly high enough to handle the burden of the new equipment, especially after Entanglement. Plus, I didn’t know how I felt about putting shoulder pads on top of a cloak.

“Do robes even work with shoulder pads? It’s giving me some serious extravagant mage warrior vibes!”

Next, I whipped up plans for hammers and spears for the group. I upgraded the arts club’s shields and cloaks with improved inner layers. Meanwhile, I worked on spellstone-powered refrigerators and washing machines as well as the revised hybrid pad model. *These designs better not get mixed together.*

“I suppose I’d better go with a halberd,” I said. “Everyone’s got a Power stat close to 1500 at this point, so they may as well make use of it.”

Oh? Someone had just showed up. It was Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl...in faux leather suits? Tight, body-fitting leather, equipped with a zipper that ran from top to bottom. They looked like fabulous female spies ready for bonding and bondage. It was equipment for battle, but it had gotten rejected from the armory as a sale item for some reason...and I’d snapped it right up. The problem, of course, was that it was way too hard to take off! It was so tight-fitting that it was hard to put on, too, but taking it off proved an incredible challenge!

“Damn this thing! It’s so tight that there’s no gap for my tentacles can slip into!”

They were designed to be body-tight catsuits, so it went without saying that there was no gap for fingers. The zippers didn’t open, either, so there was no hope of victory. Even the zipper, the prospective weak point, stayed totally, perfectly sealed. These were actually this world’s first zippers. I’d made them as a trial product, but their construction took a lot of effort, and they had ended up being too expensive. Zippers weren’t yet prolific in the marketplace. These precious, one-of-a-kind fantasy-world zippers were stuck as could be.

“If I could get them down, I’d see wonders. But I can’t, and I’m getting entwined and entangled. What’s supposed to be revved down is revving me up!”

“Our reward, is, accessories!”

“Hang on, you’re sexy thieves now?!”

With only one prospective opening being fiercely and fabulously guarded, their hands protected this incredible artifact of clothing. I had already started recording out of anticipation, but the catsuits were too powerful! Their equipment nullified Vibration magic, and Sensitivity couldn’t penetrate it! This was the downside of making the neckline so high... *This started out as simple, full-body leather armor?*

“I made it for when I eventually met sexy female spies, and it got rejected for being too hard to take off. Who would’ve thought they’d eventually crater me

in a catsuit catfight, meow god! These outfits may be my nemesis now, but I'll dream about them for the rest of my days! Sweet lord!"

I could weep! All a teenage boy's love and hopes and dreams were stuffed into those tight-fitting leather bodysuits. *Just look at all the great things stuffed into there!* I just couldn't *freaking* unzipper them!

As I tumbled into a vortex of pain and suffering, the sun at last came through the clouds of those leather suits in a glorious blaze that seared into my teenage-boy eyes like lightning, knocking me to the ground. As I lay there, knocked out by the force of the view, my long-held dream of the zippers coming down, one after the other... Yes, it had finally come true!

DAY 83

NIGHT

It appeared that the mystery medical squad was as mysterious and unidentified as ever.

WHITE LOSER INN

GIRLS' MEETING

UNDERWATER—now that was a fiendish trap. A terrifying nightmare of wriggling and writhing under the glittering surface of the pool. Haruka-kun had made further upgrades to his cave deep in the forest, which felt like a distant memory now. He'd expanded the garden and built a pool. Of course, that pool was a competitive swimming pool equipped with a hot tub and was also the site of a furious, squirming naval tentacle battle that invaded every gap in every swimsuit, eventually forcing Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san to succumb to death by drowning.

Before leaving, he'd even installed a waterslide made of quartz glass. They jumped into it shouting, "Waterslide!"

"Oh my god, I wanna go swimming! Down the water slide!"

"You never know what squirmy things are gonna be in the waaater," purred Vice Rep B.

"Eeeeeek! Shut up! I wanna swim, but that's dangerous!"

Everyone fidgeted and blushed. *Yeah, don't think about that.* We'd heard the legendary monster tentacles had been reborn anew as even more monstrous models.

"Mushroom-headed, lumpy trunks."

"They are, so crazy!"

"Like bumpy, creased tentacles? That's a lot of friction."

“Waaaaaagh!”

Gurgle gurgle.

We drowned. Despite our maidenhood, most of us had developed frightening powers of imagination. Yet the reality managed to surpass our imagination every time, leading to maiden overload and a lot of bath drowning. We anticipated bubbly hot tubs and lotion, but a tentacle-filled pool? That was a hellish heaven beyond anything. Yikes. Mushroom-tipped tentacles, the shafts covered in lumps, then pleated nodes connecting the long, wriggling ropes. That was way too much for any maiden!

“I still want to go swimming.”

“The wriggling... In the water... Wriggling...”

“Inside... Wriggling...”

Glub glub.

“In the pool... Wet... Get in the pool, and in goes the...”

Gurble gurble.

The swimmers still wanted to swim above all else. They loved swimming. How could they forget it? Haruka-kun made a competitive swimming pool for them, so they could get back to what they loved doing...only to ruin it with tentacles.

“But the water slide. That’s gotta be awesome!”

“Yeah, maybe there’s no wriggling on the water slide?”

“The water slide goes into the pool, so you’ll end up drowning anyway.” Vice Rep B winked.

“Eeeiaaaaaaagh!”

Glub glub.

I didn’t get it. The moment we put on bathing suits, Haruka-kun shuffled away awkwardly. He was a shy, awkward, nubby-tentacled Sex God.

“The bumps, vibrate. Thought I was going to die.”

“Eeeeeeeep!”

Gurgle gurgle.

“The pleats, squishy, squench!”

“Waaaaaaaagh!”

Glub glub.

Everyone listened to the two of them, their faces bright red as they fidgeted in place, imagining the scene. Even Erailia-san was drowning! She hadn't gotten used to the girls' meetings, so maybe the details were too much for her. Since Erailia-san had originally been a shrine maiden, maybe her heart was too pure for this. Even Erailia-san's powers of imagination sent her straight to the bottom of the bath. She popped right up and kept listening with tightly gripped fists, nodding as Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san continued. She had been suffering from a terrible illness just a few weeks ago, but she sure seemed in good shape now.

“Crawling inside... I-I-I mean, why vibrate and rotate like that?!”

Splash.

“Inside... Wriggling...inside...”

Kerplunk.

“Even the bumps started buzzing and vibrating? And the moisture...”

Thunk-splash.

The maidens were out of HP. We needed an emergency evacuation to a private place in order to hear the rest. This was a dangerous situation. We called a meeting in my bedroom to address various concerns, the biggest of which was what to do tomorrow. We needed to discuss how to team up our parties to take on the dungeons. We needed to get stronger, of course... *And not so we could deal with those tentacles, obviously!*

Haruka-kun, like he always, always did, had gone up against death itself head-on at the bottom of the dungeon. He'd fought the level 99 dungeon king alone, not even involving Angelica-san, Nefertiri-san, or Slimey. With his weakened body. A body that was physically unable to get stronger.

“He hurries, with the new equipment.”

“He probably wants Kakizaki-kun and Oda-kun’s groups to be able to set out on their own.”

“Won’t it be lonely for Haruka-kun being the only guy?”

“Yeah, they’re all so tight.”

I knew that both groups wanted to take Haruka-kun with them. They understood the dangers of being away from the frontier. Haruka-kun was worried about us, though. We were supposed to be protecting him, but it somehow always turned out to be the reverse.

Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san finally understood. In the most dangerous times, Haruka-kun fought alone. In spite of all of his weaknesses, he took on the true terrors himself. With his fragile body, guarded only by that back-breaking, destructive equipment, he fought alone. Every time. Every battle. Every truly terrible danger. No matter how mad we got at him, he prepared to sacrifice himself so that no one else would be hurt, killed, or taken away from us. He did it so we wouldn’t lose anything else at all. He just had to save the world. He didn’t want to lose anything anymore. He’d protect it all, even if it killed him. Even though it’d *definitely* kill him one day. If he kept going on like this, he’d falter and eventually fall one day. And yet, he did it again. Every time his body broke down he kept right on fighting.

I wanted to catch up to him and stand beside him. If he truly failed one day and couldn’t do anything to save himself... Well, I didn’t want him to die alone. At the very least, the whole class needed to be there for him. We had to get stronger. We needed to be able to stand beside him.

“We also need to decide when we’re doing the picnic.”

The monster forest was dangerous. There was nothing wrong with the forest itself, but nothing topped the dangers of a tentacle-equipped teenage boy’s homecoming. I had figured that we’d bring the orphans along to the pool, but it sounded like too much of an adult site. In fact, the forest sounded much more dangerous for maidens than it did for kids at this point!

“Bringing the kids will be okay, right?”

“Worst case scenario, we’ll offer up Class Rep.”

“Yeah, she can handle the underwater tentacle-fest.”

“Good luck, honey!”

“H-hang on!” I shouted. “Don’t make me a human sacrifice!”

They were so cold! Even the Revival skill wouldn’t keep me safe against the flurry of maiden-breaking tentacle attacks. I mean, nothing could be more forbidden or off-limits than violating a maiden with squirming, lumpy, thick tent...a...cles... *Kerfwump*.

Mushroom mouth-stuffing ensued. They didn’t even call a medic. The other girls just stuffed a mushroom into my mouth. They’d had one ready this whole time!

DAY 84

MORNING

They're invincible or magic-reflecting—nothing shoddy, and massive for sure!

WHITE LOSER INN

MY TEENAGE BOY SELF ran out of arrows in my sling. The two of them taking off their skin-tight PVC suits was so sexy! Putting them on had been a disaster. I mean, I needed to rub their bodies in oil in order for them to slip on. Their glowing bodies now overflowed out of leather bodysuits. I'd never heard of a more magnificent sight! I could graciously accept defeat having witnessed it! Except now, it was time for my revenge.

"Yup, I win."

"Aaaaaaaah!"

Fwump.

"Nah, that's not quite it. I mean, the 'ah' was cute, but unnecessary, I'd say. You should work on your timing."

Time to wash these suits.

I needed to get the spellstone-powered refrigerators and washing machines I'd made last night installed into the inn for fee-for-use. Once I made the necessary improvements and tested everything, I could sell them at the general store. Fortunately, the washing machines managed to clean the oil off the bodysuits perfectly, but what a perfect despoilment it had been.

"Refrigerators and washing machines are basically cheat codes that drastically reduce time and effort put into household chores. If I make a spellstone-powered vacuum cleaner next, the frontier's development will go into overdrive. Maybe this will help abate the old dude ratio problem?"

I went down to the dining hall to put the improved female armor MK-II model

bras and new cloaks, spears, and hammers on sale. I sneakily handed over the new pad model 2 editions, then started preparing breakfast. I hadn't gotten any messages, so I assumed Mr. Meridad and the frontier army hadn't made it back yet. When he did, I knew I was going to get a wave of demands for more throne room massage chairs!

"The spear model is the 'Severing Spear: Power, Speed, Dexterity +40%. Spear Mastery bonus (large). Physical Defense Nullification. Sever. +Attack.' I'm selling it along with the Severing Sword as a value set perfect for mid-tier dungeon raiding. The hammer model is the 'Explosion Hammer: Power, Speed, Dexterity +40%. External Equipment Destruction effect (large), and Internal Equipment Destruction effect (large). Physical Defense Nullification. Explode. +Attack.' It was a real nasty one. So, seriously, no need for morning stars anymore?"

"I'll get it! The discount set!" came a chorus of cries.

I didn't exactly want to make sexy, body-tight armor for a guy. Yeah, I didn't want to see that on dudes. At all!

"It'd be a tight, uncomfortable fit for guys, whereas for the girls, it's a just-right hit for everyone... Those PVC suits are truly crazy!"

I sold out all the new equipment before long as well as the new inner gear I'd whipped up. The long-sleeved, skin-tight turtleneck shirts, compression shorts, and knee-socks had 30 percent boosts to all resistances, including inflicted ailments, plus Super-Speed and Hardening. *Don't walk around in just the compression shorts, though?* They were pretty transparent...and super sexy!

"Let's eat!"

Today, I did a buffet-style meal. The orphans had never had a buffet before, so I made sure to give them buff bodysuits for battle purposes. I hoped they wouldn't be too buff, though, because buff orphan cannons pointed in my direction would definitely be super destructive.

My plan for today was to learn Healing magic from the Archsage herself along with Class Rep. They must've been as round as they were because she was an Archsage. Underneath that tight shirt that revealed large, round, shaking jiggles, the compression shorts tightly enclosed a firm bottom. With so much large round firmness, she could definitely teach us Healing magic. I mean, bouncing

of that magnitude contained not only healing and medicine but also hopes and dreams! *I'll need to take a closer look to make sure!*

Even though I had been looking the other way and using Jupiter Eye, forty-six glaring eyes were trained on me? Hang on, Poster Girl and Stalker Girl made that fifty!! *Okay, maybe it's a bit too early to break out into celebrations.*

After that, dungeon time.

"I'll shoot ya! 'Cause if I don't, I'm super dead? If I accidentally friendly fire on my friends here, their response isn't going to be particularly friendly! Ya know and stuff?"

I tried shooting.

"Stop talking, and hurry up!"

"You're loud and annoying, and you're not shooting, so it's actually hard to fight!"

Were they mad at me? I mean, I needed to properly aim. I supposed I didn't need to announce it to everyone, but I was only trying to be big brotherly and everyone got all upset. Wait. Were they trying to little brother me?!

I didn't have anything to do since I couldn't join a party, and I was bored, so I aimed and fired with my remodeled Fire Bullets. And they got mad at me! Miss Armor Rep joined the jock girls and arts club girls. Slimey went to jiggle around with the nerds. Dancer Girl and myself joined up with the student council and the mean girls, since we were lagging behind in levels. We split up into three teams for the mid floors. Then, Dancer Girl and I would take over when we'd gotten deeper and closer to the dungeon king. Even around the 60th floor, floor bosses could be pretty dangerous. That was where we came in.

"Fire!"

"Aye aye!"

They fired their arrows, stopped the monsters' movement, and finished them off. They split the team into two forces and encircled the enemy from both sides for a coordinated elimination attack. I'd been seeing a lot of these coordinated attacks lately, primarily at night and especially ones with clothes

involved. Yes, those coordinated PVC suit attacks were especially fab!

Dancer Girl's role was defensive this time. She could easily wipe out an entire floor in the 50s by herself, but she was the perfect team player. I didn't even know she could fight defensively. Normally, she dodged everything, even while holding her giant shield. Why she was holding a giant shield while executing evasive, high-speed, whirling dance moves became the inevitable question. Today, she was actually using the shield, protecting the girls behind her. And then there was me. I was a NEET, so I didn't have anything to do.

Watching them fight from behind was making me feel kinda guilty, since everyone's armor was getting a wee bit sexy. I decided to join the fray, and they got mad at me? *Man, this is boring.* I used to grab the monsters with my tentacles to keep them still, but none of the girls even tried to attack the frozen targets!

"Teenage boys deal with so much unfair criticism. The floating force is the unbearable lightness of this unreadable room, creating pressure that divides the environmental density of the aerodynamic, corrective airmass and inevitably suspends my teenage boyhood in a floating, air-like, aerial, aboveground existence. Yeah, I'm bored!"

"Don't float around like that just because you're bored!"

Shield Girl had gone with the jock girls, and Elf Girl joined the student council, so the party had top-notch coordination. They could sweep through monsters into the 70s. Their tight-fitting armor revealed so many sexy curves while they did so, too! *I knew she was an ero-elf all along!*

"I thought you were a typical elf who used bows and magic and daggers, so why are you so good with whips...? Oh, is that Plant magic?"

"Yeah, it is, but..."

That was a rare type of elf-exclusive magic. She used Plant magic to wield and strike with whips made of vines. *Aren't these tentacles, in a sense?* She also made up for her relatively low level with a Spell Holding technique similar to my Magic Entanglement. Did different elf clans have different characteristic skills and magic abilities? I had caught a few glimpses of different old beast dudes back in the capital, but I hadn't seen any elves. There weren't any dwarves in

the armory, either. There wasn't much in the way of discrimination toward the small number of demi-humans who lived in the capital, supposedly, but there weren't many of them to begin with thanks to the rotten nobles. *I should've burned those fools!*

"Nooo! Squirmy squirmy!" the girls squealed.



“It’s okay, those are just the monsters!” Class Rep called.

“Yeah, spear the worms! Don’t worry!”

“Well, the monsters definitely need to worry, ’cause y’all are killing them left and right,” I said. “They’re the enemy, so why do you keep glancing in my direction?!”

I sent a few volleys of my steel, mass-produced dum dum bullets, firing them with Earth magic. They were designed to shatter and explode on impact, and were successively tearing the spear worms apart. They were harder to wield than Fire Bullets, but when I added rotation to the head and fired my Rock Bullets, they used less MP and packed more of a punch, too. *These’ll do for the mid-floors*, I thought.

“Here’s, like, totally, the light of my Healing magic!” said Vice Rep B.

“Whoa... It’s wobbling!”

“Where do you think you’re looking?!”

Vice Rep B taught me Holy magic as we walked through the dungeon. She held her hand in front of her chest and produced a glittering light. Even the shadows shook! A light-up was causing a motion-up!

“Hang on, don’t whip out the morning stars before I even say, ‘Don’t get the wrong idea!’ And don’t get the wrong idea! It’s a totally different, separate, irrelevant thing from the thing you think is the thing! I mean, the ball of light is literally wobbling. I just muttered that, and yet you invoke the suspicious, unfair act of irately accusing an inviolate and irrevocably innocent teenage boy. I’m not the bad guy here!”

I was over here trying to learn Holy magic, minding my own business, and now I had to deal with all these false accusations.

“The ball of light literally wobbled, but you were saying ‘jiggle jiggle jiggle’ *long* before the ball appeared! There wasn’t any ball of light wobbling then!”

“Guilty verdict confirmed!”

They got mad at me. I mean, she was holding her hand directly in front of her chest, so how could I not look? Of course I witnessed plenty of jiggling and

shaking? *I'm a teenage boy!* Look, if I wasn't looking there, I think that'd make me a little *too* much of an ass man.

The Holy magic's ball of light enabled one to control Recovery magic. You hit someone with the ball of light, and it healed them.

"Attack! Holy ball!"

"Yummm!"

Jiggle jiggle.

"Whaaa?! It bounced off them!"

"Guilty! Guilty! Where are you aiming those?!"

Unbelievable! It bounced straight off them! Those were invincible or magic-reflecting, definitely nothing shoddy, and massive for sure!

Visualizing the healing process was important, and therefore, I couldn't visualize dirty thoughts. *That wobble, though!* The ball of light bounced off them with a magnificent shaking ripple! Just how far into the distance did my Holy magic fly? *Some faraway monster is probably getting healed right now!*

"Look, they were nearby. They're all round objects, so I thought they might all get along! I was just trying to be a nice guy, and then when I unleashed my ball, it bounced off flying. Like, boing, kaboing, and stuff. Ya know?"

I mean, that boing, that kaboing-a-boing! I got a lecture, but I also got Holy magic. A sage of arches involved powerful kaboinging. *I'm sure Slimey is boinging around merrily at this very moment.*

If I could use Entanglement on Recovery and Healing, it would significantly abate my self-destruction. Another Holy-type spell was Enchant, which would power-up my body and further slow the damage. I may have acquired Archsage, but I was still concerned about my soul, so I probably should lay off on using the Life Jewel. I didn't know how to use it to begin with, and I had a bad feeling about it to boot. *I mean, it involves lovemaking mastery!*

DAY 84

NOON

It's been a hot minute since I've enjoyed the echoing reverberations of a cave dungeon scream.

DUNGEON

59TH FLOOR

DUNGEONS: the place where your back is constantly up against the wall. Incidentally, I like doing it from behind. You can see the lovely, lascivious, curvaceous curves from back to butt and the scintillating shaking and shimmering of a bubbly rear... The dungeon, where death dogs you to the end. Yeah, like doggystyle. And now the morning stars were being drawn? *Gotta run!*

Whack! Thrash!

"How's the new armor feel?" I asked.

"Great!"

"Not as strong as the dresses, though."

Those dresses had the effects that made taking on deeper levels of dungeons possible. Hard to beat that. That said, taking on dungeons in frilly and mermaid dresses felt wrong somehow? If monsters suddenly attacked in dresses, things would be extremely problematic to say the least!

"Class Rep, what about the pad?" I asked.

"It's perfect," she said. "The last model was good, too, but unlike before there's no sudden biting, pinching, or chafing. Even in tough situations it's— Eep! Eek! HOW DARE YOU?!"

Clank! Crash! Whack! Thrash! Thud!

I got beaten up. I was trying to ask her in the most innocent way possible to make sure it didn't hurt during battle, and she *attacked* me! The Ring of the

Destitute was close to activating! That didn't activate until one was on the literal verge of death, and yet it had started to glitter during the beat-down!

"Ouch?"

"S-sorry, it's just..." Class Rep stuttered.

Dancer Girl stared in amazement. Class Rep usually focused on leading the group with her instructions, but she also had incredible solo battle prowess. Even I couldn't see through the moves. Had she used Hijack on something else lately?

I had been grilling up fish this morning while working on the new and improved fishbone design to minimize pinching and create a firm, clean fit. And it worked. Who knew fish were this powerful!

"Sorry," she said, blushing. "It's just... Asking me out of the blue... It's always just girls around, so I ended up answering anyway, but... Sorry."

"Eh, I'm healed up, so it's good! Seems like learning Healing magic worked. I mean, if it didn't, I'd probably be dead right now."

"I'm sorry, Haruka-kun. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry..."

It was like she was stuck on repeat. She looked like she was about to cry, too, so I patted her head. She eventually fell silent, sporting a fierce flush. I gave her some manju right away. Sweets and some head pats can solve anything in an emergency situation. I knew that firsthand from Dancer Girl, after all.

"Great, now *hug!*" giggled Vice Rep B. "Embrace! Take it off!"

"Whaaaat? No way! Take *what* off in the middle of a dungeon?!"

"You gobbled up those manju without second thought, so..."

"It's all ruined!"

Time for a sudden dessert break. The girls were in manju, crepe, and pumpkin pie factions, all munching fiercely. Dancer Girl was normally Team Crepe, but after eating all the crepes available, she switched over to Team Pumpkin Pie in battle against Team Manju. *Look at her waist, even after eating so much. Dance really is a sport!*

“Tiny Tanuki, the kindergarten backpack is fine and all. They’ve been getting super popular in town, but parading it around the dungeon like this... It’s only monsters in here, and we kill them all. So it’s not like the trend is gonna spread or anything.”

“I wear it ‘cause it’s convenient!”

“There’s a debate going on about whether it’s better to wear it over or under the cloak.”

“Under the cloak looks weird. Plus, then it’s hard to take anything out of it.”

Look, I was happy she liked it, but I couldn’t help but be concerned about the appearance of using a kindergarten backpack as armor. Teenage girls walking around with those cutesy backpacks and miniskirts didn’t create the most wholesome environment around town by any means. Although the orphans were happy that they matched the big girls.

“We’re still in the 50s, so I can probably give it a shot,” I said. “This is the new equipment’s first time in action, but it feels good.”

The current opponents were level 59 Evil Fangs. I slashed them to shreds by timing a whip-lashing to Ground-Shrink. I unsheathed the blade and swooped into a group of six of them, cutting apart three in a single stroke. I swung diagonally starting at the shoulder to cripple one, and sliced behind me to take out another. I finally cleaved the last monster in half and flicked the blood off the blade. Finished.

“Japanese-style!” the girls shouted, impressed.

“It’s brand new, but my beloved ‘Lil Steely’ is a dangerous little dagger boyo.”

“Uh, what’s with the sword name?”

“It’s like a Kotetsu, a legendary Steel Tiger sword! You know, the famous Japanese swordmaker?”

“Yeah, it’s just considerably weirder.”

“You guys are the weird ones!”

They were making fun of my super cool sword name! I supposed I’d only be able to use it today. I’d have the MK-II by tomorrow, although it’d take me a

while to get to the ZZ model.

“I made the nerds tell me how to make swords, and all I ended up with was ‘Steel Sword: Slash (medium). +Attack,’ so it’s nothing special.”

It packed a serious punch for someone in the twenties, though. You normally wouldn’t be able to use a sword with endowed effects until you hit level 30, so it was still above average given the circumstances. Plus, I wasn’t wielding the Universe Staff, so it kept my self-destruction to a bare minimum. Even a max-speed Ground-Shrink didn’t hurt at all now that I had the Archsage title and used Entanglement on my Healing magic. I could handle a longer battle at this rate, and I could unleash my full middle school sword-wielding over-the-top fury as a finisher. *Am I still a dorky junior high schooler at heart?*

We’d hit a maze floor. We separated in the intricate labyrinth of passages and advanced, cutting down monsters as we went. These evil fangs had a bit of an exaggerated name, though. They were little demons with overgrown fangs that specialized in inflicting ailments: Sleep, Darkness, Faint, and Confusion. The girls had impenetrable resistances to ailments, so they easily cut the demons apart. It would definitely hurt if the evil fangs got their teeth into you, but their stats weren’t particularly high, and their only physical attack skill was Bite. Without their ailments, they weren’t much stronger than a kobold king.

“Nice work, Dancer Girl. Wait, there are some left? Meh. You can let the fangs and the mean girls bite at each other. There’s also a tanuki who can join in, so that’ll be a nice biting fest. Ya know?”

“How many times have we told you that we don’t bite?” they shouted at me.

“Why would we want to bite these hairy little demons?!”

“And even if they weren’t hairy, we *still* wouldn’t bite them! And *stop calling us mean girls!*”

The mean girls’ screams resonated in the echoing halls of the maze. Been a hot sec, huh? When we’d split up into groups, they had talked about how they wouldn’t apologize for everything they’d done, proclaiming themselves mean girls to the core. But when I called them by their true title they came at me, jaws snapping? That was what was written in my status, since they were my servants. Queen Bee hadn’t evolved into Empress Bee yet, though. I wondered

what the conditions were for that. Maybe biting a dungeon king to death? She was staring at me with a glare that said she was about to bite *something* to death!

“We finished up over here,” called Vice Rep B. “Are we heading down?”

They grilled the foe, as in ate my grilled burgers as they made their way over here. I didn’t *think* they needed lunch anymore.

The 60th floor boss was a shadowy black snake. To be precise, it was “Snake Chimera, Lv: 60.” Where were the non-snake parts?

“Chimera implies various animals are incorporated into it, but this is just a damn snake! I suppose it’s made up of different species of snakes, but that’s still only a snake in the end. What’s the damn point?!”

“Don’t bully the poor chimera!” the girls protested.

Various snakes shot out of a large black mass at us. They were all connected to a spherical body, so they didn’t reach us. When they finally made it to us, the girls cut off those snake heads and sent them flying.

By the way, only one person in the group was bludgeoning the snakes. She only wore a robe, so there was a lot of shaking. Vibration force like that could break apart a breastplate! I wanted to tell her to ease up for her *chest’s* sake, if nothing else, but bloodthirsty glares were pointed in my direction. I decided to stop thinking about it. *Just watch. That’s more than enough!* We safely defeated the floor boss, but now they were lecturing me?

“Look, you told me to let you guys handle it and just watch, so that’s what I did? I watched and took in each and every detail and deepened my perspective? See? I didn’t do a single thing wrong. I did exactly what you told me to? I watched!”

“The *place* you were looking is the issue!”

“What the hell do you mean, ‘deepened your perspective?!’”

I had used Demolish to try to halt the snake’s rapid movement, which froze it in place. It became a little frozen ball of snakes that couldn’t throw themselves at us anymore. It was a reptile, so cold was effective against it. That reduced the

danger enough for the girls to tear it to shreds. After that, I watched from a distance, exactly as I was told. And they were still lecturing me like crazy. *Communication is super difficult in a fantasy world.* These were my *classmates!* Interpretation shouldn't be necessary!

The drop item the snake chimera left behind was the "Snakecharmer's Necklace: Can insert seven items. Intelligence +40%. Snake Replication (Three snakes grow from the body. Uses MP). Poison Production. Scale Hardening. +Defense." That was a huge find—it fit seven! I really wanted the Intelligence boost. Being able to grow snakes out of my body, making poison, and having scales for boosted defenses? Wow? I tried offering it to the girls, but they all backed away quickly.

After taking a breather, I went to the hidden room and opened up the treasure chest. It was the "Boulder Longhammer: Vitality, Power +40%. Ejects stones from the mallet. Requires Earth magic. Destructive Crushing (large). Internal Destruction (large). +Attack." It was an extra-long hammer designed for someone with the Guardian job. Dancer Girl didn't want it, so I gave it to the other girls. If you could use Earth magic, it shot out boulders and specialized in destroying equipment.

I kept practicing Healing magic as we went down to the lower floors. Knowing me, it'd probably turn into Feeling magic by the time we finished tonight. I'd better hurry up! Yeah, why did I think I'd end up with Feeling magic? We had a long way to go to the bottom and a hard road ahead.

DAY 84

AFTERNOON

Servitude can't overcome the lure of sweets?

DUNGEON

66TH FLOOR

THE 60S—floors with menacing threats over level 60. It was common knowledge that you only took on monsters half your level, since monsters had stronger physiques and compositions than humans. Those monsters were getting beat up here today, though.

Our party split into pairs as we traversed the maze, maintaining caution. The girls hadn't hit level 110 yet, so as a party of six, they should've been fighting level 55 monsters at most. But they were straight-up bonking these monster heads off in pairs.

"They're cheaters. Their training master is a dungeon emperor, so it does make sense," I said. "It's their need for a diet that— Uh, I don't know where they are, so I'm gonna cut that thought short."

The whole dungeon was suddenly immersed in bloodlust! Magic Entanglement felt totally different without the Universe Staff. It was so much easier that I was still getting the hang of it.

"You sure are hungry for monsters, Lil Steely."

I kicked and twirled through the air, cutting an intricate web through the monsters. Swords were for cutting. They didn't have any blunt attack force and instead specialized in sharp slashing. Generally, that lack of blunt attack force meant armor made a good counter. In a fantasy world, though, magic and skills made swords all the more powerful. Master Fencer also gave me a bonus. I could cut through anything so long as it wasn't crazy tough.

"It's kinda a bummer that the first dragons I meet in a fantasy world are

dragonflies. We've got plenty of those in Japan! This has got to be some mistake. What if I get a Dragon Killer title or something from killing too many dragonflies?!"

Yeah, the 66th floor dragons were just armored dragonflies. I tried using the Full Moon Sword, but it didn't distract them at all. *Impressive resistance.*

"I've seen a lot of multi-jointed, armored monsters here, but what's the point? You can target the gaps between the armored joints anyway?"

That said, the massive, seven-foot-long dragonflies had some oomph to them and were low-key scary. They were also surprisingly mobile. Dancer Girl still smashed them to death with her chains in an instant. She looked almost disappointed.

We arrived at the 67th floor. The girls mowed down the enemy with their mastered and well-coordinated bow-and-arrow and magic wave tactics. I understood why they didn't want to do close-range combat. These were level 67 Dividing Leeches. Leeches!

The spacious hall of the 67th floor was piled floor to ceiling with squirming black leeches. They looked like intestines only nastier. Groups of black leeches shot out at us from the floor and walls. Leeches rained down from the ceiling. A deluge of leeches came flooding at us from the floor.

The girls screamed and ran. Needless to say, I provided support from a *very* safe distance.

"Uh, guys," I called, "those are dividing leeches, which means they divide, which means that if you don't take them out in one go they'll keep multiplying? You all have body-tight armor, so you're safe! A little level 60 Corrosion won't melt it. So...no wardrobe malfunctions? *Curse it all!*"

No melting today. No wardrobe malfunctions. I felt a surge of resentment toward the armor I made with my own hands. Although, I was pretty sure my head would suffer a malfunction, too, if the girls had a wardrobe malfunction. Maybe this was for the best. They were already glaring at me. I suppose the glares had seemed a bit light today. Oh well.

"Ugh, they're so squirmy and gross! Go away!"

“They’re... The leeches are on my armor! Leeches!”

“They’re annelids, you know. The same family as earthworms and helminths.”

“I don’t like those either!” they shouted.

“When I cut them, they... *Blurgh! Blargh!*”

The leeches had a flexible body structure. They could breathe through gills in their skin, and their bodies composed of bilaterally symmetrical ringed segments. Even back on Earth, they could grow up to ten feet. The ones without Division were ordinary leeches.

“So big! So gross!”

“I think it’s better they’re big, actually. If they were small, they’d be able to squeeze through the gaps in the armor...”

“Eeeeeeeek! Don’t say that!”

“They’d sneak under your armor, enter your body, become a parasite...”

“Stop it! We don’t need an explanation! Shut up!”

A battle against living creatures was a battle of information. If you could understand the nature of the enemy, you understood the nature of both their attacks and weaknesses. Assessing the assets of the enemy was like assessing a good ass—er, something like that. Regardless, information was key? I did think a good ass is essential, but I decided to shut up. Class Rep and the others had their whips out! Hey, I was at the age where sexy armor attracted my attention. How could I not occasionally glance at a gluteal armor piece? I was only looking at armor, and I got a bunch of glares. I needed them to stop getting mad at me!

“Hey, so this is annoying, and I’m bored. Let me scatter some of this? Just stand back a bit. It’ll probably be fine, aside from the false accusations I’ll inevitably receive...okay?”

I took some lime out of my item bag. It was popular in town for making white walls and bleaching flour. I blew a storm of it across the floor with a burst of Wind magic. Annelids were generally weak to dryness, heat, and fire, so I dried ’em out with some town-building materials. Once the leeches fell into a nasty pile of powder with a clatter, I lit them up with a fireball and ran from the burst

of glittering white smoke, flashing red in a massive, white-hot dust explosion.

“Mausoleum? Flour shop? Dusty dust boys?”

I hid myself in a cavity in the wall from the bang and a powerful whorl of scorching wind. The girls seemed to be enjoying getting tossed around through the dungeon, but I did tell them to back up and all, so it wasn't my fault! With their equipment, that level of wind and heat shouldn't leave a scratch. *I did warn them!*

“What *the hell* were you thinking!” they screamed.

They had gotten blown all the way to the upper floors and had finally made it back. Rolling around so much looked like a blast. Unfortunate that they weren't wearing skirts, though.

“I told you guys to stand back? I explained that it'd be dangerous if you didn't stand back. Don't shoot the messenger? It's not my fault?!”

“We stood back, and we still got blown away! It was a giant freaking explosion!”

“I didn't know you were about to set off something like that!”

Blast pressure advances through any airspace if there's no shelter, so without any obstacles in between, the blast will catch up with you, no matter the distance. That was common sense. They had Heat Resistance and Inferno Resistance on their equipment too, yet they were lecturing me even though no one had singed a single hair!

“Hey, I didn't know what was going to happen myself. Ya know?”

We went to pick up the lime-coated spellstones that the leeches turned into. Drying them out and blowing them up wiped them all out. The biggest problem was picking up all the spellstones. There were a lot of impurities in the lime, which ended up ruining some of them. Still, this approach to dungeons was surprisingly eco-friendly.

“A normal person would've stopped at the lime!”

“A normal person wouldn't have set off a giant explosion in an enclosed space!”

“A normal person would’ve explained what they were about to do!”

“Just tell us what you’re thinking, like a normal person would!”

“You’re so far from normal, you’re hardly human!”

“Since when is setting off a lime explosion *eco-friendly*?!”

My method was clearly the fastest, quickest, most expedient way of disposing of the leeches, but the girls were still upset. They didn’t have time to divide if you dried them and burnt them, so what could possibly have upset them about my explosion approach? We were done for the day, so they kept lecturing me as we made our way up, scolding me as we returned to the town. Nobody understood my firm, immovable stance on my guiltlessness. It must’ve been my lack of sex appeal mucking things up.

“Don’t you guys remember? I totally said, ‘Let me scatter some of this (lime and flour). Just stand back a bit (extremely far away and hide). (’Cause there’ll be a giant explosion).’ Right?”

“That’s a lot of omissions! Don’t leave stuff out!”

“The moment you finished talking, you set off the explosion! We didn’t have time to run!”

We leisurely made our way back to the town as I ran like a scared rabbit, fleeing as fast as I could. All that for telling the unvarnished truth. Two of the parties were getting back late tonight. They hadn’t even made it to the 16th floor, and the others were making similar progress. At this rate, it would be better to combine parties and speed up the dungeon-delving progress. I worried about people not having the space to fight with oversized groups, though. Plus, the prospect of lectures from everyone terrified me!

I pranced through the sky with Airwalk, barely managing to avoid the morning stars thrust in my direction. Using the Universe Staff made Airwalk’s versatility a different beast.

“Why are you attacking me, too, Dancer Girl? You managed to evade the explosion perfectly. I was wondering why these attacks were getting so hard to dodge!”

At least I sold out of sweets. They were now getting munched on by the anti-aircraft brigadiers. It was times like these that really made me doubt the effects of Servitude.

“Crap! My only hope is to scatter cookies! Cookies are my lone hope of slipping through that wall of chains... There we go, she’s eating them.”

H-hang on a sec—

“Graaaaaaaaaaagh!”

Ker-CRASH! Grounded, secured, and lectured.

Man, that hurt. Well, better start dinner. *They’re still lecturing me? Seriously?*

DAY 84

EVENING

Fried fish with no breadcrumbs is surely a traditional women's problem, but I'm too scared to point it out.

WHITE LOSER INN

WE KEPT LECTURING HIM, but he wasn't listening. He never did.

"Is this the old legend of the girlfriendless boy? My god, I'm an Archsage at sixteen. What's gonna happen by the time I'm thirty? I'll be an old dude!"

He was muttering and shouting about something totally unrelated. He wasn't listening in the slightest. What he was saying was wrong. Fundamentally wrong.

"Says the guy who becomes a sex god who descended to the earth so he could go crazy with tentacles every single freaking night."

"Was he planning to become a sage by thirty in the first place?!"

"Not exactly the same as being unable to get a girlfriend."

"If a guy with two gorgeous concubines says that, he's normally the target of a concentrated round of Explosion magic."

With none of our lectures affecting him, Haruka-kun prepared a fried fish feast. He'd fixated on fish after coming up with the fishbone design for the pads, but it was better to stay quiet about tonight's dinner and its connection to menstrual products. I was currently the only person who knew the incredible power of the fishbone design. The pad was super comfortable.

After dinner, we planned to have a meeting and a one-more-set sesh. We would receive direction from our instructors and go straight into our belly-dancing lesson to get tight waists and perky butts! I decided to request an emphasis on legs. Not that mine were fat!

"Let's eat!"

He got us. Again. Tears welled in everyone's eyes. The moment we saw the fried fish, all traces of a lecture fried into heavenly ashes... He got us again. Potato tempura, chicken tempura, mushrooms, pumpkin, and bamboo shoots were all fried to perfection.

"This is the last meal I ate at home," came a whisper. "My mom made... tempura."

The tears started to flow as the taste of home resurrected in our mouths. It was a taste we had given up on—important memories on the verge of vanishing. It was the somewhat bitter taste of our beloved, mundane lives that we had sworn to never forget.

After cleaning up, we started training. This was an emergency maiden's secret sesh!

"He did it again."

"How can we lecture him when he makes tempura?"

"I think it was the best I've ever had, too."

"He's a better homemaker than any of us will ever be!"

Yeah, Haruka-kun was a master of everything that could be considered traditional women's work. He combined his cooking with the skills of a master craftsman. He even made Book Club President, an expert on all things traditional Japanese culture along with her whole family, groan with delight. That was some serious tempura expertise.

"I thought it'd be easier to forget it all," I said. "But I can't."

"Haruka-kun lost his family before any of us did."

"He's teaching us how important it is to remember."

"Why doesn't his niceness extend to his dungeon strategies?"

"No kidding!"

He carefully researched tempura breadcrumbs, got excess flour, and then promptly came up with the dust explosion technique. It'd sent us flying across the entire damn dungeon.

“Stopping, excess power, turn it into movement,” explained Nefertiri-san.

Still considering our reflections from the meeting, we got to training. We received precise, logical instruction. That being said, back in the dungeon, Nefertiri-san wasn't cool when she saw the leeches. She'd run the heck away. I'd blinked, and she was gone! She was Neferteeeeeeek-san! Her master was a negative influence on her; surely Servitude was responsible for that. A nasty master engaging in way too much nastiness every night.

Watch and learn. Trace their sword movements. Keep the feet moving, transform motion smoothly into force. This was true swordsmanship. Haruka-kun had demonstrated it in the dungeon. After watching her several times, I understood the flow, and had the necessary strength to perform the movements...but I couldn't execute it like I wanted. *This is hard!*

“I can't do so many complex movements at the same time.”

“It's all inertia, not logic, but we can't handle the amount of inertia and recoil. It's difficult to perform,” explained Book Club President.

A complicated coagulation of intricate dance movements. From there, unlimited patterns were possible. Nailing them became difficult while fighting against an opponent, because even if you moved as planned, the opponent could suddenly stop. Other times you couldn't do what you planned because you had to respond to the opponent. Reading each other and creating the same flow... Could you even make flow?

After getting beat up, it was time for our belly-dancing lesson. We learned the fundamental steps, techniques, and circular motions for each part of the body. The steps were made by combining horizontal circular motions that moved the hips and shoulders separately in parallel to the floor. Today's raqs sharqi style required that we use the entire body. Belly dancing became a full vocabulary; rich expressions that aligned with the rhythm of the music. We had to flow with the rhythms, learn the meaning of the moves, and get slim and perky!

“Slim! Slim!”

“Perky! Perky!”

We emphasized the movement of each individual body part, learning how to

move our muscles independently. For example, dances with veils focused primarily on the upper body, like the shoulders and arms. We worked every individual finger muscle for the finger symbols. We made countless circles within and outside of our bodies, learning from Nefertiri-san's seemingly impossible, otherworldly bodily motions.

She tracked over ten circular motions around her body, manipulating them and combining them freely, instantaneously flowing from one body part to the next in mysterious, captivating techniques. It was her proportions that were the real secret to success!

"I'm exhausted!"

"I feel incredible."

"My whole butt is burning."

We had our girls' bath meeting next to unwind. We washed the orphans, who had been waiting for us, and then all went to soak in the bath.

"Nice work today, ladies."

"I think it's working?"

"Yeah. We don't need to remember all of it."

Our vocabulary was going to expand in incredible directions.

"Should the bath be a paradise in a fantasy world?"

"Yeah, like, ethically and religiously?"

"Even if it is, if the Church tries to lay their hands on the orphans... The only ones in any real danger would be the Church. Would *they* be okay?"

The kids had worked hard today, so they deserved to relax in the bath and have their worries melt away. It was getting close to bedtime for them. They had gotten reputations as hard workers at their jobs, always willing to help with errands. That was why we'd decided to have a picnic—to give them a real vacation.

They used to starve every day despite working so hard. Now, they were getting proper meals, so they needed to move around a lot or they'd never get

to sleep. Kids needed to run around, even on days off, and they inevitably spent all their allowances on food.

“We need to make sure they get to play.”

“They were such good boys and girls from the start.”

“Haruka-kun seemed serious about getting them some real play. And getting them to spend their allowances...”

“He’s not wrong! Even in their new lives, the poor kids are obsessed with work. This is the *one* thing Haruka-kun’s right about.”

The orphans thought that getting to eat lots of tasty food every day was more than enough reward. They didn’t even want to play. Of course they would enjoy a vacation once they got one. Them *not* playing would be a way bigger problem. *We’re going to make them play no matter what!* They were such good kids, so happy to work hard, but they were too tired. They worked themselves too hard and they didn’t even realize it.

We took them out of the bath, dried them, dressed them in pajamas, and took them to their rooms.

“Good night!” they called.

“Good night.”

We put them to bed and turned out the light. The kids were tired, so they fell asleep fast. They had happy expressions on their sleeping faces. They worked so hard. They wanted to make things up to us, and worked too hard.

Back at the orphanage in the capital, they had learned how to get by. They’d made money to survive on their own, yet they had still starved every day. That became the norm. We had to teach them that their new life wasn’t some special privilege. This was the everyday life they all deserved.

After that, we started round two: the true girls’ bath meeting. We learned the wonders of the heroes who managed to topple the sex god. Although he got revenge first thing in the morning, the two heroes were thrilled to offer him something in return. Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san weren’t too different from the orphans. They were so overjoyed every day that they desperately tried

anything and everything to make it up to Haruka-kun. They could've been enjoying themselves instead—that was why Haruka-kun brought them here. No. Late night battles, every night.

“Tentacle-resistant, leather PVC suits, spot on,” said Nefertiri-san.

“Whooaa.”

“Tightly stretched, tentacles can't go in,” explained Angelica-san. “Vibration resistant. We can win!”

“Our heroes defeated the evil sex god! Thank you, heroes!”

Well, he was a self-proclaimed human, and they were two dungeon emperors. Something was off here. What did that make us? Innocent villagers?

They managed to keep him on his toes with those 108 secret arts, which they described in graphic detail. They were thrilled at having been able to give him such a...thorough offering. So why did it sound like all-out war to me?

Then they changed right into the PVC suits, looking gorgeous, magnificently muscular, and bold but also... Er, how to put it? Yeah, those suits were so tight that their figures overflowed from them. We had to all help to stuff them into the suits. It made sense, with that level of tightness, the suits would be impossible to penetrate or remove. With that, the two of them merrily went off, and we started planning the picnic and pool party. That meant swimsuit production. *We need to hurry up and decide on our designs!*

“Hmm. Should I do a bikini?”

“Oh, you can float if you put air in it!”

“Put air into *where?!?*”

“I want a racing swimsuit like Angelica-san's.”

“He already made school swimsuits for us,” said Fish Girl.

“With that underwear-making prowess, his bikinis could be gorgeous.”

“Good point!”

“And we get to get *measured* again,” purred Vice Rep B. “All squirmy squirmy!”

“Crap, almost forgot about that!”

Couldn't he make them with our old sizes? I supposed swimsuits had different dimensions and materials. Fish Girl explained that the two of them had theirs made while soaking in a big bucket of water. If we wanted good, proper fits, we'd need to do measurements and testing again.

With Haruka-kun's Wisdom ability, his manufacturing prowess had gotten ever better. On the other hand, level ups to Lascivious, Sex God, and Sensitivity incurred all sorts of terrible dangers for maidens. How could brand new bathing suits not tickle our curiosity? Custom-ordered bathing suits, too! Of course, our curiosity wouldn't be the only thing tickled with those tentacles around, so nobody was sure what to do. Our hearts were set on that pool.

“Argh, what do we do?”

“I want everything!”

I knew he'd have a mini hot tub set up for the kids, plus a competitive pool for Fish Girl and Nudist Girl. Then a water slide for everyone. Then there was the cave, full of nostalgia. The first place where we smiled in this world.

We wanted to make sure the orphans had plenty of happy memories before they went to the orphanage. They could all smile and laugh now, but it wasn't enough. The Omui orphans had also started to wear Haruka-kun's backpacks, so he'd been over there since rebuilding the orphanage here. Haruka-kun had lost his family himself, so he'd do anything for kids in the same circumstances. They walked down the streets with their backpacks, smiling brightly, running off to their work for the day. What happy smiles.

A fun picnic where everyone could laugh. *We'll come up with the perfect plan!*

DAY 84

NIGHT

After doggedly enduring countless long days, at last, the day has come on the second day.

WHITE LOSER INN

I'D NOTICED SOME slight bending in my equipment during today's battle. That was the result of my body's power stretching it to the limit. It was subtle, but it was a bad situation. The excess power drain overrode the natural resistances of my equipment. I made a new weave design to address the root causes of the problem, creating a new structure from scratch.

"This'll do it. The changeable parts are overlapping in the MP mold. That's why the movement doesn't align with my body speed. I'll reduce the size of the mold and increase the moveable parts instead. That'll make it heavier, but I can still strengthen the defenses. In fact, the problem is that the armor'll be getting thin when I'm stretched out, so layering the materials might cut down on MP consumption."

Slimey had wriggled his way into my armor. What a little cutey.

"Nothing's going to be perfect, and I can keep on making improvements. Once I learn new techniques or get new materials, I'll remodel things again. It's never gonna be perfect, ya know?"

Jiggle jiggle.

I combined nesting and pleating structures, then reduced friction and resistance, building scales into my armor. Relying on magical materials made designing and revising a lot easier. When I used my equipment in battle, unexpected problems inevitably appeared one after the next.

"This'll be strong against slash attacks, and the pleated structure should minimize bludgeon damage, too. I'll be in trouble if the structure itself takes

damage, though. Maybe I should stick to a standard scale structure.”

Wiggle wiggle.

I get it. A scale structure’s strengths and weaknesses depended on its bearing. I need to keep the bearing to one direction for sure. Then I could gather information, and use it to make another design. Trial and error led me to better and better models, but I still hadn’t achieved anything close to the magic imbued in Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl’s armor. “If I knew I was getting sent to a fantasy world, I would’ve gone to technical school. Standard curriculum doesn’t do much good here at all. Technical school kids would be invincible here! I’m gonna shoot for the magic robotics’ championship! Agricultural school would’ve been nice, too, so of course I had to go to a normal high school.”

Jiggle jiggle.

I couldn’t understand everything through book learning. Even if I had researched relevant things back on Earth, I ultimately needed to make things myself in order to figure out what worked here. The proof was in the pudding. By piling on mistake after mistake, revising and remaking, I was on my way to creating superior products. If I changed the design too much all at once, I wouldn’t be able to compare versions, so that was enough for today.

“What to do about bows?” I wondered. “The design changes if I prioritize release speed or power, so I’ll need to decide. I want to improve those, but anything too complicated will be too fragile for battle.”

For now, I powered up the “Boulder Longhammer: Vitality, Power +40%. Ejects stones from the mallet. Requires Earth magic. Destructive Crushing (large). Internal Destruction (large). +Attack” with mithril. It required a lot of mithril, meaning it was a good item. Now it had become “Boulder Longhammer: Vitality, Power +50%. Ejects stones from the mallet. Requires Earth magic. Destructive Crushing (ultra). Internal Destruction (ultra). +Attack.” This was a bludgeon, a blunt-force weapon, so it’d be most effective against physically tough enemies. Shield Girl could use it, or the volleyball duo. Did any of them have Earth magic, though? I’d let Class Rep figure it out.

“I want to practice Holy magic, but I think I’ve gotta focus on this baby first... Thin, soft, uncuttable thread... Er, controlling it, I mean?”

Things that had shape needed to have fixed ideas about them. Magic didn't have any shape. I had to force the unlimited possibilities into fixed ones and control my precise visualization. If I didn't establish everything precisely, the magic thread would scatter like mist. I didn't have much time, so how thin it was didn't matter. I focused on control instead.

There was a knock at the door. Oh, were they back? Two beautiful smiles peeked around the door. Those confident smiles were practically shouting dominant, unstoppable victory. What lovely, enchanting smiles, bringing the impenetrable, unsquirmable leather PVC suits with them as well as the curves contained within.

"We're baaaack!"

Those skin-tight suits had defeated me last night. I couldn't even get a finger from Magic Hands into them. I couldn't touch their soft skin, and soon, overwhelmed with good feelings, I fell into teenage boy defeat. That was why they were so confident. They slowly strode toward me from either side, extending their arms, figuring that I was powerless and resigned to my fate. That was why they led me to the bed with such sweet smiles. And that was when I unleashed...*concentrated...STRIP!*

Yeah, I couldn't squeeze a finger into those suits. But Magic Hands? They're crazy. They were like hands manifested outta magic or something, so they didn't have any set shape. There was practically nothing they *couldn't* do. After all the testing I'd done with Wisdom to see how much I could control them, I was ready.

Still, that alone wouldn't have been enough. Magic Hands weakened when dispersed. Even hard steel weakens when it's stretched out so far. The solution was simply to let the target get close, *and then unleash the power of mushrooms!*

I started to tear the suits off, sensual sensations stimulating my teenage boy senses as finger stimulation was coming for me until the coming came to me!

I wove. I took the invisibly thin mushroom thread and spun it together, constructing a shape. Spinning mushroom thread creates nothing less than a mighty mushroom! I emitted and controlled magic thread that was thinner than

hair. Thin, weak, easily torn magic thread. Yet, something so incredibly thin could slip through the minute gaps in the faux leather suits weave!

“M-magic power?!”

The teenage boy had already been teenage boy’d into a dangerous teenage boy zone, breaking my concentration. But the girls’ confident attack was conducive to a counterattack. In a mere instant, the thread reached its destination.

“You can’t win, leather suits, unbeatable!”

The two beautiful faces were flustered in a moment of indecision. This was my chance. I went all out, concentrating on Wisdom. I used that one thread to tickle their nerve endings. There were close to no gaps in the PVC suit, but the thread was thin enough to slip through the ultra-tight weave.

“Eeeeeeeeeeep!”

“How?!”

Now that I had achieved the initial invasion, I poured consecutive rounds of thread through the gap. They layered together, thickening and strengthening, growing and spinning larger and stronger. Before long, I created a thread as strong as Kevlar, wriggling and growing within the PVC suits. *Invasion complete!*

“Aaaaahh! Mmmmmm!”

The peerless beauties arched their backs, quivered with pleasure, and toppled over alluringly. Their full, erotic figures, so tightly trapped in the shameless leather suits, had fallen into states of twitching, gasping, and writhing. Tentacles crawled and slipped beneath the leather and across their skin. Sliding across their bodies, teasing and meandering, the tentacles began a rampage of rubbing and squeezing underneath the suits. Victory was mine.

“Pfaaaagh!”

That’s a different sound... Still, victory had been decided the moment I infiltrated the suits. The concentration necessary to create tentacles thinner than the PVC thread was the deciding factor. They were too confident in their defenses, and their surprise bought me time to focus. I managed to transform

that instant into their defeat!

I made my tentacles thicker, overwhelming them with sensation, twisting and winding all over their twitching, shuddering, thrusting bodies until they fainted and woke up in bursts, and again. Still wrapped in the tight black leather, I barraged them with tentacles. Their trembling was so sexy to watch as they moaned and gasped for air... Surely they couldn't move anymore.

"That took ages. I mean, after two whole days of endurance and patience, I finally managed to unzipper those outfits. I finally did it!"

From their slim, lovely necks, I politely and courteously poured my heart into slowly, haltingly unzipping the suits. Those black leather body-tight suits peeled open from the center, revealing seductive white and tan skin to the open air. I continued to slowly, gently unzip the suits, stripping the seductive figures naked neck to waist. As the zipper slipped over the deep, soft cleavage, beautiful collarbones emerged, and the full, round flesh beneath burst out of the suits next. The zipper lovingly slid down across their beautiful stomachs, reaching the final point, finally splitting the suits open from top to bottom.

That tight, body-hugging black leather sundered. I took my time with the process, revealing another sliver of skin at a time. Bit by bit, body part by body part, I stripped them naked, inching, creeping, crawling, revealing every last bit of their bodies until they were completely exposed. *I've never been more grateful to be alive!*

When the PVC suits finally split apart, when I at last cast them aside, two beguiling bodies were left lying on their backs, naked. *You know what happens next!*

DAY 85

MORNING

Walking into a known trap is anything but my fault.

WHITE LOSER INN

THE BRIGHT CALLS of birds and lively lecturing announced the morning. *A morning like any other!* Washed in bright sunlight, they got mad at me. Another great day was ahead.

“Hey, the leather suits were impenetrable, so the only way to get through was to make tentacle thread just as thin and touch you all over. To squirm and slip and slide and rub all over your naked skin. An inevitable fabric invasion. So it’s not my fault?”

The teenage boy took over from there. A proper unleashing, an eruptive explosion worthy of the title of teenage boy. An unstoppable overflowing excretion. It was the turbulent waves of the bottled-up teenage boy bursting forth and crashing on to the shore. *Hey, I’m a teenage boy, ’kay?* We went down to the dining hall where everyone was gathered as they continued to lecture me. Guess they were all hungry?

“Morning!”

“Okay, you say morning, but you were just hungry and couldn’t wait for food, right? It’ll be ready in a minute, okay?”

I put together breakfast. There was lots of fish and meat for the growing orphans, and, I suppose, for the calorie-concerned, one-more-set sesh girls from whom I didn’t catch the remotest glimpse of concern over getting seconds of diced garlic beef. The meatheads normally went crazy stuffing their buckets, but I supposed they were holding back because the girls were wearing their compression shorts. The nerds were also basking in the scene.

“The mountain of mushroom salad is disappearing at a preposterous yet

predictable rate. I know eating vegetables is good for you, but is eating them with this much gusto still actually healthy?”

I sensed a presence outside. Everyone instinctively got their weapons out at the appearance of an unexpected visitor. Hey, that was Mr. Meridad’s advisor? From the duke’s castle?

“I apologize for intruding so early, but we have a bit of an emergency situation...”

I flew, kicked into the air, springing and dashing over the land. *The princess...* I thought that we’d laid down a perfect plan, one with no possibility of danger. But I’d underestimated the depths of Royal Girl’s stupidity. She must’ve heard about it from Miss Armor Rep—the secret of the pseudo-dungeon!

I used Gravity to reduce my weight to close to zero and dashed through the air with Airwalk. I sped myself up with Wind magic, made extra leaps at the same time with Teleport, and headed for Murimuri Castle. *For Royal Girl to...* What would I even say to Maid Girl?

“It’s definitely not my fault? I implemented safety measures. So why would she ignore them and head straight into a trap? Going head-first into a fully loaded trap all gung-ho like that is definitely not my fault. And I came at full speed to rescue you, but it looks like I’m too late in more ways than one... Yeah, that’s a no-go? No way?”

“I’m sorry! Forgive me! Don’t touch me! I’m sorry, don’t touch me. Forgive me, I’m sorry, I beg you. Don’t touch me! Stay away from me! No tentacles, don’t bully me, forgive me...”

Yeah, it was no good. She wasn’t used to it, as in... Look, a lot of things weren’t okay at the moment. I was too late to rescue her. The rafflesia had already dissolved all of her clothes and equipment. My god!

“Keep it together, Your Highness! You bring dishonor upon yourself as the princess of this land! It’s vulgar, shameful, lower than treason! To have your belongings disintegrated by such vile tentacles... We must cut through them and destroy the despoilment of this unseemly, heinous violation!”

Yeah, these folks were pissed. Maid Girl got mad listening to the advisor dude

be mad, and charged in to help Royal Girl. She wasn't quick enough. Yup, the rafflesia wasn't going to let me down today. It was working *hard* for its rent! Everything looked great to me, the organizer of this dungeon, but nothing looked too good to Maid Girl at the moment. Everyone was all pissed off at me even though flying over so quick and crash landing here seriously hurt! I had to tolerate the absurd, nonsensical, totally preposterous, ridiculous, riotous suffering.

She probably heard about the slide that takes you back to the pseudo-dungeon entrance at one of the girls' meetings. Miss Armor Rep and Slimey loved that little trap, so they took off their employee IDs and activated the trap of their own volition and went sliding back to the beginning.

"Uh, look. This is the new pseudo-dungeon. You realize that, right? The traps are different now. The trap sends old dudes to drown in an underground river and sends hot chicks to hang out with Mr. Rafflesia? Pretty glorious, right?"

In the event that the pseudo-dungeon recognized the person in question was a commanding officer, the tentacles secured the individual...and that was exactly what had happened. Even after getting so traumatized by the half-naked heave-ho before, she wasn't prepared for this!

"No more gooey—I'm sorry, no more dripping, forgive me. No more squirming, don't touch me! No more squeezing—forgive me, I'm sorry, keep your tentacles away from me! Don't tease me, I'm sorry, forgive me..."

Now I was going to have to deal with all sorts of unwarranted false accusations. There was a future where I never escaped the burden of everyone's anger. *Time to feed them sweets!*

Munch munch munch.

Okay, that fixed things. They ate the sweets.

"If you come to the frontier town, we're planning on having a picnic. There's a pool and a waterslide without any tentacle traps, too, so it's all good? I gave you indissolvable armor, so what were you doing in ordinary clothes? They totally melted?"

"You see... They were such precious gifts. I didn't want to get them dirty..."

If she had clothes from the frontier, they might've resisted melting. But jumping into the rafflesia's nest wearing plain ol' ordinary clothes...? What was she thinking? *I kinda saw some things?*

"Ah, Haruka-kun. I just got back. Sorry about all this. I didn't know how to undo the trap, you see. Is Lady Shalliceres still broken?"

"Lord Haruka, thank you so much for your priceless mushrooms, armor, and equipment. Thanks to you, we have alleviated the despair of our domain. Thank you."

It was Mr. Meridad and Mrs. Murimuri. Mrs. Murimuri thanked me every single time we met. Maybe she had gotten into the general store's mushroom bento boxes. *Uh oh. Now I'll need to worry about another mushroom addict!*

"I wanted to pass on the news to you personally," said Mr. Meridad. "There is a priceless treasure of Diorelle called the Pure Water Mirror. The nobility make their vows before this mirror, and if they betray those vows, the mirror strips their titles away. Now that we have inspected the past deeds of the corrupted nobility, we have punished all of those involved. The king told me to thank you on his behalf. So, thank you. Truly. It took a while to reformulate the court, but we've finished the job. The legend of this kingdom will forever include this tale of its rebirth. It starts now."

They had yet another treasure. How'd I miss it?! They'd questioned the captured nobles with the mirror and punished them accordingly. Those who'd been banished didn't have any fortune or estate to come back to, anyhow... I'd kinda vacuumed all of it up.

None of this had actually saved the kingdom, but I'd avenged the orphans at least. I had bullied those bullies right back, just like they deserved. It still wouldn't undo all the unnecessary suffering inflicted on those innocent children, though I had picked up a hefty apology fee.

"Naturally, the remaining nobles and the royal family have paid over half our fortunes as restitution for our failures as rulers. We're planning to construct new schools, hospitals, and orphanages, and to rebuild older ones. We are all so poor now that we'll have to fulfill our debt obligations on a long-term repayment plan."

“Oh, don’t worry ’bout that,” I said. “Any time. I can’t use the royal currency anywhere else. Plus, the old dude with the food cart will chicken out. It’s a super-hated cursed currency, so honestly, I’d rather it not get returned. Here, seconds?”

Munch munch.

Royal Girl was on Team Crepe, but Maid Girl repped Team Manju. This was Royal Girl’s second time, so I expected her to recover quickly. Seriously, though... Why was she the only person that my sexy trap pulled? Man, this was problematic. I made sure to thoroughly record all angles of the incident with Wisdom so they could be analyzed later to resolve future issues as they emerged!

My classmates had Dancer Girl with them, so despite the change of plan, I didn’t need to hurry over. I decided to hear the news from Mr. Meridad. We didn’t get *any* news out here in the countryside.

We’d been too hasty to leave the capital. Way too hasty! Although, that dungeon had grown to ninety-nine floors, so technically, we’d left the capital way too slowly. We missed the beautiful wolf girls who’d come to the capital from the Beast Kingdom! I had assumed they were going to be old dudes and left, but it turned out they were young women. We had saved the Beast Kingdom and all, so they’d sent an envoy to convey their gratitude and solidify trading terms. The pimpin’ king sent them to the general store, which bought rice and soy sauce from them. Miso, bonito flakes, seaweed, and kelp were all on the table for next time!

They had also formally invited the nerds to the Beast Kingdom. The nerds were still wailing about how they’d been too late, hadn’t made it in time, and had only been able to rescue the kidnapped slaves. Not only had they done all that, though, they’d also grieved for the fallen beastfolk heroes, and the beastfolk had recognized them for their deeds. *I don’t think the nerds can handle any formal ceremonies, though?* The kingdom was now preparing to send an envoy, so the nerds couldn’t refuse the invitation. I could ask Class Rep to give lessons in manners.

An unofficial envoy from the Merchant Kingdom had also visited the capital.

They were a group of merchants who hadn't been at the top of the old merchant alliance. To make the country sunder even faster, they came to engage in dual diplomacy. I wrote a strategy guidebook on how to plunder the Merchant Kingdom's wealth, but I wasn't sure if those merchants could capitalize on it. If they didn't, the Merchant Kingdom was done for. And it'd be for good this time. The bureaucrats would do their darndest to destroy it.

With the Merchant Kingdom unable to make a move, that only left the Theocracy. They also had internal rifts, but all we'd heard from them were demands to return the archbishop. Naturally, the kingdom replied that they would indeed return him, so long as the Theocracy paid absurd, rip-off levels of restitution for the damages they had caused. Yeah, I had come up with that price. Their archbishop being seized as a criminal affected the dignity of the Church, so the pressure was on.

Since I was nearby, I inspected the new pseudo-dungeon. Merimeri was buying stuff out the wazoo at the newly installed vending machine souvenir shops. She totally abandoned the captured Royal Girl for those treats!

"No, I didn't! Princess Shalliceres hadn't come back to the exit yet, so I came here to check on her!" she protested. "I was just doing some shopping as I waited for her! That's all!"

She claimed she had rushed to the entrance to try to rescue Royal Girl. The red bean paste smeared around her mouth said everything, though. She didn't seem to notice the crumbs, and I felt bad for her, so I didn't mention it.

"Let's get going. They're probably around the 70th floor boss by now."

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl were with my classmates, so they could safely retreat in a worst-case scenario. There was no way they'd hit floor 75 yet, so they shouldn't have been in any real danger. *I bet they're getting hungry!*

DAY 85

AFTERNOON

“Walk away with the other person’s shoes” and “do what the other person hates” are fundamentals of moral education, so what’s the issue?

DUNGEON

71ST FLOOR

A BLAZING INFERNO COVERED the floor, the flames raging in a scorching whirlwind. I’d gotten carried away, so I kinda burned everything?

“Why are you trying to burn down flare ents?!”

“They’re already made of fire, idiot!”

The monsters didn’t make any sense. They were withered, burning trees that shot fireballs at us.

“Well, you could cut ’em down, but trees burn and all, so they seemed burnable. Wisdom analysis said they have Inferno magic immunity, so I poured oil on them and burned them like normal. They’re just trees, ya know?”

I made globs of oil with Holding and shot them at the trees. The end. The monsters were too hot to get close to. Now they were spellstones, but I didn’t want to get burned! It looked like the 70th floor boss had taken them a while, but the girls won. Dancer Girl had sat on the sidelines during the battle and gave them a passing grade.

Of course the boss had to have armor as its drop item after all the effort I had put into creating the next generation standardized MK-X model armor that featured superior mobility and functionality. “Stone Spirit Armor: Vitality +50%. Rock-Hardening (immobile). +Defense.” I expected this to turn into Steel Spirit Armor or Platinum Spirit Armor after upgrading it with mithril, but the immobile

feature was a real issue.

“An item that allows you to take hits but prevents movement is an inevitable death flag,” I said. “It might be helpful for an army, but an adventurer using this would end up sitting around waiting to die.”

That was why Dancer Girl took it. I preferred selling it. I didn’t want Shield Girl to end up seeing it, ’cause she’d definitely want it.

We advanced further through the floor and encountered Class Rep’s squad playing around against a concentrated volley of Flare Bullets, so I quickly burned those flare ents to the ground. We then exchanged information while waiting for the spellstones to cool. After hearing about the floor boss and the Stone Spirit Armor... *Yowch! Everything’s still way too hot!*

“We’re just trying to get to the 74th floor today, so we’re not really in a hurry...”

“I understand why it worked, but that doesn’t make fire burning down fire monsters any more sensible...”

“Common sense only gets in the way. Let’s all get rid of ours too.”

“Uh, I was using common sense?” I said. “Just ordinary, common, regular, widely-accepted sense?”

The spellstones had cooled down. They were still hot in general, but we could pick them up.

This dungeon went all the way down to the 70s, too. Was it me, or were the dungeons growing faster than they used to?

“Close combat? No problem. Countering long-range attacks...? Problem.”

The ever-wise Dancer Girl pointed out that the girls struggled against enemies with long-range attacks. Normally, the only two operations were to counter from afar or rush headlong into the fire, but this jack-of-all-trades squad ended up hesitating when they tried to evaluate the best option.

“Okay, on to Floor 72,” called Class Rep. “Is everyone ready?”

“Ready!”

We meant mentally ready. High school second-years constantly experienced wildly swinging, unstable emotions, like the typical crushes of teenage boys. When a beautiful girl asked if you were ready, you had no choice but to say yes—except no one asked me this time? Yeah, they left me behind?

I was no good at this. Next up were “Bubble Shooters. Lv: 72,” who were shooting bubble bombs at us from afar. Those monsters were so bubbly I almost couldn’t tell they were monsters at all. They were far away enough that I couldn’t see what exactly was shooting the bubbles. The girls couldn’t get any counters off, either.

“Front line, shields!”

“Magic is ineffective!”

“Prepare arrows. Fire!”

They hit the bubbles and popped them, but nothing more. They repeated three more volleys to the same effect, at which point Class Rep took a more assertive approach.

“Take your swords out. We’re going straight for them. Chaaaarge!”

“Chaaaarge!”

Plip plop!

They promptly slipped and fell. After bursting so many bubbles, the floor was slippery. I was well-versed in slipperiness. The mysterious bubble shooters had irregular skills like Bubble, Splash, Lubrication, Divide, and Dissolve. Now the girls were rolling around on the wet, slippery floor, but the fun was going to end as soon as the bubbles started dissolving their armor. Not that their armor had any chance of dissolving, but the floor was too slippery for them to get back up. It was dangerous, and their panic flung them into total chaos.

“Hey, Queenie. As in Queen Bee? What’s that spear? And Class Rep, you’re looking very drippy and slippery today, as in, where’s your whippy? Your whip?”

“Oh!”

Queen Bee used her Eternal Ice Spear to freeze all the bubbles and the monsters making them. Then Class Rep finally regained her composure and

took out her Thunderbolt Chainwhip. Yup, it was all over. She unleashed Explosion Ripple, a sonic wave that burst the bubbles one after another in a flurry of Whirlwind and 100 Blows attacks. The bubbles couldn't Divide when they were frozen, so they shattered and turned into spellstones, defeated.

The girls had forgotten their special weapons. It would've been over instantly if they had used those from the start. At least they won in the end.

"Sorry, I panicked," said Class Rep. "Thanks for the tip, Haruka-kun. Let's keep the drippy and slippery talk to a minimum, though, okay?"

"It was our first time against bubble monsters. No wonder!" said Vice Rep B.

"I never thought about ways to defeat bubbles before," agreed Vice Rep A.

"We only needed to, like, freeze and smash them and stuff. We didn't even think about their weaknesses."

"Y'all need to be more considerate," I said. "You know, walk in the other person's shoes and figure out what they would hate the most. Then you think about whatever they don't want to be done to them, and do it... The golden rule. Yeah, I'm applying my teenage boy lack of consideration on to lack of consideration for monsters. Feel bad for my lack of feeling bad! The nerds are probably exceptions, though!"

"Uh... That sounded nice at first, but it ended up being the worst!"

It sounded like their deep gratitude toward me wasn't coming across in their words.

"Walk away with the other person's shoes, and do whatever they don't want to be done to them! These are basic ethical guidelines. So what's with the bad attitude? I'm good at ethics, so I'm not bad!"

Given that I wasn't bad at all, Class Rep's smile was awfully scary! Still, that'd been one strange monster. The bubbles were close to normal bubbles, although Splash, Bubble, and Divide had caused general chaos before anyone understood what was happening. They could've overwhelmed them with fireballs, but the girls tried to survey the enemy and determine the proper tactics instead, which only ended up confusing them. This was the very definition of "unexpectedly dangerous."

“Oh nooo. I totally slipped. Now I’m soooaaaking wet,” moaned Vice Rep B.

Yes, the slipping involved quite a lot of shaking. *Good work, bubble shooters!* Well, they were dead now.

“I wish I had no-slip shoes or something if we have to face more of these kinds of enemies.”

“Yes! A new product, please!”

I had the Adhesion Boots combined with my boots, so I had a superior grip. Those were hard to build into my own products, though. I’d need to revise my approach to footwear. Because of all the shaking, my eyes were flickering over to Vice Rep B. *The true value of body-tight armor is revealing itself!* Vice Rep A’s silhouette was completely captivating! Yes, I needed to take another look in her legs’ direction!

“Knock it off with that expression!”

“Hey, I’m just looking toward legs that are toward the ground because that’s where I need to be looking with this slippery floor sitch, so cut out the baseless accusations, if you please!”

Why didn’t they understand the importance of conducting a comprehensive investigative survey of the setting? Legs were seductive, but those glares were reductive? And scary?

“You say at the ground, but your eyes are straight on her thighs!”

“You need to watch your step, not thighs, you know!”

“And you better think twice before calling them chubby. Got it?”

They had a point. Thighs should be slippery, not grippy. Did thighs need to be slippery inside armor? They should already feel adequately slippery from the equipment getting wet, but did the thighs need to be wet inside the equipment, too? *Armor play is sounding like a better and better idea!*

They kept glaring at me as we made our way down to the 73rd floor. Two more floors and we’d be done for the day. This was a life-or-death dungeon, so all of us needed to tighten up and focus. The only problem was that I was having trouble handling the tightness of the body-tight armor around those

thighs. Following them would be perfect if we were going upstairs instead of down. Ah, good times in the Ultimate Dungeon!

Anyway, we'd all gotten summoned to the duke's castle that night. They were having a banquet to announce developments in the capital and express their gratitude. Only, they'd asked the person they were supposed to be thanking to handle preparing the meal as well as install additional massage chairs. Sure, I'd make money, but creating massage chairs for old dudes wasn't any fun! There might be some shaking and resulting enjoyment from Mrs. Murimuri's extra-large massage chair, but if I enjoyed that too much, I'd end up with more than a few problems. Still, I had to make them.

The 74th floor had a hidden room, and we obliterated the monsters inside before they could do anything. These monsters' attacks sure were powerful! We had to seize the upper hand and corner the enemy with group tactics, targeting their weak points and erasing them. The girls either had to simply get used to it or accumulate more experience. These monsters were never-ending. Same with this world's lectures... *Okay, Class Rep's got her evil smile going again. I better shut up for real!*

DAY 85

EVENING

If I didn't construct it to be durable, sturdy, and tough, it might not be able to withstand teenage temper tantrums.

OMUI CITY

DUKE'S CASTLE

WE MADE OUR WAY to the duke's castle along with the capital and frontier orphans. I remembered how small and shoddy this so-called castle was! I chased after the old dudes jostling and squirming outside of the building, and used Holding on the entire shoddy place. Needing to use extra care so as not to break the low-quality ornaments and personal belongings didn't make it any easier. This was my upgraded Wisdom's first real go at new construction—this was its time to shine, so it needed to put in my best effort.

Equations flickered through my head as a fresh design plan and construction formula flickered into existence. I still had all of the leftover dirt from Neo-Murimuri Castle's construction stuffed in my item bag, so I had plenty of raw materials. I dug up more dirt and expanded the basement floors at the same time. *Calculations complete.*

Through the intensive labor of my daily side job, I had acquired Alchemy Level 8. I made the walls taller and thicker by adding, combining, connecting, expanding, and layering. I had soon completed the initial structure. I may have overdone it a bit, but this was the last line of defense for the frontier. Nobody could complain about it being *too* strong. Even if they did, throwing a few massage chairs in would be enough to shut up Mr. Meridad and a mushroom bento would do the same for Mrs. Murimuri.

Wisdom sort of got on a roll and ended up expanding the castle so much it merged with the castle walls, creating an Agra Fort vibe... *Was there going to be a titan attacking here?!* Regardless, all done.

“H-H-Haruka, what...what is this?” Mr. Meridad trembled as he looked up at the castle. “An opulent structure even sturdier than the king’s castle?!”

Was he afraid of heights or something? He could always sleep on one of the lower floors.

Wisdom was more of a practical designer, so I had to negotiate the aesthetics and settled for the exterior resembling Mont-Saint-Michel Abbey. I then expanded the second outer wall, updated the inner wall, and connected the two. We’d be safe from titans with those babies.

“There we go. Your house, Merimeri. Or, like, a fortress as in a citadel as in home sweet home? I made all the bedrooms spacious, so choose whichever you like. You guys invited me over here, but it was cramped and super shabby. It wasn’t a good place for the orphans to play at all. I figured I’d open the place up a bit and then got a lil’ fancy. That’s all?”

Well, Agra Fort and Mont-Saint-Michel Abbey were World Heritage Sites, so that meant plenty of tourists should come to tour the domain. Ignoring how that would require sexy tour guides with lovely white gloves to guide me on a bewitching sightseeing tour, this was what was best for the orphans.

“All right, go on in. It’s not my house, but I guess I better show you around so you get an idea of the defensive capabilities and the interior. I’m gonna keep tweaking things a bit, but I’ll keep you updated. I’ll post maps. That’ll help any invaders safely navigate? Ya know?”

“I don’t think it will be possible for enemies to invade to begin with, Haruka. Just seeing this would be enough to make me turn around and go home.”

Welp, the advisor approved, and that was good enough for me. If it was anything to do with the duke’s castle, your best bet was to ask the advisor.

After I built a spacious dining hall and luxurious living room for the orphans, it was time to feast. Mr. Meridad was the one paying, so I could make it as lavish as possible. Now it was possible to think of this as a first-class castle. The duke and his family could have a place for themselves here. It would’ve been such a waste to make the duke’s castle less impressive than the inn. The orphans wouldn’t be able to enjoy themselves here otherwise!

“Father... It’s so luxurious that I can’t relax at all.”

“I agree. Shall we build a small shed in the garden? Just a normal-sized house?”

“Lord Haruka did this for us, though... At least the interior is cozy.”

“Guys, hurry up,” I called. “You’ll get lost if you don’t keep up, and we’ll need to send out a search party for you in your own castle, which is quite a problematic situation. The search party wouldn’t know where to go, either, and we’d need a search party for the search party... Anyhow, dinner time? And stuff?”

We passed through an arched lobby lit by vast crystal chandeliers and traversed down a long hallway with plush red carpets toward the dining hall. I had wanted to carpet the whole interior, but it was so spacious that I didn’t have enough materials to do so. I only installed carpet in the guest areas.

“This is what a medieval castle is supposed to be like,” I said. “Everywhere in this world is so crappy. Not romantic at all. Just a bunch of moldy rocks.”

“Oh, let’s build a little hut in the corner of the living room. That could work.”

“It is a little overbearing in here... Okay, let’s do it!”

This was a true royal court. That being said, it was still a large stone castle, only a fraction of which was extravagantly decorated. Maybe I’d hold off calling it a royal court for now.

“Good idea. We need to stop Haruka. If he makes it any fancier in here, we’ll have to run away from our own home!”

“I think you should give up. It’s already too late.”

“Poster Girl and her family have been living in the warehouse ever since the inn got remodeled because their new rooms are too fancy!”

“That general store orphanage branch was a marvel, too.”

“He put marble statues around the place. I bet he’ll do the same here, too.”

“Ugh.”

Everyone continued the pleasant chitchat, which included wails of agony

coming from the duke's fam for some reason? Maybe they were upset that there wasn't enough furniture to fill the spacious rooms. *I better make them some... Yeah, how about some classy art deco stuff?*

"Seriously, what's with this princess-like furniture? Nobody can use this!"

"Uh... Maybe a princess could..."

"Haruka sure does love cabriole legs."

"You'll understand if you go to one of his picnics. There's no escape."

The overall atmosphere was, in a word, French. I still hadn't gotten my hands on any cream, but I was importing milk in bulk now, at least. I could skim some cream off the top of the milk for my crepes. For the all-you-can-eat buffet, I prepared mushrooms, vegetables, fish carpaccio, potato and cabbage confit, tomatoes stuffed with herb-grilled ground meat, and breadcrumb-crusted grilled fish marinated in wine as the main entrée. I made chicken thighs sautéed in white cream sauce and some kind of grilled rib roast for the extra meat dishes. I prepared a variety of sauces, too. Bread sounded too lonely as the only side dish, so I also made potato galette as well. Then for dessert... *Hang on, I can't bring out dessert yet! That's too dangerous!*

"I suppose no introductions are needed," sighed Mr. Meridad.

"Let's eat!"

After a never-ending speech from Mr. Meridad, we started the pre-dinner meeting. Look, I didn't know what he was going on about with the whole thanks-for-saving-kingdom-whatever-its-called after being cornered by whoever-it-was and the whole thingamajig. This castle hadn't even been named yet! I had no chance of keeping up with whatever he was prattling on about. I put up the sign, but I didn't know what the place was called, so I wrote "Nameless Frontier Castle? Well, maybe there is a name, but I don't know it, so it's nameless? Ya know?" Mr. Meridad looked like he wanted to say something, but he was pacified after I put some new vibrating massage chairs into his chambers.

After that, Merimeri kicked off her rebellious phase and asked for another house in the garden. I supposed she was about that age, so it would be nice for

her to have a house to go to if she ever wanted to run away from home. Wouldn't want her to smash the windows and take the horses or something. Or smash down the door with a hammer or whatever.

"Still, it might be literally impossible for her to break the glass? It's fully powered up and twenty inches thick."

"I'm not going to steal something or run away or break anything! I'm not in my rebellious phase, and my name *isn't* Merimeri!"

Hey, there's the ol' temper tantrum. Dancer Girl and I joined in, the orphans next, and soon we had a whole big stomping sesh going. Maybe they were upset that they couldn't let loose at the ball like this. Before long the orphans were doing the hopak—*that's not standard foot stomping, guys*. H-hang on, Merimeri started doing it too! Did she start a trend?!

The pre-dinner meeting ended safely, and the orphans, who had been nervous earlier, stuffed themselves. Unbelievably, the girls were eating with good manners! Back at the inn, they whipped around tridents and activated their skills in all-out dinner fights, and yet, there they were, pleasantly smiling and taking petite bites. *You frauds!*

"Who are you calling frauds?!"

"We're maidens! *Ladies!*"

"Did someone say may-day? Lay-day?"

"No!"

Even Slimey had perfect table manners! He grasped a knife and fork in his tentacles and carefully wiped his mouth with a napkin. Er, except he didn't have a mouth, and the napkin got sucked into him too!

Royal Girl, Merimeri, and Maid Girl chitchatted, happily reunited. Even the registered slaves Miss Skeleton the Armor Rep and Miss Mummy the Dancer Girl were official participants. Everyone was happy. I introduced them at the ball as, "Oh, this is Miss Armor Rep the skeleton, and this is Dancer Girl the mummy. Oh, and Slimey, the literal slime. Ya know?" So they had met them before. Everyone had been confused at the time, but my introduction was totally on point.

We had isolated the meatheads at the end of the table, threatening them with punishment from our whip-wielding Class Rep, so they were doing their best to behave. They couldn't disobey their trainer, after all. At least they were eating off of plates, for once. The nerds were as quiet as church mice, their presences shrinking so small that no one noticed them. Thank goodness! It was even more impressive than a presence-hiding skill.

Even though this was a formal invitation, everyone had worn their ordinary clothes. If everyone had suddenly changed outfits and personalities, it would've shocked the orphans, which we didn't want. They talked loudly and freely.

The hosts, Mr. Meridad and Mrs. Murimuri along with Royal Girl, made the rounds greeting everyone and expressing their thanks to each guest. That was why they had invited us. They, as well as the king, wanted to express their thanks, although it was hard to be appreciative of thanks from a pimpin' king like him. They hadn't wanted to hold some ceremonial event, lavish us with flowery praise, or disseminate honor and glory. They wanted to apologize and bow their heads in true regret and thanks. They knew doing so would be meaningful. That was why we had been invited here today. They dropped down on to their knees before each orphan, smiled, and spoke to each one.

The only reason the frontier had survived for so long was because everyone believed in their leaders. Only on the frontier did everyone come together to help one another in this cruel, divided world where people focused only on their own power and desires. The duke's family was proof of that. The people believed in them. It wasn't about family prestige, power, or history. It was how dedicated they were to the people. Their people trusted them, and they didn't betray that trust.

A gaudy castle, power—those were nothing more than meaningless ornamentation when not recognized by the people. They could be bought with money, so they didn't hold any real value. If you had the recognition of the people, then a gaudy castle was simply a pale reflection of your real power. Wielding power in an unearned castle should be ridiculed, but a duke who had truly earned the respect of his people ought to live in a residence befitting them. But what was the point of that extra house in the garden? It was so shoddy and ugly looking.

DAY 85

NIGHT

I don't think the horde of bikini-armor-loving teenage boys out there will ever forgive such a sin.

WHITE LOSER INN

THANKS TO THE LONG, pre-dinner meeting, we got home late. The girls ran hither and thither, getting the kids washed up and ready for bed. Technically, those kids had just gotten back from being talked up by the most powerful people in the domain. They might not have understood what had happened, but when they grew up, they would always remember this day. It wasn't because everyone pitied them, either. They'd been invited as guests and equals. It wasn't simply that they *had been* there, but that they *belonged* there. They had become true citizens of the frontier.

Other countries may have been scheming behind the scenes without making their intentions public, but that didn't change the frontier's priorities. Everyone listened to the reports, including the one about the nerds' invitation. They needed to send a response. And they did! Those damn meatheads responded! Since when had they learned how to write? Since when did they know how to *read*? *Learn how to throw a damn boomerang first!*

"Ahhhhh..."

Wiggle wiggle.

I chilled in the bath, idly formulating plans, then went to my room to figure things out. I upgraded the MK-X armor to MK-Z, which was the limit of my current abilities. I'd figure out further enhancements at some point, but this was the best I could do for now. It still hadn't reached the power of the dresses or the equipment from the lower dungeon floors. I supposed this was the limit of using ordinary metal and mithril. *Maybe I can find orichalcum somewhere.*

"Hmm. I don't think lace, frills, or corsages go with a cloak for a proper armor

set, and it poses a risk to the poor monsters. Although, I kinda get the feeling we've already crossed the line now that we have armored kindergarten backpacks."

Here was the philosophical conundrum: If metal armor didn't get the job done, the logical conclusion was to make battle dresses. From an objective perspective, however, something seemed off with the idea of girls in flowery dresses slaying monsters wholesale. Metal Kevlar-strength thread powered up with mithril had the potential to be as sturdy as armor, though.

The current dresses didn't have any problems, but the girls cared about them too much to wear them in dungeons. Royal Girl had made the same mistake and ended up getting her clothes dissolved by the rafflesia. All the girls cared about their clothes. They could learn something from those of us who lived in nothing but tracksuits. *I'm looking at you, meatheads.*

Then there was the guys' armor. Nothing fun about making that. Amazingly, everyone agreed for once. I shouldn't make nor should the nerdbrains wear sexy, body-tight armor. *That's totally unsurprising!*

"The nerds prefer heavy armor, and the meatheads prioritize mobility. Those idiots are so idiotic that they use their own armor as shields! I suppose there's a way to make that work, but they're too stupid to understand an explanation, much less remember it!"

Jiggle jiggle.

Shoulder, arm, and breast plates provided protection from sword attacks, but it was hard to equip the meatheads with armor when they were prone to using their armor as another offensive weapon. They underestimated the range of what armor could do, demanding armor that was as thin, flexible, and mobile as possible. "Armor" probably meant "wearable shield" to them. The least they could do was consider the perspective of the person who has to make this armor. What about his comfort?! I honestly considered making the meatheads bikini armor, but I'd rather die than see that in real life, so I didn't in the end. I didn't think the legions of bikini-armor-loving teenage boys out there would ever forgive such a sin.

The item I found in the hidden room—"Spike Buckler: All stats +30%. Thrust

Bash. +Defense”—was hard to evaluate. A 30 percent stat boost to all stats meant it could at least make a bargain sale appearance after a mithril power-up. That was a destructive skill, so it wouldn't get in anyone's way.

Then there was the traditional Japanese attire requested for our upcoming picnic: yukata for the girls, and jinbei for the guys, with kids' sizes for the orphans, too. Kimono required straight-line cutting and sewing, so I made those in no time. Making the fabrics, dyes, and patterns were all tricky. They didn't need to be perfect, though, so that was quick enough. The furisode kimono I made for Book Club President was likely to cause an uproar, but the girls had all passed level 100. Coming-of-age-style clothes shouldn't be too out of place. I didn't get why they had to go for Japanese attire as their Sunday best when we were in a fantasy world, but I let it go.

“Even after making yukata and armor in a fantasy world, I'm struggling on these paper lanterns?! Yeah, these are really tricky.”

Jiggle jiggle.

Slimey was in the middle of trying his hand at making bamboo ware. He was better at pasting on the paper than I was!

“Paper is so annoying to make in the first place,” I said. “The simplest things have the fewest shortcuts. Even magic and alchemy doesn't do enough for me to cheat my way through it.”

Wiggle wiggle.

A festival just wouldn't be right without paper lanterns, though. It wasn't hot like summer, but I decided to mass-produce paper fans, too. They had “Festival Omo-whatever” printed on them. I didn't mind putting in the work. Everyone wanted the orphans to make happy memories before they moved to the orphanage. If we were going to put in all this work, then everyone needed to have a good time. High school kids shouldn't have been fighting in dungeons or wars. They should have been shopping and messing around at festivals. Hence, why I engaged in full-on festivities of the flirtatious type and activities fit for teenage boys at night! *Gotta try my best tonight.*

I had prepared food carts and they now sold everything from grilled corn to taiyaki pastries in town. Mr. Meridad and his fam were finally back, and things

were going to get busy. I had to hurry.

I had prepared two pairs of my trial-run night-wear yukata. Since these were trial products, I ensured that the fabric was thin and transparent and that they had wonderfully deep necklines.

I made a men's yukata for myself, but nobody cared much about that. The nerds said they wanted yukata, too, but the meatheads wanted jinbei. I also got orders for happi coats. Did they want to do a portable shrine too? If it involved wardrobe malfunctions for a female goddess, then I'd definitely be down! Hang on. Would she only have an underskirt?! *Yes, please!*

Slimey was resting, so I was able to do my side job in peace and quiet. Not that I liked doing my side job. I just didn't have any money. Got it?

"They say you shouldn't light your nails instead of candles and oil, but I've been firing up the nail clippers and razor sales out the damn roof lately. Plus, we've seen great mirror profits. And I'm somehow still out of money! My profits don't keep up with my supplemental investments, and my ever-extending labor time can't account for my big-spender lifestyle. I took one day off, and this much work has piled up already!"

Zzzzz.

I'd definitely fall into a cycle of never-ending side jobs if it weren't for Wisdom. Fortunately, my side job was the time and place for my high-speed parallel calculator Wisdom to show its might! Probs?

The infinite helix conveyor belt spun and spun. It was a dizzying sight to behold, and I watched in silent but pleased shock. Right now it was in the middle of processing and producing designs for yukata, beach sandals, and shaved ice, plus new dress orders and swimsuit trial samples. My classmates had quite the list of orders.

"In the midst of my ennui, I confront my side job daily, producing goods from an ever-accumulating list. Yet I fail to ever land in the black, slash get my life back. Like, seriously? What's happened to me? Ya know?"

They talked about ennui, but man, it was really bad! Was I losing it, or were the girls craving stuff like crazy? My classmates were the frontier's biggest

spenders by far. I supposed I could give them a free paper fan at the very least. I was already ripping them off with everything else.

I'd sure love to see two beautiful bodies right about now while I was in the midst of my long night of the soul. For real? The sleeves of a white on navy, lily-of-the-valley patterned yukata appearing in the stillness of night and pure-white snowy skin peeking out. The crimson, rosy-faced-lovebird patterned yukata and the enchanting amber skin beneath it. Those fleeting, falling fabrics and the charm of two curving figures contained within. Their hair pinned up by simple, ornamental pins graced their soft, supple necks.

"Here we are. How...do we look?"

Nod nod...

My god. Even I was stunned into silence! My eyes were glued to the scene in front of me. Recording mode activated. Standing up? Sexy. Sitting down? Sexy. Walking? Sexy. *And if I take those off...sexy time!*

"We wore, what you made us. Are we cute?"

Nod nod.

Yes, so cute. Incalculable hotness, enough to run the cute and hot meters past their freaking limits! The atmosphere of elegance, purity, and sophistication overflowed into amorous, beguiling sexiness!

"Have some, tea."

Nod nod.

Miss Armor Rep sat on my right and scooted close. She could sit in perfect, formal Japanese posture, and I noticed she didn't have any underwear. *'Cause I can see through the outfit!* The pale white skin underneath, the alluring nape of the neck—she was mesmerizingly erotic. *A truly captivating figure.*

"Good work. Here, tea sweets."

Nod nod.

On my left, Dancer Girl leaned against my shoulder coquettishly. My gaze was sucked into the deep opening in the front of her yukata. I knew this was a trap, but I was more than happy to be drawn into the profound depths of her soft,

supple skin. True beauties looked amazing in any type of clothing. Without clothing too. But they were so dazzling that, even clothed, I couldn't bear to look away.

I sipped tea from pink-painted lips. I nibbled tea manju from scarlet-painted lips. My right hand slowly moving deep into the navy-blue, transparent-thin kimono sleeve, my left hand opening the V-neck of the scarlet kimono and caressing the full, plump breasts underneath.

As I alternated between tasting tea and manju, my own clothes had somehow disappeared. Now, they licked my body all over. I was caught in teenage boy throes, unable to resist the whoas of the foes dragging me into the throes of night. *There's only one thing left to do!*

"Let's goooooo!"

Their obi kimono sashes were tied tightly. *Who taught them how to tie those properly?!* Forget that. Those were the sighs every teenage boy dreamed of hearing. Hang on, did the girls teach them to sigh like that? *Thanks, ladies. Time to dig in!*



DAY 86

MORNING

We're safe from the fantasy world age problem, but the history problem's off-limits.

WHITE LOSER INN

IT WAS SAFE TO SAY THAT, despite the customary morning glares, I didn't have much of a lecture to listen to today. *You two sure are quiet this morning. And very glarey?*

"Hmph!"

"Harrumph!"

Without saying anything at all, the two beautiful girls in yukata harrumphed at me. I mean, I had been invited in by the beguiling bodies beneath the ultra-thin kimonos, the soft, smooth flesh simmering with sensations. My friendly teenage boy hospitality sincerely activated the full force of its feelings. Yet they glared at me!

Testing out those prototypes had value. It was fair to say we had reached the pinnacle of yukatas. The true essence of the yukata was the contrast between curved and straight lines representing the true yukata aesthetic. The girls may have been glaring and grumbling at me, but they turned red, shut up, and sunk back into the futons after I told them, "You were too cute, so...I did it? Ya know?"

I mean, they were so cute! They were cute, and with their half-torn yukatas towering over me, my own feelings started to rise up and gush out. If I acted on them, I'd have another lecture on my hands. *The world of the teenage boy is one of eternal suffering!*

They had their heads half-buried under the covers, glaring at me. Technically, they were older than me, but they looked so adorable. *Generational history*

depends on this generational gap... Er, never mind! Where the hell did the morning star come from?!

“Did you have that hidden beneath the covers this whole time?! That’s impossible!”

The morning stars were too big to hide up their sleeves, and there was no way they kept them between their breasts... Although, that would be a sight worth viewing. A morning star wardrobe malfunction! A malfunction so massive it surpassed all comprehension!

Thwack! Bonk!

Owchie? They did say to never discuss a woman’s age, but with these two, it was more of a problem of history than age... Well, I’d be quiet if they didn’t want to talk about it anymore. Who cared about ancient history that was nothing more than legend at this point? The only things that mattered were the massive mysteries that were the heaven of now. Even if they wanted to talk about their pasts at some point, I decided to not ask for their birth dates. *That’ll turn me into ancient history!*

“Time for breakfast? I don’t think you should expose the world to your tantalizingly transparent yukatas. If the nerds saw, I’d have to gouge out their eyeballs and fry their brains until they lost the memory, so I’d appreciate it if you two could get changed?”

I couldn’t help them take the yukata off, because then they’d be in no shape to get changed into something new. I had gotten a lot of sensory stimulation (and bonking) this morning. I was wide awake, Revival was hard at work healing the lumps on my head. I mean, the “Let’s goooooo!” from last night followed up by the “so goood, so *good!*” had caused a bit of a Revival overload. Sheesh, I couldn’t decide what was better, the “Let’s” or the “goooooo.”

The ensuing reaction had caused Lascivious and Sex God to level up. It made sense—barging in on them when they were all vulnerable and equipment-free had them bending over and gasping. I was maximizing sensation with the combination of Lascivious and Sex God and Entanglement, but it turned into something incredible for me and incredibly embarrassing for them... Yeah, they were still glaring.

“Morning, everyone. Ya know?”

“Good morning!”

After finally escaping from the allure of morning yukata, I went downstairs to find a bunch of teenage girls in extra-tight compression shorts giving their morning greetings. Er, not that the tight compression shorts were doing the exclaiming. Even the mean girls were in skin-tight shorts. We’re talking Sakata Ginko level compression shorts mastery here. Looking too much would get me in all sorts of trouble! *I’d appreciate it if people could be more understanding of the struggles of teenage boyhood.*

The nerds’ presence had faded so much I was starting to have trouble finding them, even with my Presence Sensing skill. As soon as the girls left, they immediately started putting in orders for the same compression shorts and gym shorts for beast girls. *Blech. I should give them some credit, though. Classic otaku move to put the underwear OVER the gym shorts!*

“We’ll pay however much we need to. Just give us school swimsuits and gym shorts!”

“With sizes for the loli dwarfs, too. That’s an absolute necessity!”

“And for the flat-chested elf girls!”

“Calm down, guys. We need to start with striped panties and sailor uniforms.”

“Ohhhh my goodness! You’re a genius!”

Meanwhile, the arctic glares from the girls washed over the clueless nerds. I wished they could decide whether or not they wanted to exist. *At this quoted price...hell yes!* The temperature had fallen below freezing. Forget ice, a spilled glass of water would turn into diamond in this blizzard. That was how frigid those glares were. None of our classmates had the Tsundere title or anything, but they must’ve all learned Tsundere magic for a cold spell like this! *Gotta dash before the glacial lake floods!*

Next, breakfast. After an outbreak of ladylike opinionating (read: vicious violence) against the guys’ demands for grilled meat bowls, we settled on chicken-and-egg rice bowls. The orphans ate everything. I knew my classmates’ bad influence was starting to creep in! *Gluttony’s influence is unstoppable!*

“Thanks for breakfast,” said Class Rep. “Now let’s clean up and get going for the day!”

“Yeah!”

My god! They changed modes on a dime. Those were eyes of warriors, hunters’ gazes. Yeah, they wanted to make some cash. They’d settled on their requested swimsuit designs. It looked like today’s monsters were destined to be turned into swimsuit collateral.

They washed the dishes with terrifying vigor and snapped their armor over their compression shorts. Since the armor had to be put on from the bottom up, the girls had to bend over in order to pull up the armor, making for a scene of bottoms dangerously close to full exposure. On the flip side, putting on the tops required them to stretch out and jump up and down, turning them into a bunch of jiggling Slimeys. The nerdbrains sat in the corner in silence the whole time. I knew they had significant reasons for why they couldn’t stand, something that us teenage boys wouldn’t confess to under torture. I went ahead to the Adventurers’ Guild and finished up some errands while I waited for everybody.

“As suspected! Yet another day of immutable, immovable, indestructible, invariant bulletin board postings! The unshakeable fact that the jobs haven’t changed has been bound by the ironclad will of destiny! When is there ever going to be a job that I can make some money at?”

Receptionist Glare Rep sighed. “If I may ask, why does someone who is *not* an adventurer sneak in each morning to cause a ruckus? I’d like to see your shameful sneaking change into a noble strut. First, allow me to check first whether you’re an adventurer who has any right to be here. Oh! You’re still *not* an adventurer, you still *don’t* have a right to be here, and you’ve never done anything but sneak! Why is someone with no right to be here *also* the person who’s lodged the most complaints about our postings in the history of the guild? Answer me that!”

Yada-yada-yada-yada.

I basked in that magnificent badmouthing. Receptionist Glare Rep truly deserved her title. Her glares would go down in history! Not that she had the

title in her stats. Anyway, Class Rep and the girls had finished their report to the guild, so it was time to get going.

“Take care of it. Thanks!”

“We’re on it.”

“Of course.”

“You can count on us!”

Next up, the dungeon. The squad merged into ever-shifting formations as they swept through the monsters. They had intended to stop at the 75th floor, but the girls had already decided to make it to the 80th, so that was today’s task. As usual, the plan was to split up and rendezvous at lunch time.

“Keep moving and attacking. No stopping!”

“Roger!”

They had a defensive formation that the enemy’s relentless attacks couldn’t break through. The giant, level 75 Blade Gorillas launched attack after attack. The girls took the attacks with their shields, then parried and sidestepped to get in attacks of their own. Vice Rep A, who couldn’t carry a shield with her dual-wielding style, kept one of her swords rotating, turning the enemy with the flat of the blade and then skewering them as they charged in to attack her. The girls proved that they far surpassed the cooperation and technique of level 75 monsters. Tiny Tanuki had figured out how to use her dual axes as a shield to repel and counterattack, spinning to mow down the gorillas. I was expecting more from a tanuki versus gorilla fight, but alas, no biting was involved.

“Aim for their legs!”

“Crush them all! Surround them!”

They surrounded the remaining gorillas, who had trouble swiping at close range with the massive blades growing out of their bodies. I mean, these apes had enormous freaking swords shooting out of their arms. It limited their options.

The gorillas shrieked and cried in agony. They had superhuman strength, massive bodies, and humungous swords on their arms. Those huge figures,

covered in magic-reflecting fur, died one after another. The girls nullified their Howl, Fear, Panic, and Daunt skills and tore them apart. It was an overwhelming victory.

The girls had quickly stopped leveling up after passing level 100, but they refined their skills in nightly one-more-set seshes. They deepened their experience and improved their judgment every day in the dungeons. They were deadly in a group melee. If an opponent cornered them, they became unbelievably weak, but in a fair fight, they had the power and talent to battle their way deep into the dungeons. This was what Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl had taught them, and what they had gained through long days solo fighting.

They continued to overwhelm the monsters on the 76th and 77th floors, but the 78th floor was configured like a labyrinth. We hadn't seen what the monsters here were yet, so the girls moved in parties. That meant Dancer Girl and I were a team. The enemy: "Attack Fox. Lv: 77." Surely the only reason I felt a hint of dirtiness was because I was a teenage boy, right? Foxy! Get it?

"They're foxes with axes for tails and sharp, spiky fur, so you can't pet them. Not that you'd want to. They're not cute at all!"

Rattle rattle.

Dancer Girl had already bound them in place with chains and was beating them to pulp, so there wasn't much left to pet.

What is this uneasy feeling? The monsters were too weak for being this deep. Maybe the dungeon was growing too quickly for the power of the monsters to keep up with. Or maybe it varied dungeon to dungeon. In the Ultimate Dungeon, the monsters had been stronger than their level suggested. That wasn't the case here. The girls had become more than powerful enough to handle the lower levels of this dungeon in two parties. Not three months had passed since we'd arrived here, but I supposed that was how far cheats got you. And Dancer Girl... No. Standards were different for dungeon emperors.

In a hidden room on the 78th floor, I found the "Magic Drillspear: Power, Speed +40%. Magic Defense Nullification (medium). Physical Defense Nullification (medium). Drill. Piercing Rotation. Equipment Shatter. +Attack." It

was a literal drill. I'd gotten it as payment for some of the debt I was owed, but I planned to upgrade it with mithril and sell it at a bargain sale, so it wouldn't really do a lot to relieve their debt in the end. It should be enough for tonight's room and board, at least.

We took care of the 79th floor in a jiffy and finally made it to the main event: the 80th floor boss. There was no way this floor boss was going to be weak. The girls had their new armor, and wouldn't go down easily. Dancer Girl and I started to prepare for battle. To be honest, I was rooting for the boss to be strong. Otherwise I'd never have my chance to fight. I was getting bored!

DAY 86

LUNCH

They ran when I launched an overpowering, low-frequency, ultrasound wave at full force.

DUNGEON

80TH FLOOR

THE GIRLS CHIPPED AWAY at it bit by bit, dodging the relentless inferno. Their movements were easy to read, though.

My job was to keep the flames in check, and I flowed through the gaps in flames in the air with Incarnate. I launched a heavy rain of Fire Bullets, using Teleport to disappear and shoot forward, causing as much havoc as I could. Yup, I was a decoy. And for some reason, I was great at it?

“Change guard! Prioritize mobility, and surround the enemy!”

“Roger!”

Their timing was off. When the rear guard came up, a momentary delay caused Mean Girl C to get blown straight out of formation. She slammed against the wall so hard that she couldn't move for a moment, pained. The flame giant didn't let this opportunity go and punished them. I swung my Seven-Branched Sword into the gap this created.

“Yowch! It's hot!”

That was close. The flaming figure managed to avoid my attack. The girls' coordination crumbled, giving the giant time to target fresh openings. Queen Bee, who had been holding out despite having gotten isolated, raced to Mean Girl C, who was on the opposite side of the formation. A massive flaming sword roared in her direction. The blazing crimson of the scorching blade reflected in her wide pupils as the inferno threatened to swallow her whole. A terrible fate awaited her. In that instant, she activated Eternal Ice Spear, and I saw the pure-

white flash of Position Freeze. A crazed storm of the whirling Ice Spear and Ice Sword battled against the scorching scarlet fire, beating it back and shaving them down.

“Yeah, a fiery monster shouldn’t target the queen of icy glares like that. She’ll bite you, you know?”

The giant had four arms, each wreathed in flame. Mighty Class Rep’s Thunderbolt Chainwhip knocked away one. Dancer Girl’s Prometheus God Chains broke off another. Vice Rep A’s quadruple-sword style slashed alongside Tiny Tanuki’s whirlwind of axes to cut off the third. The fourth and final arm had targeted Queen Bee and gone in for the kill. *You chose the wrong opponent, flame giant.*

“Now!”

Clouds of steam erupted as the giant sword of bursting flame began to freeze. Its final arm cracked apart. A thunderous roar sounded with the enormous mass of the falling boob—er, booming hammer! Yes, the booming hammer was now smashing the level 80 Flame Giant into tiny pieces. Glittering shards of ice burst into the air.

In the meantime, I stuffed a mushroom into Mean Girl C’s mouth. Yeah, that was all I could do for her.

The girls broke the monster apart into sparkling ice dust that floated away and vanished. They won.

“Ahhhhh, I’m so tired!”

My expectations hadn’t been that high to begin with, and I still somehow got let down again. *If only they’d been more reckless!*

The 80th floor boss was a giant wielding four longswords wreathed in fire. It was a ferocious, imposing, rampaging force. But it had made the mistake of choosing close-range combat. It was fast, but its movements and attacks were straightforward and reckless, so it was easily distracted by my little Inferno Illusion and Inferno Incarnate. Mean Girl C had noticed the coming outburst and rushed headlong into the danger, because if anyone suffered a serious injury, the reinforcements would have only been more prone to a dangerous

counterattack. Since it was all brawn and no brains, we'd let our guard down. We couldn't fight it as if it were a meathead!

"In short, this is all the meatheads' fault! I'm gonna bully them as soon as we get back. Of course the monster was actually thinking!"

"Haruka-kun, you saved my life. Thank you," said Mean Girl C.

"No, it was the other way around. Honestly. You all took it out and stuff?"

All I did was impede its attacks, annoy it, and buy some time. The girls were the ones who had defeated it. They'd managed to beat a level 80 floor boss with two parties. If they had gotten others involved, they could've minimized the risk and still have won the battle. We didn't have any guarantee that everyone would've been kept safe. Anything less than that was unacceptable.

I didn't like this at all. It was an alarming problem. And it wasn't just one problem but several. The girls had taken me by surprise at how strong they'd gotten, and that wasn't all!

"That was *clearly* a titan, not a giant! Why was it called a Flame Giant and not a Flame Titan? Everybody knows the difference; I don't understand this world at all!"

I guess fantasy monsters weren't quite the same in this world. No wonder my perfectly logical speeches never quite seemed to translate. That was the only possible explanation for why I got so many false accusations despite never doing anything wrong ever.

"Okay, let's head to the meet-up point. Everyone's waiting for lunch, although I did give everyone sandwiches and fried chicken salad. I'm sure everyone will come over early for lunch anyway. Look—proof! You've already finished yours!"

"Thanks for the bento. It was good! What's for lunch?"

Uh... That was literally lunch? They weren't listening to me!

The nerds had already arrived at our rendezvous point. According to them, the meatheads ended up eating their bento before they'd even gotten to the dungeon and rampaged their way all the way down to the 80th floor dungeon boss. It was moving that sheer hunger inspired them to defeat a floor boss all

the way down on the 80th floor. *They're idiots, though, so they probably weren't even thinking about it.*

"So hungry... Dying... Save us..."

"F-food... Haruka-kun, please. Food."

"It's lunch and y'all have already had two meals: breakfast and brunch. How many calories did you burn? Brains consume 70 percent of the energy in normal humans! But you never use your brains, so you should only need 30 percent of the food a normal human needs! Just how inefficient can your bodies be?!"

The sports and arts club parties weren't back yet. Both of those parties were weak on defense and in the mid-guard. They dominated on offense, but they needed to get into a groove first or else the battles took a long time. Miss Armor Rep was with them on the off chance the 80th floor held a dungeon king, so we didn't need to worry. In fact, the thought of the dungeon king lying in wait only to find his higher-up had gotten bonked to death almost made me feel bad. Yeah, I'd participate in a bonking victims' convention.

"Barbeque!" everyone chanted. "Barbeque! Barbeque! Barbeque! Barbeque! Barbeque! Barbeque! Barbeque!"

Jiggle jiggle jiggle! Jiggle jiggle jiggle!

Everyone started a spontaneous barbecue chant, stomping their feet and hitting their forks on the table.

"I think the lyrics are actually 'We will, we will, barbecue.' And you gotta go into the actual verse at some point! It's an intense chant with an indescribable force to be sure. Hopefully, I don't get a Hype Resistance skill or something?"

Jiggle jiggle!

They were being obnoxious, so I started the barbecue prep. That was when Miss Armor Rep's group finally returned. They said there were no particular problems. They'd just been caught up in a battle of attrition. With that much attrition, they'd need nutrition. I skewered meats and veggies and tossed them on the grill. The meat sizzled, smoke rose into the air, and the chanting slowly faded. Soon enough, all I could hear were growling stomachs and deep breaths sucking in the fragrant smoke. *From people who all ate their lunches early!*

I piled up rice balls and a chicken and mushroom soup flavored with chicken bones.

“Okay, it’s all ready,” I called. “Given the fact that I gave all of you lunch bento, this is one profound mystery of a lunchtime. The meat’s ready, though, so fight to the death for it? Yeah, really go all-in and stuff!”

“Hyaaaaaaaaah! Lunch tiiiiiiiiime!”

The meatheads normally went wild in close-quarters combat, but the girls had taken off their armor, leaving them in their super-tight compression shorts. The meatheads suddenly found themselves on the outside looking in, shedding tears of blood as the girls mowed down the rice balls. The nerds had vaporized into pure oxygen and were now circulating through the atmosphere. To be fair, no teenage boy could fight their way through such a squishy scene. It would cause more than a few problems.

I felt bad for the guys. I used Teleport to shoot some of the skewers and rice balls in their direction, and the meatheads happily went racing after them. The nerds hadn’t yet recovered from the super-tight compression shorts war, so I didn’t throw anything at them. The skewers would’ve ended up stabbing them.

The three parties or teams or whatever you wanted to call them had defeated the 80th floor bosses. None had been dungeon kings, which led me to believe that the dungeons had to be getting deeper. *They must be going through puberty.*

“Well, if they’re swelling up and getting bigger, then we’ll need to penetrate deeper. It’s like a negative puberty, which raises a number of questions. They’re getting more floors, so they’re getting bigger, and with all this big and busty dungeon talk I kinda wanna touch ‘em?”

Wiggle wiggle.

The class decided to split into three groups and take on the remaining dungeons up to their fiftieth floors. They didn’t need me or Miss Armor Rep to come along, since they’d handled everything up to the 80th floor easily. Even Mean Girl C had only taken about 30 percent of her HP in damage from today’s floor boss knockout. If it had totally broken her stance, she would’ve been in

trouble. My new armor model, MK-Z, provided more than enough protection, though. I didn't need to worry about any attack killing the girls in one hit.

I handed over the latest armor model to the nerdbbrains making sure to thoroughly rip them off in the process. It wasn't form-fitting. I didn't want to witness the yucky sight of skin-tight armor on any dudes. *I don't want a Yuck Resistance skill. Not yet!*

However, if the frontier dungeons were getting deeper, I needed to check up on the dungeons that I previously assumed were too shallow to worry about. Dungeons with more than fifty floors posed the greatest threat in a deluge, so those had to be top priority. Starting tomorrow, we'd be able to add the frontier army and imperial guard to our dungeon-fighting ranks. I decided to let the duke know on the way home. *Oh, here come the meatheads, racing back after retrieving their barbecue.* Oh man, did I need to throw them treats? Yeah, their eyes said they wanted to play barbeque fetch!

DAY 86

AFTERNOON

I ended up finding a job, but it was a bad match, so my workplace was fatal.

DUNGEON

81ST FLOOR

THE GIRLS WERE PUMPED about making money. I was starting my swimsuit production today, so we needed to cut the dungeon raiding a bit short. I'd already figured out the right material while making school swimsuits for Fish Girl and Nudist Girl. I had gained additional experience making them for Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl. The rest of the class wanted bikinis. That meant I needed to start with a new design. Some of the girls were still growing too, hence changing bra sizes. I'd need to do some remeasuring. *My god, what does this world want from me?* This was going to be hard! Very hard.

"Guggyaaaaagh!"

Ker-splonk.

My side job made me money. I didn't want to take *all* the girls' money, though, so I was waffling on the price. If I made it too inexpensive, I'd get an endless stream of additional orders. For sure! For real!

"Garooooo!"

Ba-donk.

I hadn't started yukata production yet. If I took measurements, I could make all the necessary adjustments. With their monstrous, level 100+ stats, ordinary clothes weren't getting the job done anymore.

"Gaaaaaaaagh!"

Sa-slice!

So much to do!

“Shut up, monsters! I can’t focus! I’m busy focusing on the labors of my profession, and you won’t stop screaming! It’s so distracting! Shut up!”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

The monsters charged recklessly. Normally, they all gathered in one place, but this time, they lay in wait. They never showed up when I struck up my cool pose, but as soon as I started walking, they attacked. No consideration for my needs whatsoever.

It was true that the whole point of the level 81 Ambush Bears was that they could conceal their presence and launch a sneaky, sudden strike. The only problem was I could see them. Presence Detection wasn’t enough on its own, to be fair, but I had Jupiter Eye. The girls had leveled up their Presence Sensing so high that they didn’t have any problem, either. *What exactly did the girls do to boost that skill so much?*

The bears’ agility didn’t match their size. They swiped with sharp claws, which I deflected with my shoulder pads, then slashed vertically.

I wanted to test out my new “Aegis Shoulder Pads: Vitality, Power +50%. Automatic Defenses. Physical Defense (ultra). Magical Defense (ultra). Reflection. Absorption. Slash Parrying. Blow Parrying. +Defense,” and they turned out to be useful. Taking the full brunt of the attacks was dangerous, but diverting the blow turned out to be the perfect solution. I’d make elbow pads once I got back tonight. Having gauntlets on the shoulders and pads on the elbows to block and parry attacks turned out to be quite useful.

“This is what those idiots were using, and since they’re stupid, I figured these were stupid too. In practice, though, there’s a surprising lack of stupidity. But they’re still stupid.”

Jiggle jiggle.

Divert, deflect, receive, parry. When I smoothly interrupted the flow of their

attacks, I took almost no damage.

“Still, this feels risky when a small mistake could result in giant HP losses. I suppose it’s my first time, so it’ll be better with some practice. It could help protect me in a pinch. What do you say? Does that hurt?”

I tried talking to the shy, quiet bears, but they died without a response.

With my black cloak, robe, and black shoulder pads, I didn’t know what kind of professional vibes I gave off, and since I was supposed to be jobless, I didn’t know what to think. Still, I was digging these shoulder pads. Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl were the ones who’d recommended I try them. I didn’t feel any discomfort, even when using Magic Entanglement. Moving around was easier than expected, too.

“Groooooaoaoagh!”

Ker-plink.

Predicting attacks. Reading the enemy’s movements, direction, and rate of change.

“Why do they scream so loudly? They’re supposed to be ambushing us? Are they trying to activate the Daunt skill? It ruins the point of them hiding in wait, though?”

Things were going so smoothly I’d have to wait for everyone at the end of the floor. I just needed to mop up those last few...

Only, it turned out that the 87th floor was the final one. The dungeon king did sometimes show up on random floors. I supposed this dungeon was in the middle of growing.

The dungeon king lording over the 87th floor was “Polyphemus. Lv: 87,” a one-eyed giant. For whatever reason, it wasn’t called a cyclops. I did remember that Polyphemus was a particularly nasty cyclops from Greek mythology, and that cyclopes were children of Poseidon. The family tree was complicated, though, and I only knew it vaguely. Regardless, Polyphemus was a super buff giant, one so tall that he almost smacked its head on the ceiling. He was much bigger than the giants we’d faced so far. Which meant...he couldn’t lift his weapon? ‘Cause it’d hit the ceiling?

“Yup. This dungeon’s too small for him,” I said as I walked up onto the ceiling and smacked him in the head. “On one hand, he’s an impressively sized giant. On the other, he’s going to have trouble fighting with this low ceiling. He can’t raise his arms above his head and all. Giants aren’t good fits for dungeons, are they?”

“I don’t think the giants, expect anyone, walk on the ceiling!” Dancer Girl and Miss Armor Rep shouted while Slimey gave a *jiggle jiggle*.

The giant would’ve been terrifying to fight against outdoors with its stride and mobility, but since he was pinned down by the low ceiling, he could only throw a hissy fit. There was nothing he could do against me, relying more on his constitution and power than skills. I sliced him from below and bonked him from above.

He had astounding might and bulk, but that was it. With enough bonks to the head, even the girls could’ve taken him out. That would’ve taken all day, though.

The most annoying skill he had was Total Reflection (ultra). With the level gap, I couldn’t go in recklessly, but that skill was only woven into his fur clothing. I could target the arms, legs, and head all I wanted. Without being able to walk on the ceiling, he would be so tall I would only be able to hit his legs!

“He doesn’t like me going after his head, so I can shave down his health at the legs all I want... He’s bald, so what’s the big deal?”

“Even without hair, people don’t like, stabbed in the head!”

Wiggle wiggle.

If this guy had gotten outside, he would’ve been unstoppable. He would’ve taken immense effort and potential sacrifices to defeat. With such size and force, the castle would’ve been at risk. We had to defeat the giant here. ‘Cause inside of the dungeon, he was just a large old dude.

“He’s so tough! I can’t damage him!”

“Don’t worry, HP is draining. Keep it up!”

This was an enormous giant with HP in the thousands that could minimize

damage from oncoming attacks with Diamond Hardening and restore his health with Ultra-Revival. That was the beast I was up against. I gave my all to my Demolish attacks to the extent I could control them.

I wondered what would happen if I used Vibration magic on his brain. I gave it a shot, and he started to hold his head and groan. It wasn't fun watching a massive one-eyed old dude moan, so I switched back to traditional attacks.

"Now that we've tied him up with the upgraded version of Prometheus Chains, I don't think I'll ever recover from witnessing a big old dude chained up and moaning. Yeah, that's no fun at all. And I'm not taking out the tentacles."

Jiggle jiggle!

Even after getting nullified by the Prometheus God Chains, he continued to take endless attacks from three dungeon-emperor-class warriors. That was how tough he was. I continued to use Demolish on his brain along with Vibration magic, but Ultra-Revival still managed to keep up. The attacks weren't reaching his brain. They barely hit hair roots, to be honest.

"This thing is so strong, but it's worthless in a confined space. He must've gotten the wrong job posting. He isn't fit to be a dungeon king at all."

Wiggle wiggle.

Now Demolish was breaking my own brain. *If this goes on much longer, my own hair roots are gonna be at risk!* Hemorrhaging HP would prove fatal, so I needed to figure out how to kill this thing fast. I whipped out Mistilteinn.

"Good work! That was annoying? I was wondering if there was some way to finish him off faster. With all the power between us, we're bound to find a weak point eventually, but that thing would've been nasty against Class Rep and the others in a drawn-out battle. Seriously."

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Munch munch.

Munch munch? Slimey was too occupied eating to respond. Polyphemus didn't look particularly tasty, and I didn't want Slimey to incorporate the

elements of a giant bald dude. I supposed it was best for him to absorb Ultra-Revival, Total Reflection (ultra), and Diamond Hardening, though. Was Slimey trying to acquire every skill in this world? How was he going to feel about getting Loner and NEET and Shut-In? Although, I hadn't seen any monsters with negative skills like that.

Today's objective had been to test out the shoulder pads, but I hadn't been able to against such a powerful old dude. He could've killed me with a glancing blow. I didn't know what it would take for Automatic Defense to activate, either. I needed to practice more to get the knack for it. Shield Slash and Shield Bash sounded like introductory attacks, but they were quite difficult to control. I wanted to test those out, but I ended up having to use Demolish instead. Even Wisdom wasn't enough to handle shields imbued with Entanglement, Teleport, and Gravity. Unifying all my skills at once caused too many divergences. Wisdom was already an over-the-top, shady conglomeration of skills. *I'm worried it's gonna get revenge on me someday!*

"I think we have time to start another dungeon," I said. "I want to squeeze some practice in. I already know that my shoulder pads are gonna get bonked straight off if I practice back at the inn. I'd rather practice in the safe confines of a peaceful dungeon."

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

Thank goodness they agreed. I was spared a beating today!

Slimey picked up all the spellstones and drop items. The giant only had his fur clothing, the "Polyphemus's Leather Armor: Power, Vitality +30%. Revival (large). Total Reflection (large). Diamond Hardening. +Defense." *Isn't the name a little too on point? The guy must've had a serious ego.*

On the way home, I popped into a small dungeon. We started on the 1st floor, so it was all fun and games. I took on a giant swarm of small fries to test things out. Auto-Defense wasn't nearly as useful as I'd hoped. It could only save my life in an emergency, so it wasn't something I'd be able to rely on. I couldn't

control it all—it suddenly activated out of the blue. That still meant it could come handy in an emergency, though.

The real stars turned out to be Shield Slash and Shield Bash. I could use Random Fire to activate them, but controlling them myself was faster. Dimension Blade and Fire Bullets handled long-range combat. Yeah, this was far and away the best. *Wheeeee!*

“Man this is fun!”

My shoulder pads danced through the air, providing perfect back-up and coverage attacks. They used a lot of MP and were difficult to handle, but I cut down on the MP loss by connecting them to some Magic Thread I’d made with Magic Hands, which I could also use to attack the monsters’ weak points. I left handling things Wisdom, but I could see the thread perfectly with Jupiter Eye. I had the shoulder pads under complete control.

“If I master this, it’ll increase my offensive options in battle. They can use magic attacks, too, since they’re hooked up with Magic Thread. I’ll be able to do a Fire Bullet crossfire! Not like that would come in handy often, but it’d be freaking dope!”

Jiggle jiggle!

These would’ve come in handy back in the old dude hell of Murimuri Castle. I suspected they could handle the suicide bomb attacks perfectly, although I couldn’t risk trying it out.

The shields didn’t have much use in a dungeon, though. The Universe Staff was so overpowered that it was always quicker to whack things. Whacking monsters enough times usually solved everything. The shoulder pads would come in handy for attacking weak points, solving traps, and definitely for pestering human opponents. Spinning around like that was just unfair. You couldn’t call that one-on-one combat anymore.

DAY 86

EVENING

The more wholeheartedly I do it, the more my sex appeal fades into the distant sunset.

WHITE LOSER INN

I HAD SO MUCH FUN spinning around my little shoulder pads that I ended up going to the 16th floor and came home late. I'd been checking the time, but I had so much fun that I lost track of time after a while.

On the way home, I met up with my demon scythes, who had been enjoying a day out logging. When I got home, the girls made me whip up dinner lickety-split. They had already taken baths and everything!

After that, I went to the bedroom with Miss Blindfold Rep. This time she employed help, with Miss Armor Rep covering my right eye and Dancer Girl covering my left—a fancy arrangement. But they kept spreading their fingers open! I asked why we didn't use a regular cloth blindfold, but I got no response.

"I don't think it's in a dungeon emperor's job description to be a blindfold. They're literally failing at it?"

We decided to do the fittings one at a time in size order. The first one up was already taking off her clothes. Yeah, you don't need to ask who. I didn't need to activate Presence Detection to sense the shaking of those massive orbs. The force of those could make the very air vibrate. They were weapons of mass destruction!

This would also serve as our trial run. Hers was likely to take the longest, so it made sense to work out issues now. I'd thought about it while dealing with the problem of my supposed blindfolding hands trying as hard as they could to wrench open my eyelids. *If my eyes are open, dangerous objects will appear before my eyes! Spare my eyes, please!* They were so close to my face that they

wouldn't fit into my vision entirely, anyway.

"Mmmmm, yes. There, theeeeere."

"Uh, those are your shoulders? Why in the world are you moaning like that?"

I started measurements at the prospective support joints. I had fully mastered the art of the bra, but swimsuits had water resistance to deal with as well. That created additional rubbing against the body, squeezing out new problems, and requiring bouncy new solutions. Plus, the size and surface area of these in particular made them interact with a larger volume of water, creating more variables in how they would shake and sway. A mighty surge of sheer breast power! This was a jiggle matched only by the likes of Slimey!

Vice Rep B continued to moan, sigh, gasp, and groan.

"I'm not even touching you right now! I'm literally just checking the design! Stop making creepy sounds!"

"I'm soooo naked, and, like, totally standing right in front of a boy..."

"Blah, blah, blah. I'm not listening! They're covering both of my ears, so I can't hear. But, guys, could you please cover my eyes instead? You're supposed to be my blindfold, and if you're not blinding my eyes, then you're not fulfilling your purpose in li— That's my *mouth!*"

Using Area Analyze to record information about the quivering round objects beside me in generous detail and taking great pains to avert my face, I looked down in genuine modesty as I checked the design. This situation could prove fatal to my sex appeal. And to my status as a teenage boy, obviously. *They're so close!*

Yup, no matter how many times I checked the design—string. How was I supposed to support those things with *string*? The bikini was basically all string in the requested design, aside from the absolute minimum amount of cloth. I guessed Vice Rep B was into the lovely possibilities of provocative, excessive exposure.

"Um, so, like, I figured it was gonna be hard," she said. "Please do what you can. I totally get it if it's impossible."

To make a long story short, she had always longed to wear a normal bathing suit. Since her breasts were so large, she could only choose extremely supportive designs, though. She could never find anything cute in her size. It was all just one-piece swimsuits with thorough coverage and support. She'd looked and high and low and never found anything she liked.

"Sorry," she said. "It's impossible, isn't it?"

Since I'd made her bra fairly open and exposed, she was hoping I could make a bathing suit in the same vein. Without enough surface area, I wouldn't be able to support her breasts, and they'd spill out. After much thought, she requested I try to support the weight with string instead.

"Just tell me you can't. Look, I'm sorry."

"Oh, no. This is war!" I declared.

"Wha?"

The teenage boy in me had mixed emotions. If she had such high hopes, though, then the least I could do was to help her achieve her dreams. *Wisdom, you take it from here!*

"The logo print is a current impossibility for teenage boy bra production. There's no mention of bra production in the 'teenage boy' encyclopedia entry! We're testing the limits here!"

Hyaaaah! My head felt like it was going to split. Or it was more like the middle of my head was under intense pressure. Wisdom, which I had decided to fully subcontract this task to, was trying its best. *Oh god, I hope it doesn't take revenge on me someday for this.* I searched for a solution to the impossible, calculated the procedure to execute a miracle, came up with prospective solution after prospective solution, and stuck it all together.

A teenage boy breaking his head trying to achieve a dream that a teenage girl never thought she could achieve—it sounded like the law of equivalent exchange. Super dangerous! My head would heal with Revival even if it did break. A teenage boy who couldn't make the ultimate bra? Well, that was a teenage b— Oooouuuch! Uh, yeah, 'cause teenage boys didn't make bras?

"No, the infinite points of support have to—arrrrgggghhhh!"

The task at hand was to create a supportive top that was still cute and minimized surface area. It defeated the point if she couldn't move around and swim in it. I had to minimize the fabric and make the strings do the bulk of the support.

I decided to use netting for the fabric to maximize skin exposure. I needed more fabric below this and on the outside areas of the chest so there was enough support. I went for as deep of a V-neck as possible with only strings and netting offering support from above. Bridges used wires, so big boobs could surely be held up with string! *Looks like it could dig in a little, though.*

"H-Haruka-kun!"

"R-right now there are three possible patterns for the design. Is there one you want to request? Testing out all three is usually fine, but if I did that, then everyone would find out and demand three options for themselves. It'd put me into an infinite swimsuit production process, so choose your favorite please. I can't say it'll work until I try it out, but I'm doing my best! We'll see? Well, I won't see, so please don't stop doing your jobs, blindfolds! Wh-what outstanding coordination. It's as if you two planned to move your hands! You're scheming, aren't you?!"

"Th-thank you, Haruka-kun..." Vice Rep B trailed off. "I... I can't express how happy I am. Thank you."

Boing, squish!

Something hit my face! Then from the left side a moment later! Vice Rep B leaned in to give me a hug, bombarding me with squishy expressions of gratitude. *Is she giving me her thanks or her boobs?!*

All of a sudden, the hands covering my eyes were gone. The speed of dungeon emperors, no doubt. That fully buried me in the boing-boing, but I couldn't see anything, of course. Or breathe. Now my former blindfolds were holding my arms and torso in place so I couldn't escape! Look, I knew they were ridiculous, but what in the hell were my blindfolds doing now?!

I gasped for air. "So, plan B. Is that okay?" I heaved. "I took the necessary measurements with my face, no need for Magic Hands. I can make it?"

I shaved down on the fabric in the top, cutting it to the absolute minimum needed for support, and ultimately created a dual-type bra by providing string and netting support from the shoulders. In a dire decision of dangerous contradictions, she also went with low-rise bottoms with netting on the upper section. *This'll keep all the boys stuck in the pool.* Sharks'd gather from all the nosebleeds!

"I'm so happy," she said. "I always had to wear these big, ugly swimsuits. I never thought I'd be able to wear something cute like this. Thank you!"

I had poured all my effort into this trial product. At last, it was safely being worn and tested out by the subject. She told me I could open my eyes... *Hang on, are they floating?* Yes, they were floating along with Slimey. Three jiggling objects floating and shaking on the water's surface.

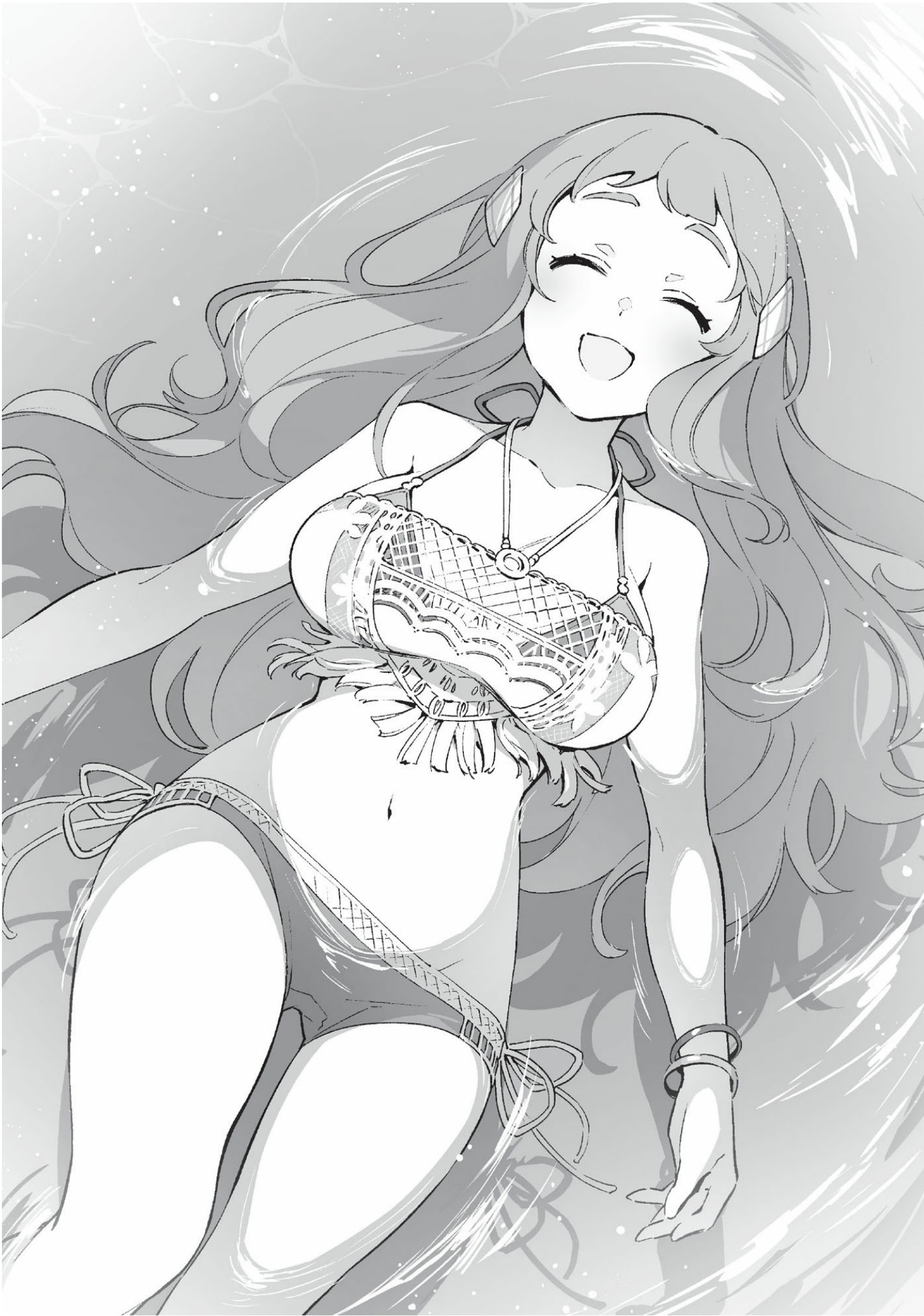
"Remember that water pressure is weaker from above, so don't jump too hard, 'kay? Or at all? 'Cause everyone will blame me for any wardrobe malfunctions? Not that I would be upset about that. The court of high school girl law will definitely find me guilty. The same goes for your bottom hanging out of those bottoms, so please don't let your crimes get assigned to me! I want sea products. I wanna go to the ocean, but not because I got banished. And that bathing suit can't handle waves, so it's for the pool only? This design is positively precarious!"

"Got it," she said. "I'm going to take care of it forever!"

I thought about imbuing the materials with magic, but getting into the water would definitely disrupt or cut it off. MP Support was harder to control and incurred a higher risk of slippage. Vice Rep B probably wanted something simple and small, you know, as in normal? The best solution was to cheat our way to victory with netting and string. I'd totally failed, but she seemed happy anyway. Wisdom needed more and more levels for Operation Oppress Orb to truly succeed.

"Who's next?" called Vice Rep B. "Take those clothes off. Time to get naauughty!"

"Wait, Haruka-kun's eyes aren't covered yet! No, wait, don't come in! Don't take anything off!"



“Eyes *are* covered, don’t worry, it’s tooootally fine!”

“Those are *my* eyes, not Haruka-kun’s! Cover your chest! Wait, cross your legs!”

That was one spectacular series of drawn-out Class Rep screams. *And can someone please cover my eyes?*

“Uh, you’re covering my chest, not my eyes, but I’m wearing clothes, so there’s no need, really? In fact, you might say that you’re groping me right now? Do we need to call the police about this?”

Everyone finally calmed down, including Class Rep. She still had a hand over her mouth, trembling. That was Magic Hands for you.

“Is that a yawn? Don’t try to repress a yawn! It’s a natural phenomenon, and it’s supposedly better to let it out, ’cause it stimulates your brain. Especially since a deep breath helps activate your nerves and release tension, so just let the yawn out, got it?”

No response. She just kept her hand desperately over her mouth, arching backwards in agony as if about to faint?

“Other theories say that yawns help regulate body temperature, for brain cooling and heat release, but there’s no need to quiver like that before the yawn, ya know? Yawning is necessary, so anyone who doesn’t need to yawn isn’t a living being, so if you’re not going to yawn, just stop living?”

A living being that didn’t need brain stimuli, oxygen, and cooling may as well stop living. That would end the complaints on my end. It would result in death, but then no yawning necessary, am I right?

“Okay, time for the bottoms. You requested small ones, so you’re going to feel a bit of a prick?”

“Mmm, mmm—aaaahh!”

Sexy response, so good enough. The trembling soon turned into twitching. It was hard to measure her when she was leaning back like that? The hands covering my eyes seemed determined not to lose to the arching body and were opening up with all their might!

“You’re gonna cut my eyelids!” I shouted. “Since when could blindfolds cause eyelids to burst! Come on, Revival!”

“Ahhhh, ahhhh... Nnnaaaahh!”

Whether it was puberty or all the DDR sessions, Class Rep’s body had changed considerably. I needed to take her measurements all over again. Even if she hadn’t, a bra and a swimsuit had different objectives. I needed to design her swimsuit from scratch. Even though they were the same shape, the target body parts and conditions for support differed. A swimsuit was like a bra designed for combat, but it needed to be able to handle water flow and water pressure, which resulted in substantive design differences. Above all else, the fundamental purpose and materials were different. Unlike underwear, which required breathability, bathing suits needed water repellent and fast-drying qualities. When water-repellency stretched over a larger surface area, the material turned transparent. Something too transparent would result in lectures! I needed to double up on layers to maintain elasticity while reducing transparency. With different fundamentals, I was making a design from scratch.

As I wove this new bra, I carefully considered the true nature of the bra. *How I long to ask this fantasy world what it actually wants from me!*

“Aaah! Nnn... Eep!”

It went without saying, but I’d turned off Sensitivity on my Magic Hands. Yet Class Rep was still being pushed to the limit. By the time we were finished, she might have a broken back. She was totally overheating. All that steaming would heat up the water in the tub so much she’d turn it into a bath.

“Hey, Class Rep, you still alive? I’m going to start moving the water around with some magic, so don’t struggle too much, ‘kay?”

The only problem was the fact that I was taking girls into a tub and creating a flow of water to jiggle and shake them in all directions, which very likely created a flow that jiggled and shook my sex appeal out of existence. I tried to do my best and live in this world, but the more I did, the farther away my sex appeal ran. I was gonna need to set sail after it soon. *I won’t let you go, sex appeal!*

After a thorough investigation of water currents pushing and squeezing in every which way, I went about refining the design. Class Rep was lying in the

water, burbling. *Is she okay?*

“Well, your evaluation of the design is gasp, tremble, and groan. It’s kinda hard to make adjustments when you’re twitching so much and bursting out of the water? Are you listening to me?”

Bubble bubble bubble bubble...

I optimized the elasticity and added the finishing touches. Then I got Miss Backbreaker out of the water, dried her off, and warmed her up with Heat magic. She burned a lot of calories with all that motion, so I fed her a manju, which she happily munched. Okay, she was back.

Now I had to deal with another enormous challenge. The next two patients were in constant defiance of the laws of physics.

“Do whatever you can! Push ‘em up!” said Vice Rep A.

“Give me as much air as you can!” said Vice Rep C.

I guess we’re starting with the student council.

“No matter the scientific field, it’s impossible to inflate a flat surface,” I said. “You can’t put air into something that doesn’t have any volume to begin with. You’ll just have a floating bra? Hey, hey! We’re chitchatting. You can put the morning stars away! Like, *theeere* you go, thank you very much?”

These two didn’t have much going to begin with, so their bras could easily fall off. There was nothing for the fabric to grip.

“Why are you going with bikinis? Those’ll definitely slip. I’ll need to glue them on so they stay in place! It’s not a problem when they’re dry, but in a battle of water currents versus bra, the pressure will sweep away your chests’ principle of nonresistance, and the bra will fly off in defeat... How about an ordinary two-piece?”

“Our chests don’t have principles of nonresistance!”

“We could only ever wear two-piece or one-piece swimsuits! Come on!”

“Vice Rep B thought she could never wear a bikini, and you made her one! She looked so happy... Please, try to make us ordinary, cute bikinis.”

“Please... Please just give it a try.”

“Okay, I get it. Wait a sec. Let me subcontract this to my head and break it? It’s already hurting?”

Yooooowch! Turned out that leaving things 100 percent to Wisdom really did result in revenge. My head hurt so friggin’ bad! Okay, so I could solve things from the sidelines.

I could strap the tops and bottoms in from the sides, so that wasn’t the issue. So far, basic swimming stuff... Well, there wasn’t much in the way of contents, so water pressure wasn’t causing problems, either. How did I stop the fabric from slipping? The basic structure of a bikini lacked support on the bottom’s sides, especially the requested designs, which made slippage inevitable. A tight band around the chest at the bottom of the bikini would make it look like an ordinary two-piece swimsuit. Trying to get creative with the sides would also take it too far from a regular, cute bikini. Glue would be going way too far. There was no easy answer to this challenge of physics, but this was a fantasy world, and the answer waited in my accumulated experiences here.

“That’s right! The Adhesion I imbued the pads with! Yes, what the hell am I doing in this world?!”

Although their body shapes minimized water drag, Adhesion still had risks on its own. For a wide surface area using Adhesion, I wanted a physical supplement. *Could I redirect the force somehow?* I drew up a design and showed them.

“This ended up a bit different from an ordinary, cute bikini ’cause it’s got extra fabric crossing on the front and a W on the back, but this is my recommendation for playing in the pool.”

It looked like an ornamental strip of fabric beneath the bikini, but that diagonal tension provided the necessary support to keep the top in place. It was less risky and less sexy than only having support at the shoulders.

“Oh, that’s so cute. Let’s do it!”

While Vice Rep A didn’t have a lot, the fabric did had something to cling to, so I thinned out the shoulder straps. I had to keep them wider for Tiny Tanuki.

Both designs included Adhesion. The know-how I'd gained from developing menstrual products in this world had not gone to waste! Seriously, what had I been summoned into this world to achieve?

"Please be careful. This design has limits? Keep ahold of it when you jump or go on the waterslide. And if you want to go all-out when swimming, put on a one-piece suit, got it?"

"Got it. Thank you!"

Making a bathing suit that could handle a level 100+ person going all-out was a whole other level of intricacy. The girls had stats so high that ordinary movements ripped apart normal clothes. They needed clothing and swimsuits that could handle their strength. Merimeri and Royal Girl had the same problem. I wanted to make clothes that they could have a good time in. And if I did, I was confident that, one day, my sex appeal that had been swept out to sea would wash ashore again! *What is my sex appeal? A salmon or something?*

"Soooo tiiiired!"

After all that work, I had only finished four bathing suits. I'd have to keep measuring naked girls, put them in the mini-pool, and test out the new suits. That also included Royal Girl, Merimeri, Maid Girl, and Elf Girl. So twenty-four total. Oh, not to mention Poster Girl and Stalker Girl. So, yeah, twenty-six. Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl may have already had their swimsuits, but they'd definitely want bikinis, so that was twenty-eight. When that was done, I needed to make bathing suits for the orphans, too. And extrapolating from past experiences, the girls would show the bathing suits off to each other once they were completed and want a second pair.

"When are we even going to be able to have the picnic? This'll take ages."

I made bikinis for Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl late into the night, then had them put them on and take them off until morning. It went without saying that we spent the night in the trial pool. We added lotion, too. Let's just say that it was a good time.

What's the weather gonna be like tomorrow? Glare showers, you say? The lotion-filled pool ended up getting preeetty sticky.

DAY 87

MORNING

While living clothes sound like a housewife's dream, they're a house-dweller's nightmare.

WHITE LOSER INN

I WAS USING MY dripping-wet tentacles as hard as I could, and it caused a furious, pointed-at-me lecture the next morning. My tentacles felt lonely without some slimy lotion in the pool with them. That was all? Why the mad faces? Especially after all that rad jiggling.

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl were *very* close with my tentacles. They played and frolicked together every night. After all that fun, they were upset with me? Maybe relationships between female friends were complicated. I didn't know what gender my tentacles were, though.

"Things got weird, making those bathing suits. And weirdly wild from a teenage boy's perspective. With me as busy as a bee, my friendly tentacles were happy to help me navigate the danger of putting on and taking off and putting in and taking out. All the business of Typical Adult Society Episodes 1-10, rinsed and repeated all night ten-plus times at the bare minimum. The natural result of an unresisting teenage boy. It was more the bears and the bees and less the birds and the bees, so I wasn't the bad guy? In fact, I was a very good boy! I mean bee?"

No response. That meant they were pissed!

"Gaaaaah! Did you learn that at the girls' meeting? Yowowowowowouch that hurts! You're biting me! Don't bite my ears! Stop it!"

Munch munch.

I got used to the intense pain coursing through my brain but not the pain from the bites. Nor did I want to! Did the mean girls teach them that? Or Tiny

Tanuki?

“My head hurts. It’s like a headache, except its scalp pain, which shouldn’t be a thing! We’re going to need a doctor to tell me what exactly the symptoms I’m experiencing are, except I don’t think scientists have come up with what happens when ‘one’s head is bitten by dungeon emperors.’ I sure hope not, at least.”

Munch crunch munch crunch!

Such sweet, loving bites eased the pain of my countless hardships.

“Good morning,” Class Rep called when I went downstairs. “Come back early today. We need you to make everyone’s bathing suits! Everyone’s excited for them.”

“Yeah, everyone was upset that you only got through four yesterday.”

“Morning,” I responded. “Well, only four people showed up, so aren’t those four the real bad guys here? Especially a certain person who couldn’t stop moaning and gasping and twitching and arching her back all suspiciously in the pool nonstop. She sure took her sweet time in there, so it wasn’t my fault? Yeah, that was hot?”

The bathing suits were prismatic, and I was in the middle of coming up with a copy machine for printed patterns I could use in mass production. I used white in the pool test trials to make sure the water didn’t seep through the fabric and turn it transparent. Class Rep in particular got very busy trying to shake the water droplets out of the white bikini with her vigorous twitching and splashing...so that took a while.

The detailed explanation made my innocence loud and clear, but Lord Class Rep held the morning star and pointed it directly in my direction with a smile. Yes, she was smiling, but the look in her eyes was terrifying. What was with the scary look? All I’d done was make sure her bikini bottoms didn’t slip and that she was delighted by the glorious work of my laborious tentacles ensuring she was fitted carefully, correctly, and copiously.

“Nothing was hot about that!” she shouted. “It wasn’t fun, and I wasn’t playing! You need to cut *back* on the thoroughness of your Magic Hands, not

put them on repeat! Why did you need to use Vibration?!”

Class Rep had a high pelvis, so the bottoms required a large surface area. Intensive refinements were needed to adjust the bottoms to the point where we could prevent groin slippage. That was why I needed to conduct a comprehensive, three-dimensional examination. And that was why it broke her every time? The higher those pelvis bones, the easier it was for the bottoms to slip. That required multiple rounds of adjustments, but since Class Rep wasn't exactly staying still, it made it harder for her and much, much harder for me to get the job done. *Stop looking at me like that! That is not a real smile!* She was pissed!

I supposed today was going to be a bad women day for me. Although, I think the whims of fate had ensured that every day in this world was going to be like that for me. It certainly had been thus far. *How long will this fortune last?*

“Even the movements of the stars are working against me. The least somebody could do is tell me which stars to destroy so I can fix things? Do you think Dimension Blade could reach 'em?”

“Foood!”

Jiggle jiggle.

“Don't destroy a star for your own sake!”

We had fried vegetables, mushrooms, and seafood over rice for breakfast. Mealtime debates weren't about whether to go with bread or rice, but rather what kind of rice bowl to have. Rice was still precious and expensive. My classmates' meal tabs ran up and up, making them poor but very happy.

The orphans had already learned how to use chopsticks. Slimey had somehow taught them. Meanwhile, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl still dropped their food when eating. Poster Girl and Stalker Girl hardly fared better. Royal Girl and Merimeri, who stayed at the inn most nights, were practicing, but they mostly stuck to spoons for the time being. The Dexterity stat apparently had nothing to do with one's ability to use chopsticks?

After giving the bulletin board a piece of my mind, I went to continue on from the 81st floor of a new dungeon. Or more like I was dragged there?

I wasn't gonna be in the backseat anymore. In yesterday's trial sesh, the "Aegis Shoulder Pads: Vitality, Power +50%. Automatic Defense. Physical Defense (ultra). Magic Defense (ultra). Reflection. Absorption. Slash Parrying. Blow Parrying. +Defense" were more handy than expected, and using them was even kinda fun. So I upgraded them with mithril overnight into the "Aegis Shoulder Shields: Vitality, Power +50%. Automatic Defense. Physical Defense (ultra). Magic Defense (ultra). Reflection. Absorption. Slash Parrying. Blow Parrying. Magic Blast. +Attack, +Defense," an unfortunate burst of inspiration that extended and triple layered the shoulder pads, turning them into straight-up G*ndam-style double-fin funnel types. They could shoot magic, too!

Hiiyaaah!

Pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pewuuuuuuuuuoom!

"Oh my g-g-g-g-g-g-goodness! Goodness is always good, except for the monsters that died. They're no good, except they're spellstones now, so they're neither good nor bad. Might've been a bit too much good for me and bad for them. Okay, shoulder pads, keep up the reflecting."



The sextuple-layered pads launched irregularly into the air, creating a complete circle of defense around me while firing at the enemies in every direction. They deflected the living clothes' oncoming fire and turned them to dust. With wire-operated remote control capabilities, the six shields leaped out to launch their own Fire Bullets from six different positions.

"They sound like a housewives' dream, but living clothes are a house-dweller's nightmare! Clothes that come to wring you by the neck? Get out of here!"

Cutting the clothes apart turned them back into thread and didn't actually destroy them. Blunt force did nothing at all. They were resistant to physical attacks and could fly, making fire the perfect solution. I mean, the "Perfect Ice-Wind-Water-Earth Immunity" was practically an invitation to use Fire magic. Using Water and Wind magic to fight the clothes would turn this into an everyday war against dirty laundry!

The clothes flapped through the air, rushing in to choke me only to be burned in the flames. Still, this monster seemed like my shoulder pads' archnemesis. They had to zoom all over the place to deflect and shoot the clothes. I mean, what kind of shoulder shields were they if they left your shoulders to go blast Fire Bullets all over the place? They forgot their original purpose!

"This is fun and all, but it wastes tons of MP," I said. "Forget about the whole part where shooting Fire Bullets myself would be way faster. Three-dimensional, six-directional Fire-Bullet maneuverability is way more badass? I'm turning this into a poorly thrown together video game."

This was a six-directional, remote-operated, 3D shooter that was totally unplayable for normies. Including me, 'cause it meant controlling seven different objects. It felt weird as heck. I could see with Jupiter Eye and control everything with Wisdom, which was fun but put a wack burden on my brain. After applying Teleport and Gravity to my shoulder pads with Entanglement, they had gained some serious power, a game over for my enemies. And for me!

Yeah, this was strong. A pre-calculated, sextuple, perfect combination of attacks that was completely impossible to dodge, combined with instantaneous movement for the finishing slashes. It was a massacre, thanks to my new

equipment. Utter aerial-dominant destruction without the slightest fragment of restraint. Also, I could fly myself, so none of this was necessary to begin with?

Jiggle jiggle!

Slimey bounced around joyfully. Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl looked up at the shields in amazement. Their reactions made sense—I lost track myself, having such a blast—but this sci-fi fighting style didn't exist in fantasy worlds.

"I mean, there's no any need for us to play along and use swords and magic, if you think about it," I said. "They have swords and magic, I've got...a tree branch and giant robot funnels?"

Making this a classic fantasy story had been off the table from the very start! I ended up taking out all the monsters on the 81st floor, which left my partners dissatisfied and wanting to do the 82nd floor first-come, first-serve. First-come, first-serve could be dangerous in dungeons this deep, especially if the monsters had unique characteristics. We decided to do a super-serious rock-paper-scissors ritual to determine the formation order.

I led the pack on the 82nd floor, with Miss Armor Rep on my right, Slimey on my left, and Dancer Girl taking up the rear. The most defense-oriented party member being in the back made us a weird party. She could extend her chains from behind to attack the 82nd floor's brutal rats outside of our immediate range, however, thrashing them, tying them up, and throwing them aside. Wow. Maybe rear guard was a better position for her than I thought.

The rats were bigger than dogs but smaller than bears and far from friendly. They were rodents, so getting bit would hurt, although I was used to bites by now. Not that I wanted to be. Why did it seem like I was getting bit all the time?

"Yeah, I've been getting bitten all morning, from bedroom to dungeon! You two aren't supposed to be rodents!"

"Those were nibbles!"

"Expressions of love!"

Wiggle wiggle.

We technically had our formation, but those three were ridiculous. They kept

up with all of my movements. I sliced apart the rats head-on. Any that ran to the right got torn to shreds in a metallic gleam. Slimey covered me from the left as I cut down rats on the left flank. From behind me, Dancer Girl added her chains to the right flank, sending the rats scattering into the brunt of Miss Armor Rep's blade. We were a constantly adapting and evolving formation, tearing through any opening that emerged in a contest for monster blood. It ended up being first-come, first-serve!

It was a safe, efficient approach with no obvious openings. We learned from watching Class Rep's formations, commands, and strategies. Modern group battle tactics far surpassed the effectiveness of one-on-one fighting... Although, that would work for us too?

It occurred to me that we might have been more powerful individually than together. This safer approach sounded good in theory, but group tactics simply meant dividing the monsters between us and taking them out in an organized manner. We used more energy than necessary. To exterminate an entire floor, one of us only needed to stand in the center and go nuts. That would win the battle for sure, except in cases where an equally powerful enemy entered the fray, of course. That wasn't on the table with this squad? No monster was equally powerful as a dungeon emperor. Not on an ordinary floor.

"If a whole group of monsters equally powerful as dungeon emperors came charging, we'd run right away! We can't fight that! I know that from my own nightly experiences!"

Jiggle jiggle.

Still, we did have three dungeon-emperor-level monsters here. There could be more out there. Taking out one of those one-on-one would be a miracle. Formations, tactics, efficiency, and calculations were all meaningless against foes like that.

"There's no point in taking unnecessary risks, either. Chilling and winning is the strat! Chilling and winning is the approach! And working my ass off at night is the war! Yes, the sacred war of the teenage boy!"

The other three looked like they were having fun. Each member had fought on their own up until now, so working together to fight—or trying to see who

could kill the most enemies first—well, one of those two was enjoyable for everybody.

“Almost, done. Ready?”

“Formation, rock-paper-scissors. I want front!”

Jiggle jiggle.

They did like fighting in formation. Fighting without a position in the group was the same as fighting alone, in a way. It must’ve been their first time lining up in position to fight like this. The invincible three cooperated seamlessly. They thought it was fun. Well, not for the monsters.

“We’re gonna charge in from the right,” I said. “Echelon Formation, got it? Now let’s go! Go G*ndam funnels! I mean, shoulder pads! You’re supposed to be shields. Did you forget about that? Okay, well, no holding back now... That one’s mine! Go! Fiiiire! Flyyyyyy!”

I’d explained that I wanted to try encircling the enemy on the 88th floor, so we were attempting to surround the monsters and take them out. Something felt off about four of us surrounding over three hundred armed golems, but we had fighting power. It wasn’t going too badly. The hardest part was encircling them without getting killed.

“Is this really an encirclement, though? It’s four of us all standing opposite each other.”

Boink boink!

The monsters on the lower floors that equipped weapons left good drop items, so they were real wallet-fatteners. The golems froze, unable to attack us one-on-one at such close range now that we had them surrounded. We brought them in closer, crowded on from all sides, making something of a golem dumpling, then obliterated them. The golems hadn’t even been able to swing their swords at us. *Now pull off a perfect imitation of Miss Armor Rep...* Well, it would ruin the whole point if any of them broke through, but still.

There was also a hidden room with a chest that had an iron-ribbed fan inside. Dancer Girl’s eyes lit up the moment she saw it. I asked her if she wanted it, and she immediately ran over and hugged me. It wasn’t as fun getting the hug in

armor, but Miss Greed didn't seem to need it. I gave the fan to Dancer Girl. If it was any good, I'd power it up with mithril tonight.

As she frolicked with her new fan, we fanned out the flames of the 89th floor. The short-range fan attacks in addition to her long-ranged chain attacks made her a spinning, whipping whirlwind who tore apart monsters as she went. The level 89 Blade Bats had Dancer Girl as their waltz partner, which was too much for them to keep up with. I nearly died on the dance floor with her myself. I knew how they felt. If you didn't compensate for the centrifugal force, your bones broke!

I wanted to join in with my G*ndam funnels to take out the blade bats from the sky, but I lost track of time watching Dancer Girl and didn't get the chance. I had prepared a cool pose and everything, but not a single bat remained. I even thought up the sick line, "I've got you now! Meet your *end!*" But there was nothing for me to use it on.

We took a quick breather and went to face off against the 90th floor boss.
What should my line be now?

DAY 87

NOON

A high school girl's hand-knit Kevlar cord isn't an expression of love. It's a murder weapon!

DUNGEON

89TH FLOOR

APPARENTLY, THE IRON-RIBBED FAN wasn't a main weapon but more of an extra tool, because Dancer Girl went back to using her scimitar. We were up against the floor boss, though, so going with the best of the best was safest.

Miss Armor Rep and Slimey were both stuck at level 48, so Dancer Girl was starting to catch up with them. Servitude was definitely restricting their level growth, and I still hadn't budged past level 24. I got the sense they'd all end up at level 48 before long. Even at level 48 they were already starting to push their stats into the thousands. All three of them had a Speed stat over one thousand already. Yeah, they were beasts.

"Judging from what we've fought in this dungeon so far, I don't think the boss will be that strong. It's still a level 90 floor boss, so be careful anyway, 'kay? Remember, neither of you have much Vitality or HP? And Slimey...please don't overeat. You'll get a tummy ache if it's something gross, although you don't have a stomach, so forget it? I will say that eating too many old dudes could cause a negative adjustment to your cute factor." I paused. "If you see the darkness, don't try to fight it. That's for me."

Nod nod...

Rattle rattle...

Jiggle jiggle...

They looked a bit upset, but darkness was the one thing that was off-limits. There was a chance that they could get caught in it, and once they did, there'd

be nothing we could do to stop it. We'd have no choice but to kill them, which would be next to impossible, and none of us wanted that.

"Falling into the darkness has kind of a cool, badass vibe, ya know? I can be all, like, 'Witness the power that resides in my right fist,' and all... Oh yeah, and it involves sexy stuff, so it wouldn't be much of a change?"

No worries on my account. In fact, my current reality was more worrisome!

"I would love a floor boss that had some consideration for the state of my sex appeal, though."

The boss was a squat, unpleasant, frog-like humanoid. Its charcoal-black skin was gleaming, slippery wet, and covered in warts that sprouted countless repulsive tentacles that squirmed and swayed like seaweed. What a bizarre, disgusting opponent! *Why are my allies glaring at me?*

It launched a barrage of attacks with its monstrous, dipping wet, slimy, wart-covered tentacles, which I met with my refreshing, wholesome, and hard-working mushroom-tipped tentacles... *More glares?* Why were Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl standing so far away?

I was starting to get the sense that my sex appeal would be chipped away to nothing if I didn't defeat this thing quickly. *Maybe I should quit the tentacle duel*, I thought. *Hang on. No, I'm not like this thing!*

I blocked the tentacles with my own because I knew I couldn't lose. It didn't even have one hundred of those totally nasty tentacles. It needed to understand the true might of my beauteous unlimited tentacles!

"Die already, you vile tentacles! Die till you're dead! And stuff?"

Since I could remotely operate my shoulder pads, it should've been possible. My Magic Hands could hold and use weapons. This was the technique I had been practicing all this time...in the dead of night, that is.

"Wire-operated, remote-controlled Sword Rain! With spears and axes, too! I mean, it's Sword Rain, but I didn't have enough swords? Ya know?"

They were too big and heavy to sell to my classmates, and they were too valuable to put on the general market, but their cutting and destructive force

was unparalleled. Without any useful imbued effects, they had been in my item bag waiting for their time to shine. The 99th floor minotaurs' drop items now blasted down in a metallic thunderstorm. I flung the mass of weapons specialized for destruction at the boss.

"Wow, Sword Rain is finally useful now. It was only ever useful for replenishing the general store's stock before. General store restocking rain!"

I couldn't move while operating the attack. I had to stay still and control ninety-nine weapons and six shoulder shields, with an operating radius of three hundred feet. I could only handle them with precision in about half that radius. The attack wouldn't be able to handle a mobile opponent, and it left me defenseless. Of course it didn't have a practical use. Or it hadn't up until now, at least. *I'm so happy I'm finally using this!*

"Look, I get it if you're gonna glare at a disgusting, tentacled frog-man like that thing, but why are you glaring at me like I'm also some kinda freak? Not that I mind the glares, but you should be able to tell at a glance that our tentacles are in totally different universes! I mean, that monster's are disgusting and gray and lumpy, and mine are beautiful and mushroom-tipped and nubby in lovely shades of pink? They're your close friends, aren't they? You play together every single night? Squirming and all?"

"The same! Yours are worse!"

I explained how unfair this treatment was, but reasoning with people went straight out the window in this world. I'd need to thoroughly demonstrate in bed tonight! *Yes, those tentacles are your friends, ladies! You're in store for a nubby, mushroom-tipped tentacle rain!*

The gross frog dude was a "Variant Frogfolk. Lv: 90." I was right about the frog part. Regardless, it was a disturbing mess of a monster.

"I was hoping for something more Cthulhu-esque, but all we got was a freaky frogfolk. Nothing that would've made hot girls come crawling up to me, so killing it was all good, I guess."

Looked like Slimey was gonna eat it. It didn't feel great that Slimey was so indiscriminate nor that Slimey would be gaining the Sensitivity and Arousal

skills.

With the Poison Gloves' effect "All types of ailment infliction," I could incorporate not only Sensitivity into my tentacles but Lascivious and Arousal, too. Not that I did so—that would result in attacks or attracts! I'd never use it on all the old dudes I've been fighting! It'd be different if I could inflict the baldness condition, but I hadn't seen that as a potential ailment yet. I could burn their hair off anyhow, so the result was the same.

I took the spellstone and drop item from Slimey. It was a "Grotesque Necklace: Perversion. Grotesquemorphosis. Phlegm. Phlegm Resistant. +Defense." Yeah, this was a no-go! *I'll give it to the nerds.* I mean, it literally made you a pervert! I was sure they'd be into the sticky substances it produced. *Everything about this is terrifying!*

Slimey and Dancer Girl were on the front lines for the 91st floor, but given the flow of the dungeon, I didn't need to be concerned. Miss Armor Rep and I took the mobile flank positions.

Things picked up in the 90s, though. I had to start putting pressure on my body as I flew around. The moment Slimey and Dancer Girl stopped the super-speed baboon freaks in their tracks, I pierced 'em with my G*ndam funnels, swooped in with the Universe Staff, and fleeced 'em to bits with a Magic-Entanglement-boosted Life or Death.

Miss Armor Rep leaped in from the right as Slimey and Dancer Girl flanked the enemies from both sides. We shifted from defense to offense, bamboozling the baboons and crushing them from all directions. Even with a shield in front, you could still get hit from the side or behind, so without any leadership or strategy on the baboons' side, the battle turned into old-fashioned annihilation.

"The level 91 Ultimate Baboons don't seem particularly ultimate to me, but maybe they're top-of-the-line as far as baboons go? These are the first baboons we've come across, though, so there's nothing to compare them against, even if they claim to be the best of the best."

They were level 91 and had Complete Resistance, Slash Immunity, and Magic Immunity. Trying to bludgeon them wasn't easy, what with their huge frames and impressive shields and armor and everything. They had power and speed

stats in the thousands, so they were pretty strong monkeys. I didn't know anything about regular old baboons, so these guys' ultimate-ness was a complete mystery to me. That said, my classmates couldn't have handled them with only two parties. If the baboons had Cooperation, they would've been able to prevent my classmates from escaping and pick them apart one by one until they'd been wiped out. The entire class might've been able to win, but not without taking serious damage.

We had a strategy. A double-pronged, safe-and-sound strategy, in fact. The first prong was to pour oil and light a fire in the center of the throng because they were magic-proof. They still had strength in numbers, so our countermeasure was to be stronger, and bonk them more times than they bonked us. We struck back against the hundred of them with ten thousand times the force for each one of us. Yeah, flawless, right?

Unfortunately, another Sword Rain was impractical. It was impossible to control my shoulder shields when using Entanglement at full speed. I would go off the rails and end up self-destructing.

It was impressive how strong monsters were on the 90th floor and above. If we didn't go all out, there was the real possibility of getting outed ourselves. Not that I was going to use the G*ndam funnels just because they were fun or anything! *Which they were.*

"I got Archsage after a little self-destruction and all. Revival is working well, too, and I've Entangled myself in Healing and Recovery. Resuscitation should also be activated. I can die and still be fine and stuff?"

Still, I wasn't sure I wanted to activate all of those right now.

"Don't do anything, dangerous!"

"We need to control these damn baboons, not my danger. They're babbing and booning all over the bam and kaboom. I mean, we sure did a lot of bamming and booming last ni— Er, wait, what are you doing?!"

I got whacked by my own teammate? Beyond that, I should've made it through the battle without any damage as long as we didn't make any mistakes. Opponents in this large of a group surpassed the capabilities of my long-range,

remote-operation, pack-tackling attacks, including the remote-operated shoulder shields' magic fire plus unlimited tentacles' wire cutter. Using any of those was reckless to begin with, naturally, but I wanted to figure out what sort of burden it would be to activate them simultaneously. I might need to know someday, after all. Plus I wanted to be all like, "I got you now! Suck on *this!*"

Even if I couldn't leap into the middle of the pack of monsters, maybe I could activate both of my long-range, pack-tackling attacks at once. Like, I was managing here on the 92nd floor? Remote-operated attacks made handling small numbers of enemies easy, especially since the shoulder shields' Reflection did most of the work.

Here we were up against scale ostriches, giant birds with metal armor, which meant the most efficient approach was to use Magic Entanglement to boost high-speed movement evasion and have Magic Thread slip in for severing strikes. Oh, and tripping them? It turned out their armor was surprisingly weak to my Magic Thread. When it hooked onto them, it knocked them over when they tried to run.

These ostriches were dangerous because they specialized in offense, but they didn't have many defensive skills. Plus, I was lassoing them with my Magic Thread? I'd be killed in a head-on collision with those birds, even if I were level 100. These types of monsters were why I didn't want Class Rep and the others to go into the bottom levels of the dungeon. These ostriches' beaks had the Defense-nullifying skill Total Penetration, and a kick from their powerful, clawed legs could be fatal. These lower-floor monsters sure had lots of skills to go with their high levels.

After hunting down all the ostriches, we went to the hidden room. Slimey was in a jiggling-good mood, especially after eating all that poultry. As I've learned to expect, the treasure chest had neither a lock nor a trap.

I took out the "Sorcerer's Seals: Slash (large). Darts. Guidance. Magic Transmission. +Attack." It was a nice set of eighteen mysterious, sharp-edged seals for made throwing, although you could also hold them like a fan or a dagger for close-range attacks or tie them to string or cloth and spin them around like a flail. Maybe we could tie them to the ends of Dancer Girl's chains.

Well, I ignored that for now. Area Analyze said that the dungeon king was on next floor.

“Scuse me, as in ’scuse yourself, as in bonk yourself, as in become a sellable spellstone for massive profits, and we’ll be thick as thieves! Does that make me sound like the bad guy? Forget that. Spellstone collection is last thing’s last on the last boss of the last floor of the last of my six remote-operated shoulder shields, which I shall now call Shield Trigger. I shall not allow myself to be triggered by this unfortunate episode of getting shot at in the face?”

What a deep dungeon! Ninety-three whole floors. A level 93 dungeon king, or so you’d think. It was level 100. *We should be okay so long as there’s none of the darkness.*

It was a big plant. “Earth Plant. Lv: 100.” It wasn’t a vegetable, so I guess I couldn’t cook it. It appeared to be an orthodox fighter interested in a duel of tentacles. It extended its leaves and vines like spears in a clash against my tentacles, while my Shield Trigger provided support from behind with magical fire.

The plant regrew all of the destroyed branches in an instant. Was I supposed to use the bonsai technique and cut branches that were higher up or something? The earth plant could regrow infinitely, divide infinitely, and produce infinite branch and vine spears. It had Magic Reflection, Magic Absorption, and it was fire resistant, too, so an oil-lit fire wouldn’t do the job. Cutting, slashing, and stabbing didn’t work because of its Grow ability, and I couldn’t keep up with its barrage of precise spear strikes. The situation got worse and worse. All I could do was dodge the slashing, swiping, and stabbing vines as they chased me. I could try to outlast it till it ran out of MP, but with Magic Absorption, I had a feeling that wouldn’t be for a while.

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl clashed against the branches. They whirled through the whipping vines as if dancing through the air, cutting them where they clattered to the ground. The endless barrage of fresh attacks kept them occupied with evading, as the sharp branch-spears prevented them from closing in on the main body of the plant. Slimey ate the branches as they stabbed him. He seemed perfectly fine. They were free refills.

Jiggle jiggle!

I summoned my shoulder shields from the rear guard. Then, I made my weapons crash down in a Sword Rain attack from the mid-guard. I was still moving, so I couldn't control them and had the ninety-nine massive minotaur weapons fall from right overhead. Most of them cut apart the far-extending branches only to get thrown aside by more. Those branches were rock-hard, hard enough to knock aside one hundred powerful minotaur weapons.

"Crap! A green-thumbed teenage boy like myself can't lose to a damn vegetable!"

I recalled the moment I first saw it. It made me a bit sad. I had been holding back, but there wasn't any other option. I stopped the Sword Rain, put the items back in my bag, and started to bind Kevlar-strength cord out of Magic Thread. I was an expert knitter for a teenage boy, and I doubted many of us could make something Kevlar-grade from scratch. Or girls, either, for that matter?

"I don't think hand-knit Kevlar is much of a gift for a crush. In fact, it could be seen as a threat?!"

I started rotating three densely layered Magic Threads at high speed and sent them whipping across the room, which was now thoroughly overgrown. I charged toward the front, slashing away the vines that struck at me with the Universe Staff and shaving down the branches with the rotating Magic Thread.

"I mean, it's a lawnmower thingy, a weed-whacker-style lawnmower? Leaving the question of why I'm mowing the lawn in a fantasy world aside, legit, what the hell is this mower?!"

I was a teenage, 360-degree spherical lawn master. Yeah, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl, who had been striking down the branches with their swords in an honest fight, glared at me... *This is why I didn't want to resort to this!* I supposed a rotating weed-whacker-style lawnmower was probably rare in this world, so it might sell surprisingly well.

"A teenage boy mowing the lawn in a dungeon... Well, I suppose it's more like monster mowing, or earth-plant mowing in this case? At some point, all that plant matter is gonna fall down like rain. I'd much rather have a bamboo-

harvesting babe, although I'd rather this plant didn't suddenly start growing bamboo! If it did, it might be able to defend itself from my mower.

Unfortunately for both of us, this rejection letter was raining on our parade, just like all of the leaves and branches above us are about to. Yikes!"

It was just plain mowing the lawn. Resistances, Absorption, and Reflection had nothing to do with it. The monster was just a bunch of grass after all.

"Wind Cutter didn't do the job, but all we needed was a lawnmower. Mow sesh!"

Those demon scythes of mine loved logging so much that they had been at it all morning, sure, but I hadn't expected to end up doing similar work *myself*, in a dungeon no less. Sure, I could understand using an actual lawnmower, but what the hell was this skill-created lawnmowing device?!

"Why oh why did this world summon me here? If I make a lawnmower, I'll mow this whole world down! If it was for making bras, I'd like to have a long conversation (read: lecture) with whoever's in charge!"

At long last, the earth plant had turned into a tasty-looking salad for Slimey to gobble up. All he'd had was meat so far, so these nice, healthy greens were a good change.

"What a boring thing I've ended up mowing. I mean mauling. Isn't there a better use for my tentacles than this?"

I'd need to remove this bad taste from my teenage boy tentacles in bed tonight. *Ooh, there are some glares!*

DAY 87

EVENING

Eighteen was too late to get married in this world, but forever-seventeen was off-limits for discussion.

WHITE LOSER INN

HARUKA-KUN AND THE OTHERS had defeated the dungeon. It was a deep one, with ninety-three floors total. Many of the monsters on the lower levels had dangerous abilities, too.

“Stick to the first eighty floors, ’kay?” he said. “Well, I’m sure you could get to floor 85, but it’ll expose your weak points. A lot of those monsters have unique skills, so let’s wait until everyone’s equipment is fully upgraded.”

He was saying they were the only ones who could handle the lowest floors at the moment. The rest of the class groaned in protest.

No one could chaperone us, so we had to refrain from all going together. It sounded like the monsters themselves had been the dangerous part, so while the 80s might’ve been technically all right, the 90s were definitely off-limits. If those four thought those floors were “bad news” then they would’ve been unbelievably dangerous for the rest of us. If they were difficult monsters for them, then think of how dangerous they were for the rest of the world! Anything they struggled with would prove fatal for us.

“Even with our current equipment... What the hell kind of equipment do we need, then?”

“Weapons that overwhelm with brute force and armor that can guard against specialized attacks? Bring some nerds you can leave behind as decoys when you need to escape, too. Or idiots you can experiment on to see what happens when a mysterious enemy appears? Oh, and biting mean girls you can set on the enemy!”

“Don’t leave us behind!”

“We don’t bite! And we’re *not mean girls!*”

No one was happy. A monster that grew new spears endlessly—I couldn’t think of a way to defeat that. It had been too much for Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san to fully cut down with their attacks. Even our whole class couldn’t have beaten that. *‘Cause we definitely couldn’t make a human lawnmower.*

Haruka-kun said he was searching for more mithril. He wanted to upgrade Angelica-san and Nefertiri-san’s ultimate equipment with it. Even the new model of armor we were all wearing was just “substitute gear.”

It felt like he was being overprotective and overly cautious, but it sounded like our gear wouldn’t be enough to get through the 80s without taking damage. The monsters beyond that point would be even deadlier, too.

“To win in a fair fight, proper... Better equipment, needed.”

“Weapons to win, armor that won’t lose, and the technique to use it all fully.”

Jiggle jiggle.

All four were in agreement. You couldn’t be too cautious when trying to avoid casualties. The four of them would have to shoulder all the risk. Only fighting safe opponents we could beat and making them fight all the dangerous monsters—that was no different from them protecting us altogether. Especially because Haruka-kun was at the greatest risk out of all of us. Angelica-san and the others were hitting a level cap. Even Slimey had reached it. Their equipment wasn’t fully upgraded yet, either!

“Look, it’s just kill before you get killed, so don’t overthink it?” Haruka-kun said. “I’m good at killing before I get killed. So you guys just kill enemies that you can kill before you get killed, too. We’re approaching high-levelled opponents appropriately, so we could get overwhelmed by the level...or say screw it? We gotta find equipment appropriate to all of your levels, ya feel?”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

I knew that. Even if we fought the right way, we still weren't strong enough. That was why we had to train. That was all we could do. It was our only way to improve ourselves, to grow stronger. Plus, we ate way too much pork cutlet for dinner! *I know I have to accept this, but for some reason my heart can't.* We had to keep trying our best...which meant a one-more-set sesh! That grated daikon cutlet had been a trap!

"You don't need to force yourselves to surround them, but don't fall apart!"

"Roger!"

Training was brutal. Angelica-san, Nefertiri-san, and Slimey assembled a formation to take on our class—twenty girls plus Princess Shalliceres, Merielle-san, and the maid Ceres, too. We couldn't break through them at all. Their teamwork was shoddy, but we still couldn't find gaps in any of their defenses. Despite having the advantage of overwhelming numbers, we didn't stand a chance.

With their triangle formation of ever-shifting roles, they toyed with our own formation and broke us down bit by bit. They were the strongest fighters in this world individually, and were now cooperating as one unit. We couldn't hold a candle to them.

The girls managed to make it back to their positions on the side only to get scattered again as we struggled to defend against their attacks. The moment we surrounded them, they broke through and took our rear in a surprise attack. They toyed with us as they scattered us with cooperative tactics.

It proved how weak we were. We couldn't win on our own, so we fought as a group, but when our group tactics got disturbed...we fell. They cornered and corralled us, with anyone rushing in to disrupt them immediately getting targeted in turn. They broke our formation in one location, then targeted anyone who came in to assist, eliminating us in turn. Soon we didn't have any way to come back in the fight. Individually, we were still too weak.

That was why we needed "weapons that overwhelmed with brute force, and armor that could guard against specialized attacks." So that this wouldn't happen when we came across a powerful enemy. I wouldn't comment on it, but the boys had also started their own training session. They'd set out on their

own eventually, so we couldn't have them dig us out of this hole. Based on the principles of offense, defense, and maneuvering, we'd remain unable to maintain our formation. We'd be powerless. And without our formation, we'd never be able to go on the offensive. We were too weak on our own.

"Urk! I'll stop her!"

"We'll help!"

Even if the shield unit stopped Angelica-san's attack, she'd pull them in, exposing the rear right guard to Nefertiri-san. When my group on the right flank rushed in to take on Nefertiri-san, Slimey rampaged right into the center of the formation, breaking our entire unit apart.

"Leave Angelica-san to me! You all need to go to Slimey!"

"Yeah, this is hopeless!"

With Shimazaki-san's group on the left flank now disrupted, they had to try to force themselves back into position by switching sides. My student council and the arts club girls were trying to contain Nefertiri-san, but she was luring us out of position. She switched to targeting Shimazaki-san's group on the left flank, so they struck out at her to try to stop her in her tracks. But now Slimey was coming from behind!

Jiggle jiggle!

"We've trained for this moment!"

"Boys, do your job!"

"They're too fast! We can't friggin' keep up!"

Yup. In the end, the boys joined in as well only to get defeated. They were soon isolated and received a concentrated barrage of attacks, and couldn't hold out without the aid of the defensive unit. AKA, they got bonked. Good practice for dungeons.

Seven battles. Seven rounds of bonks and Xs for eyes later, Haruka-kun went around giving everyone juice, saying, "Good job everyone! I'm pleased to rip you off with a tasty healing potion juice that's just 300 ele! And stuff?"

Uh, is this a giveaway or highway robbery? It sounded like he was going to

have a rematch with Nefertiri-san next. Back when she was level 1, she had lost on account of Haruka-kun's illegal attacks. Now she had a big level advantage. They both used wooden swords, too. Except Haruka-kun's was the Universe Staff, which meant he was going all out.

"Hang on... Are those from G*ndam?!" the nerds shouted.

"They got shot down in less than a second."

"They were so *cool*!"

"An emergency lifeline for Haruka-kun in this battle."

Black shadows flickered into existence and shot across the ground, making it seem as if they'd vanished. Haruka-kun spun his body, combining evasive maneuvers with a powerful whirlwind slash. That was only a feint, as he shot out Magic Thread from below to target Nefertiri-san's legs.

"In a single step?!"

"It's not just about level. That technique is incredible."

Nefertiri-san spun her stick in her right hand to fend off the oncoming attack in response, stepping through and around Haruka-kun's Magic Thread that was extended toward her legs. He targeted her landing spots, but she used that distraction to leap at Haruka-kun and swing down.

"Aerial evasion!"

"She didn't even scratch him!"

"Those G*ndam funnels are *shields*?! What?!"

Haruka-kun launched his shoulder shields away from his body to block the attack and flew backward. Nefertiri-san shot after him, spinning in mid-air as their sticks clashed, crossed, and clanged. Then, they twisted their bodies so they were positioned horizontally as they fell to the ground, spinning so fast that they shifted back to vertical positions, their blades whirring as they orbited each other furiously.

"It's like they're dancing."

"I would've thought they were perfectly in sync!"

Haruka-kun disappeared as he tried to attack from the back side, but Nefertiri-san's rotation put her in a horizontal position that was perfect to strike at the black shadow. It looked like a martial arts demonstration, a miraculously mastered dance. Their expressions were tense and resolute. That was because they had decided that the loser would need to face thirty minutes of attacks later tonight without being able to resist in any way. *This is a mock battle of life and death!*

"If I'm gonna be outnumbered tonight," Haruka-kun wheezed, "I'm the one who needs the thirty minute handicap!"

They danced amid a flurry of exchanged blows, stepping across the air in a willowy waltz. They drew nearer, but somehow remained unable to touch or land a blow on the other. As they endlessly changed their positions, their sword strike techniques extended to infinity. *This is one serious fight.*

"You've got it wrong," Nefertiri-san gasped. "Thirty minutes undefended tentacles, like dying three hundred times!"

Nefertiri-san swung her sword in a broad arc, knocking Haruka-kun's blow to the side before launching into the next strike and changing her position. *Wait—like dying three hundred times?!*

Both were completely out of breath. They waltzed around one another, their blades flashing and glittering as they leaped and danced. They leaned toward and then away from one another—it almost looked fun—spinning round and round and round. Yet, they were deadly serious. They gasped for air. It looked like Haruka-kun couldn't fend her off any longer. They were deadlocked. Slimey bounced up and down, cheering on the fierce match.

"Still not," Nefertiri-san wheezed, "used to fighting. Rapid changes, sudden disappearing, Magic Thread."

She was still getting back her true strength as a dungeon emperor, but even now I felt overpowering strength emanate from her. That didn't make it any easier to fight a king of logic-smashing. The moment you attacked him, he disappeared. His tentacles stretched after you no matter where you dodged. He had learned the nature of Nefertiri-san's dance steps and was starting to anticipate them, too. The pace was too rapid for her to properly wield her

chains.

The logic-smashing king had a serious disadvantage in the stats department and was guaranteed to lose in a contest of strength. He had learned an impressive number of techniques, but none of them were enough to finish Nefertiri-san off. Both were going all out in a desperate attempt to avoid being the victim of the thirty-minute punishment. Then suddenly—match over.

“Enough!” the girls shouted. “If this goes on any longer, we won’t get our bathing suits!”

Angelica-san stepped in and separated the two, ending the battle. *What a fight.* Nefertiri-san looked relieved that she had escaped without having to die three hundred times in thirty minutes. *She literally has Perfect Sensory Resistance. Just what powers does he have exactly?!*

“Sooo tired...”

“Come on! Swimsuits, swimsuits!”

Haruka-kun went back to the temporarily forbidden Universe Staff. He’d even used his new powerful shoulder blades. Just a few days ago, his body had been falling apart, but he had now gotten back his lost strength. Yet all that was barely enough for a tie. I was sure he was using plenty of cheating, trickery, fraudulence, and deception. What in the world did he do to that so-called “limit” of his?

“She couldn’t beat him.”

“Of course not.”

“Yeah, you know that Haruka-kun doesn’t want Nefertiri-san to see how frail and weak he can be. He’s trying to show off.”

Haruka-kun wasn’t going to let Nefertiri-san see how much he suffered. How easily his body broke to pieces.

According to Angelica-san, the true source of his strength was the ability Magic Entanglement. That wasn’t a typical skill or type of magic, but a body-strengthening technique that applied the effects of skills or magic onto equipment or one’s body. His body had been falling apart because it couldn’t

handle the stress of Magic Entanglement. He kept suffering horrible injuries until, finally, he surpassed his limits and lost control altogether.

When he had rescued Nefertiri-san, he hadn't taken any attacks. However, he had been gushing blood all over, his bones had been broken and bent, and his arms had been torn off and crumpled on the ground. Talk about surpassing his limits. That was why he put the Universe Staff down and stopped using the body-bending Life or Death technique to master proper footwork and technique. He'd managed to use his equipment to cheat himself into mastery without needing to master any of it. He hadn't learned a single thing!

"The bath feels soooo good!"

Someone started singing "A Viva Non Non" happily.

As for our powerful urge to lecture him, he washed that away with his newly developed, better-than-ever, super-bubbly body soap. The silky smoothness entranced us as we washed each other's backs with the frothing bubbles and happily soaked in the bath, restoring our energy. We fixed our eyes upon our clean, wet, smooth skin, beautiful as fresh fruit, shimmering like silk. Glossy, lustrous, pure. The fresh white soap smoothed our skin so beautifully that we hypnotized ourselves!

"This soap!"

Everyone stared at each other, mouths hanging open. I could hardly believe it, even when touching my own skin. Shiny, pale arms, a stomach like ivory, porcelain legs... *Am I in love with myself?* It was like everyone had instantly become more beautiful by leaps and bounds. It felt as if we were in an alternate universe where everyone had transformed to marble. *I'm using this soap forever. I don't care how much of a rip-off it is!*

Tonight, the rhythmic gymnastics and volleyball girls as well as Shield Girl had their swimsuit fittings. After washing up, they went straight over to Haruka-kun's room, the blindfolding tag-team joining them. Although it would be safer without them, to be honest.

"He's trying his best to keep his eyes closed. They're the ones making it hard on him!"

“They want to instigate something! Make us into a Haruka harem!”

From everything I had heard, they were getting aggressive. It sounded like a problem. Although, Haruka-kun had been getting attacked nonstop ever since we’d arrived here now that I thought about it. He was the shiest, most chaste sex god the world had ever seen, a real nervous, tongue-tied womanizer.

After that, he’d do Princess Shalliceres, her maid Merielle-san, and Erailia-san. It was the fantasy-world group, or European group, or whatever you wanted to call it. When he fitted them for dresses, they all got knocked out. This was going to be an even more intense, precise fitting... *Are they gonna be okay?* Erailia-san went bright red when she simply *heard* about what the fitting entailed from the other student council members. She seemed pretty excited at the same time, though. Pitting innocent maidens against those tentacles... Something very dangerous was going on here!

DAY 87

NIGHT

A fantasy world's education system doesn't mean much for a teenage boy with questionable post-grad promise.

WHITE LOSER INN

GRIPPING HER SMALL WHITE FIST firmly in front of her heart, she gazed boldly forward and proclaimed, "I'll do my best in this bathing suit!" in a high, ringing voice.

"At *what*?!"

"I appreciate that you're always pumped up, Shield Girl, but just swim normally in that. Got it?" I said. "It's a bikini, not battle armor. If you try too hard, we'll all be at risk."

I gave the bikinis some basic enhancements, but the bikinis weren't for battle. I'd rip the girls off with other combat-centric accessories. I mean, fighting in bikinis could only cause problems for teenage boys, which would result in us getting bitten by monsters and forced to get on our knees and apologize.

"Rhythmic Gymnastics Girl! You in particular need to chill," I added. "If you turn into soft-bodied mollusks then there's no guarantee that the fabric is gonna be able to cover you, which means a special hello, wardrobe malfunctions, and teenage-boy nosebleeds in the pool. That means mean girl sharks swarming and me getting bitten! Also, volleyball team, beach volleyball is off-limits with your current levels of strength. You'll knock the ball into outer space. Anyhow, it's a river, so there's no sand."

"We all know that! What kind of 'special hello' are you talking about?"

I'd made the volleyball team low-rise bathing shorts just in case. The amount of crotch cover used in bikinis simply wasn't enough to cover the amount of hip joint motion involved in volleyball. I made the fabric as stretchy as possible and

imbued it with Adhesion, but that wouldn't be enough to keep up with those girls' specialized movements. They were so flexible that even Dancer Girl had become their disciple. A special hello from the area down there meant a special goodbye to my sweet sex appeal! What kinda conversation is this?!

"Isn't the covered area in all of these designs way too small?" I asked. "A normal circle to cover the chest is good enough, but you've all gone for triangles instead, and nothing but string for straps!"

"Those are our right to explore as maidens!"

"Well, you're already exploring dungeons every day. What else do you need to explore?"

By now, everyone—excluding two certain individuals—had developed curvy figures. That, combined with the force of level 100+ stats, put us at a real risk of wardrobe malfunctions.

Adhesion wouldn't function adequately without draping to carefully contain said curves. If the fit was too tight, the fabric would dig in and cause numerous problems for both the girls and the boys! Making the fabric too stretchy meant it would turn transparent in the water. Stretched-thin, see-through bikinis with mushy mounds beneath? Also problematic. This was a tough situation for the entire class, but it was especially fatal for my poor sex appeal! I mean, if my swimsuits bit into them or went see-through, that would make me, the teenage boy, responsible. A teenage boy with those deeds on his resume had no hope of succeeding in terms of sex appeal!

"We need to wet it so I can make adjustments and fix any problems that come up, so go ahead and get soaking, sopping, dripping wet in the tub, 'kay?"

"Why do you need to phrase it like that?"

We were in the trial phase, so my blindfolders had taken their hands off my eyes. Why did I have no memory of the blindfolders covering my eyes to begin with? They had their hands over my eyes, sure, but their fingers were spread wide apart, which left very little to none of the function that blindfolds theoretically had?

"What was the point of pulling on my mouth like that again? You tried pulling

on my eyelids before, but why the mouth? There are more than a few problems with an open-mouthed, drooling boy in front of totally naked teenage girls!”

When textiles got wet, they contracted. Twisted thread shrank vertically, which could cause it to bite into the skin. When the contraction got worse, the fabric went transparent. It’d inflict fatal wounds on a teenage boy’s innocent sex appeal! It appeared that my Revival skill didn’t work on my sex appeal, either.

Splash splash.

I limited the contraction and transparency to safe regions. Problems emerged when I needed to change the color of the prismatic fabric to white in order to verify the limits of the transparency. That was the best method, but it also revealed the nuances of biting issues. Of course, dubious and deadly dangers manifested when I needed to lay my eyes on such issues to examine them. It was mostly a danger to my sex appeal, of course?

“They’re cute.”

“Doesn’t feel too tight.”

In the case of transparency, my Magic Hands needed to feel the fabric for thickness. In the case of biting, they’d need to hold open the swimsuit while making the necessary sewing adjustments. So...my Magic Hands had to touch all over *here* and a little bit of *there*?

“Ah, oh, ahhh!”

“Urgh, agh, affffgh!”

“Mm, mmm!”

“Eek! Aaaaaaahn!”

Splash splash.

Such seductive sighs!

“I get the feeling that my sex appeal isn’t particularly beloved from a societal perspective, but if you take the appeal out of sex appeal you just get sex, which isn’t very appealing. I mean, is anywhere still tight? Try moving around again?”

Even though they were in the cool water, their skin had turned bright pink, and their breathing was strangely ragged. *I'm not gonna ask.* From my countless years of teenage boy experience, I had come to recognize that asking only resulted in a lecture. That was all I got from the girls around here. How many more years would my teenage boyhood continue? Was there an adulthood study-from-home course in this fantasy world or something?

"I think it's fine... I don't think I can handle any more adjustments."

"I... I... I tried my b-best... I'll do my best in this bathing suit, as i-is..."

"H-hang on! Don't do a Ybalance in your wet bathing suit, for heaven's sake! The design isn't built for handling gymnastics! I'm serious, please spare me!"

Couldn't these girls have a little more consideration for the healthy teenage boy here? Nope, guess not. They were already bouncing and jiggling around to test out the bikinis. *Seriously, don't pull on them. Or pinch them. And most of all, don't open them?! You're gonna cause problems for the teenage boy in the room. Hard, hard problems!*

"They're perfect!"

Looked like I passed. I changed the colors to black and red, and the girls checked themselves out in the mirror to confirm the design. A teenage boy gazed on from behind, satisfied... *Satisfied about his hard work, of course!*

"With the pure strength of your level 100+ bodies, I had to make the material considerably tight and elastic, clinging close to the figure to prevent slippage and biting, which has created a bit of a bubbly busty... Er, yeah, keep working on those poses!"

They liked them. Maybe they could refrain from touching their own butts in dripping wet bikinis so that my eyes could have a safe landing place. A boy like me aided by Jupiter Eye had a rigorous checking process. *Thank god for the recording functionality!*

Once finished, I got a thirty-minute break during which I broke down my blindfolds to the point where they could no longer "blindfold" me. They could only glare? Look, they were giving me serious trouble. I tried my hardest. I tried very, very hard.

“I have no choice but to advance to the next stage of human blindfolding, which is taking out my blindfolds since they hamper my blindfolding capabilities. They’re twitching, but ignore them?”

These next four would be my limit for the day. I was reaching my limit in multiple ways. I’d be breaking that limit tonight!

“Thank you in advance, Haruka.”

“Lord Haruka, thank you on my behalf as well.”

“Still... This bathing suit thing is a little embarrassing, I must say.”

“If you do anything unseemly to Her Highness, I’ll know about it! I feel like I never do know, but I’ll have your eyes gouged out for lèse-majesté!”

Elf Girl, Royal Girl, Merimeri, and Maid Girl had Caucasian body types, so I didn’t have a lot of data on them. I used the information and appearances of Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl, but...these girls wanted to order a full set of underwear, too. In the end, I’d have to take complete, comprehensive measurements. Nothing unseemly. Although there was something inherently unseemly about a teenage boy taking comprehensive measurements of girls’ bodies.

Shake, shake, rustle.

Every time, the sound of them taking off clothes... They say that when you shut off one of the five senses, the others become more heightened. Since my eyes were closed, my hearing and sense of touch became more sensitive. My previously toppled, twitching blindfolds had crawled over here to try to rip my eyelids open!

“Don’t pull on my eyes with both hands! That hurts! You’re gonna cut my eyelids! This is the exact opposite thing blindfolds are supposed to do!”

This group’s bone structures were fundamentally different than my classmates’, so their musculature and physiques differed as well. The entire design had to be changed. They were closest to Miss Armor Rep, so I had plenty of data in that regard. They still had individual differences, of course. There so many countless variations that were honestly surprising to discover. To investigate those differences, I had to touch, stroke, push, shake, and carefully

verify each and every thing... And they broke. Unlike my classmates, who had built up their resistances to my tentacles, these fantasy world girls lacked that experience. *This happened when we made the dresses, too.*

“Ah, ah, s-s-s-sorry! I c-c-can’t! P-p-please! D-don’t touch, st-stop, ah, aahhh, aaaaahhh!”

Kerplunk.

As I made my measurements, I began draping and forming the fabric, affixing and shaping. *Their vigorous movements are making this pretty hard?* They were bending backward, shivering, and writhing. This made everything take longer than expected and resulted in me measuring some unplanned parts of their bodies?

“W-wait. Just w-wait a mo— Aahhh!”

Thwack.

“N-not the p-princess... N-no! St-stop! Un, un, uns-seemmllyyyyyy!”

Kadonk.

Measuring the upper and lower bodies simultaneously was too much for them. Any more body-tight affixing was gonna bring this teenage boy to his limit. If my tentacles started rampaging and defying my teenage boy’s sense of reason, the result would be an unmitigated disaster.

After trying the outfits on, they immediately collapsed, which would’ve been convenient before and made it harder to make adjustments and corrections now. *What’s up with this suspicious twitching, back-bending, and writhing?!*

“N-no, st-stop. No, no, noooo...”

For the time being, I made the necessary adjustments while they were in their current positions, fallen over. One moment they were curling and twitching. The next, they were busy bending backward. *They might legit drown if I put them in the tub like this?* Well, they had Xs for eyes now. I could soak them in the tub and finish up the adjustments.

“They’ve lost consciousness. Would it be weird if I finished their fitting like this? I guess I can make more adjustments once they wake up. Okay, in you

go?”

I finished the fitting, but the fitees had a long road to recovery. Dancer Girl did me a solid and used her chains to manipulate their joints like dummies so we could test their movements, letting me make the right adjustments.

“Okay, can they be done being dummies? And Dancer Girl, I don’t think that’s a normal human position. That’s a happy baby yoga pose suspended in mid-air, for heaven’s sake!”

Someone’s coming!

“Haruka-kun, I’m coming in. Are you finished? You can stop after Shalliceres-san’s...group... Wh-wh-what are you doing?! What have you done with the princess and noble women’s bodies?!”

I got yelled at? Class Rep lectured me before I could brace myself for it.

“Well, in terms of what I’m doing, I’m making bathing suits. Dancer Girl and I decided to let them take a mental break from the labor and release them from their pain and suffering with a bit of healthy, wholesome yoga? See, that’s the basic *Ananda Balasana*, also known as the happy baby position. It’s perfectly good for both body and soul, and a completely unnecessary position for swimsuit making, no matter how you spin it... Er, Dancer Girl did it! I’m not the bad guy? Like, they say yoga releases mental tension and detoxes the body, and since the kidneys and reproductive organs weaken with age, it’s very important. In fact, it can improve thigh gaps. I’d even recommend it to you, my dear Class Rep?”

“What are you implying about my thighs?! That’s not a yoga pose! They’re suspended in mid-air! Guilty as charged!”

Yup, this was a lecture! Even Dancer Girl fled the scene!

That night, Dancer Girl and Miss Armor Rep were subjected to an unprecedented, never-before-seen rampage of tentacle spanking. After getting devoured by the tentacles, Dancer Girl seemed to regret her choices earlier that night.

“Using the faint-resistant phlegm from this ‘Grotesque Necklace: Perversion. Grotesquemorphosis. Phlegm. Phlegm Resistant. +Defense’ to prevent you guys

from fainting during your spanking sure was handy-dandy.”

The pair were close to tears for some reason? Come on, think of how I’d been jammed up against my teenage boy limit! That whole session was dangerous, but that happy baby pose took things to the next level.

“Teenage boy, go! Fight!”

Night fell, and the two of them slept quietly as I got to my side-job work of powering up the iron-ribbed fan Dancer Girl had set her eyes on with mithril. The result was the “Dancer’s Mirage Fan: Speed, Dexterity, Resistance +30%. Physical Reflection (ultra). Magic Reflection (ultra). Illusion. Phantom. Slash. Projectile Fan. +Attack, +Defenses.” It became a true mithril alloy fan.

“It can open and shut properly,” I said. “A lot of the time, only the two outer ribs of a ribbed fan are metal, so it’s more a clod of metal that looks like a fan from the outside. This is no paperweight!”

It was already a fan for fighting, but I tried making it easier to hold and adapted to Dancer Girl’s fighting style by concentrating the weight in the base so she could easily fold, manipulate, and throw it amid her complex movements. I added blades to the exterior of the fan for additional versatility, increasing the surface area of the fans’ ribs, which allowed it to be extended and contracted for defensive purposes. After making those improvements and powering it up with mithril, it became the Dancer’s Mirage Fan, with the resulting mithril boosts reflecting the changes I made to the original design.

Now it was a beautiful fan. I knew Dancer Girl liked ornamental items, so I added some fanciful engravings and lush colors to the gold, making it a true dancer’s fan. It had started off as a practical dungeon weapon, but I saw nothing wrong with having a little fun. I knew she’d taken a liking to it, so the prettier, the better. It would make a nice gift for her.

Then there were the “Sorcerer’s Seals: Slash (large). Darts. Guidance. Magic Transmission. +Attack,” a flowery set of eighteen. I attached those to the ends of her chains. She’d master them in no time.

“Next up are the hand grenades, land mines, torpedoes, and equipment for the nerds. Yeah, they all put in orders too.”

It grew late as I kept up my teenage boy activities interrupted by some side-job work, then some side-job work interrupted by teenage boy activities. *Hang on. Their Revival is leveling up!* Yup, no matter how late it got, the teenage boy activities never seemed to end!

DAY 88

MORNING

I thought they were jigglingly enjoying the elegance of it all, but they'd just eaten too much shaved ice?

DUNGEON

80TH FLOOR

THE CHAINS and their eighteen newly equipped Sorcerer's Seals thrashed through the air, cutting apart the level 80 Acceleration Hornets. The three-foot hornets were freakin' nuts but easy to target. Yeah, they were fast. I could still smoke them out and sprinkle them with Water magic. They had a lot of weaknesses.

The hornets shot their stingers at us, using them as ranged weapons, which Dancer Girl dodged and wove through in a vortex of spinning chains. She wiped out the horde of hornets in a wonderful, whirling dance of death, sending their corpses clattering to the ground.

"Burning smoke and sprinkling water in a dungeon isn't exactly the way I dreamed a fantasy world would play out," I said. "It sure is working, though."

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

Hornets were the fiercest and most vicious of the wasps by far, and getting stung caused extreme pain on the level of having a nail driven into your head for a day straight. There was even a risk of death. And speaking of the pain of a nail getting driven into the head, I was used to that now. *Doesn't mean it doesn't hurt, though.*

"Good work. The powered-up Sorcerer's Seals seem to be working.

Incidentally, why was I tied up in those chains when I woke up this morning? Waking up in the very chains that I stayed up all night working on! That's a pretty bloodthirsty awakening, and I experienced it with utmost clarity. And Miss Armor Rep standing by and nodding approvingly as if it were none of her business even though she participated in the ensuing arising. That's right, you did!"

Yup, they had dominated me first thing in the morning. I woke up to a morning of more damage than I'd ever suffered in combat. And I drowned in a morning that was even more refreshing than anticipated, too.

"Don't stick your tongue out at me! That wasn't an embarrassing defeat! You're sticking out your tongue in the wrong situations! That little head slap was also planned, you scheming fox! And now you're doing sexual stuff with your tongue out like that! You're not sticking out your tongue at me. You're just trying to turn me on!"

I had been subjected to an experience that would disqualify me from becoming anyone's boyfriend, much less their groom, first thing that morning. The concubine combo extended my streak of not having a real girlfriend. Sure, I've had some absurd experience for not having a girlfriend, but marriage was definitely off the table for me at this point.

Jiggle jiggle!

Slimey was getting antsy. I hoped that the next floor of monsters would be tasty.

"Seriously, getting subjected to that first thing in the morning after pulling an all-nighter? I'm gonna have to wake up early tomorrow morning for my revenge! After the nightly revenge, of course!"

Wiggle wiggle.

Still, I couldn't be mad about their maid outfits from this morning. That had made the attacks even more super-effective against this teenage boy. *What in the world are they learning from my female classmates?*

We practiced our battle formation against groups of monsters, then split up for individual training on the labyrinth-style floors. Small groups of monsters

were ideal for honing Magic Entanglement and Life or Death. Something felt off about practicing in dungeons so I could go all out on the training grounds though. Regardless, being undefended for thirty minutes was too dangerous. I got a taste of how dangerous this morning! *Danger sure tasted sweet?*

Everyone was having a good time working on individual and group battles. A lot of monsters in this dungeon resisted magic. So why did the hidden room have a “Sorcerer’s Bracelet: Intelligence, Resistance +30%. Magic Defense Multiplier (large). Magic Control (large). Magic Equipment” item? I kind of wanted it, but the arts club girls would too. The Magic Equipment bit sounded like Magic Entanglement, so it’d work well with their equipment. I figured I’d test it out for myself first.

The next floor was a labyrinth, so we split up and went monster hunting. Area Analyze and Map let me know all the paths from the get-go, but going back and forth to clear all the various branches of the maze was tiring. A lot of the monsters had items. I didn’t want to leave them uncollected. The 85th floor spellstones were extremely valuable, too. So I wanted to hunt down every monster.

I strengthened my body with Magic Entanglement. Up until now, I had focused on instantaneously Entangling my whole body at once, but now I could sense the different parts of the Entanglement, especially Teleport, Gravity, and Demolish. I could home in on those with Holding to control them better now. Without solid control, the skills got mixed together as one, which resulted in my body self-destructing. Mixing was bad. At the same time, the mixed version was stronger. I couldn’t rely on something I couldn’t control, though. Especially ‘cause I didn’t understand what was happening to begin with?

Slashing with my spear with splendor, I flicked the fiends flying and leaping after me, lancing them to shreds. I concentrated on my skills, recognizing and manipulating each one. It turned out I hadn’t been activating Vanish on my full body—only some parts of my body were momentarily disappearing. Using everything felt like I was surpassing light-speed. It was just a feeling, though, and I couldn’t control it right.

“I wasn’t conscious of it, much less controlling it. I guess I was forcing my

elbow forward faster than my shoulders, which is why I kept breaking my bones!”

That explained all the physical trauma. I suspected a different cause was behind my blood vessels bursting, but considering the way I controlled my body with Blockhead, it wouldn't be surprising to have injuries anywhere.

Since gaining Body Strengthening as an Archsage, only the body parts that I applied it to received protection. If I broke something, I had Revival; if something was on the verge of breaking, Entangling the injured area with Heal and Regeneration sped up the healing process. That combination did the job.

I stepped forward, activated Life or Death, and struck with my arm. The super-attack rippled across my entire body. Bit by bit, piece by piece, I mastered the form and technique, unleashing everything in the slow-motion world created by High-Speed Thinking and cutting out all unnecessary movements. I wrapped myself in everything, eliminated all excess, and struck. That was the technique behind Life or Death.

“Okay, this time the motion was concentrated on the tip of my hand. That'll tear my arm off?”

The empty eye sockets were confused. How had they been stabbed? How had they been killed? Dead before they had the chance to comprehend what had happened, the level 85 Skeleton Lancers burst into fragments of white bones. Those unpleasant, empty eye sockets rattled as they rolled across the dungeon floor. *They're not glaring, so it's all good.*

They were skeleton knights with a high-level Supreme Lance Mastery skill. They blasted apart one after the next as if in a frame-by-frame playback. I slashed, vanished, and danced through the air. I had to cut faster than their 900+ Speed stat and focused with all my might to defy rhythm and cut down the skeletal figures.

“Sheesh. I'm tired, but if I get stabbed, I'll get one-shotted. I've gotta keep self-destructing fast enough, which is better than getting killed, I guess? No head-on fights for me. These guys are strong and fast, and they don't glare!”

They had great spears and solid armor, too. My classmates had better equipment at this point, but these pulled good prices on the market. Strangely,

equipment that was too good didn't sell. I wanted good equipment like that to stay hidden from our enemies about as much as I wanted to stay hidden from any stray morning stars.

"They'll be on the lookout for any excuse to send those morning stars my way every morning anyway. It's as if they've decided to attack in advance. I guess I need to choose who I'm selling equipment to from these lower floors to pretty carefully."

If I hurried with my attacks, the teleportation only applied to my arms. But if I didn't hurry, I'd die?

"The kingdom and frontier army are too poor to buy this stuff anyway," I said. "Adventurers can only make it to the mid-floors of dungeons, so they don't have enough money either. Anyone rich enough to buy this stuff is definitely an enemy capable of taking my big-spender life away from me, although I already get my riches confiscated seven times a day. Oh well! Speaking of seven, seven ate nine, as in all the sixty-nine is causing me daily problems. Life or Death really can't help me even though it's a matter of life or death. Asking would only result in a lecture?"

Area Analyze showed me that the 86th floor was the last one. This was relatively smaller than some of the others lately, but it was still deep. Even with all their improved equipment, the frontier army and adventurers could only make it down to the 40s or so. They couldn't break through the 50th floor, which made levels in the 80s serious business. While the rest of my classmates could handle a dungeon king in the 70s... *This is deep, I can tell.*

"Thanks for waiting," I called. "Although being last every time kinda bums me out, especially 'cause you never see my sick poses? For a teenage boy fighting in dungeons, poses are sort of an indispensable, irreplaceable, inexplicably important item, but enemies and allies alike ignore me... Yeah, it makes me sad, guys?"

No no.

Pout pout.

Wiggle wiggle.

Rejected?! In a clean sweep, too! I guessed middle school syndrome wasn't going to break out in this fantasy world any time soon. If it did, it'd vanish pretty quickly anyway, considering I was in high school. *This is a fantasy dungeon, though!*

At least I had figured out how to dodge attacks with my shoulder shields. The small improvements to my evasion were also becoming a part of Life or Death. I could tell I was cutting down on my combat time, so surely they could let me hit some sick poses. Still, with level 80+ enemies, knocking aside attacks with the shoulder shields did some real damage. If I didn't counter perfectly, I'd suffer serious hurt.

Our next opponent was the dungeon king. Letting down my guard even a little would only end in death. Of course, before the dungeon king could even attack, it had gotten tied up in chains, stabbed numerous times, and was currently being eaten by Slimey. But still! Keeping that mental (sexual), spiritual (sexual), and physical (sexual) edge was key! This king had none of those edges, though.

"This, is good."

I knew the Sorcerer's Seals would be solid. Dancer Girl lashed out with her chains, sending them flying through the air to obliterate the monster. Once latched into place, she could send electric attacks into it with the magic transmission effect. That was two birds with one stone. Or more like one broken monster with eighteen seals? If you tried to dodge her, she had the Prometheus God Chains.

Meanwhile, I shot Fire Bullet after Fire Bullet at the level 86 Ice Hydra's regrowing heads. Miss Armor Rep turned the ice into shaved ice with her slicing and dicing, which Slimey happily devoured. I guess he didn't mind the lack of syrup. I ground up some of the tree fruits I had to create a syrup I could pour on for him, and he jiggled appreciatively. The syrup looked good, but would it mesh with the ice hydra's flavor?

"I was hoping for a dragon, but I got a dragon-shaped gargoyle made of ice instead! At least its whole body is ice, otherwise making shaved ice at a time like this would be questionable. You know what? I think it's still questionable?"

Wig-wiggle!

“See, if you eat too much cold stuff you get brain freeze, Slimey! I didn’t know you *had* a brain. Maybe your stomach is too cold? Actually, I don’t know if you have a stomach either. Anyway, here’s some hot tea, mushroom flavored.”

Slurp slurp.

Clonk clonk.

Jiggle jiggle!

All three of them tried the tea. I laid down some carpet for an attempt at an open-air tea ceremony and pulled out some manju. I made some matching Japanese-style umbrellas and everyone had a good time. *What an elegant dungeon this has become.*

DAY 88

MIDDAY

That surprised expression was expressly expressing exclamation but couldn't expulse misunderstanding.

PLAINS

ON OUR WAY to the next dungeon, we met up with the logging demon scythes for some outdoor lunchtime. When I had officially enslaved them, they had gotten reset to level 1, but they were already over level 40 now. It was safe to assume the drastic drop in monsters in the forest was due to their efforts. They had long reaches, and after getting promoted from all the experience, their name was long too: "Archdemon Scythes." Their blades were now sharper, longer, and more sinister. They might have been scythes, but they still loved sweets.

"That's two down. Number three is next. Class Rep and the others beat the 80th floor boss of a new dungeon yesterday, so that leaves two more. All of them are over 80 floors, so they're deep. If all dungeons were that deep, this fantasy world would be toast."

Wiggle wiggle.

Before all that, lunch. Where had my elegant tearoom gone? I mean, we had technically only sat down and had some tea. Slimey even had shaved ice earlier.

I took out some tables and chairs from my item bag. I spread out a tablecloth and began my personalized catering service for the trio. *It sure is tough being a slave owner.*

"Eat up!" I called. "Seeing you three eat chop suey on a giant plain in fantasy world is one strange sight, but there's fried chicken too, so no biggie? And stuff?"

"Thanks for the food!"

Jiggle jiggle!

Like the orphans, the pair had picked up on the Japanese pre-and post-meal sayings, “Thanks for the food” and “Thanks for the delicious meal.” The custom was spreading throughout town, in fact. The townspeople had stopped praying to the old god dude before their meals, instead expressing thanks to the food itself the Japanese way. I mean, that old god dude wasn’t the one who picked the ingredients and prepared the food. What an arrogant egghead!

Slimey had ended up eating too much shaved ice and rolled around with brain freeze in the last dungeon. Now he was peacefully chowing down on chop suey, so there were no long-lasting ill effects.

The last king’s drop item was an item completely specialized for ice: “Ice Fog Ring: Intelligence +30%. Ice magic (large). Ice Fog. Ice Pillar. Ice Mirage.”

Ice Fog did exactly what you’d expect; it produced a large area of icy fog and improved the effectiveness of Ice magic and Water magic. It went perfectly with Queen Bee’s Eternal Ice Spear. Ice Mirage created mirages. Ice Pillar created shields and pillars. Combining it with the Eternal Ice Spear would power up Position Freeze. Since Queen Bee’s women’s clothing brand was selling like crazy, she’d have the money to afford it!

“Let’s go into the next dungeon, start on floor 1 and look for hidden rooms on our way down to the 80th floor. We’ll start fighting there. If you feel like anything’s off, then we’ll start keeping our guard up around floor 75. Dancer Girl will be our instructor. How was the dungeon?”

“Normal. Lots of dogs? Fine until, 80th floor.”

“In that case, I’ll get the vinegar ready. I used that to defeat the multi-headed Cerberus and Orthrus, so that should definitely do the job, especially considering I’m expecting one-headed dogs in this dungeon! Those weren’t normal dogs!”

Ji-jiggle!

Not that many monsters respawned, so we charged through the upper floors of the dungeon. We wiped out the middle floors quickly too, aside from the hidden rooms we found. The monsters in there weren’t particularly strong

either, and none of the drop items were notable. All the good stuff was going to be down farther.

I used Holding on the vinegar and tossed it at the monsters. Honestly, bonking them as they came was easier, given they came in waves. I just needed to bonk 'em fast before I got bit.

“The mean girls’ group was taking care of this dungeon. I guess we’ve got monsters respawning after they bit before they got bitten? Think of all that biting!”

Wiggle wiggle?

The massive flesh-eating beasts leaped at us, snarling and gnashing their teeth. They were level 74 and had the stats to match, plus the composition and brute strength of wild beasts. Such monsters would ordinarily pack a forceful, menacing, and devastating punch.

“Awoooooo!”

“Hey, howling like that isn’t gonna stop me from bonking you, I’m not tryin’ to get bitten today? Plus, I don’t know what ‘awoo’ means! Maybe it’s an expression of the suffering of getting bitten by mean girls, but don’t try to pull that card on me.”

We were witnessing an extinction phenomenon enacted by the previously uncontrollable Random Fire ability. I was practicing it today, concentrating Teleport and Demolish into the Universe Staff to whack and extinguish the enemy. However, it used a lot of MP and the physical burden was pretty big. It was better to slash or hit them, especially since obliterating them like that also got rid of the spellstones.

“If they were cute little doggos, I’d feel bad about this. But hitting vicious, snarling, ugly-ass, drooling, gnashing monsters feels good? No belly-rubs for anything this horrifying. That’s for sure!”

The monsters were called Hound Bites. Bite was even in the name. They had Cooperation, and it was high leveled, too. How annoying! They could use feints and counters as friggin’ *dogs*. I mean, I could see through them all with Clairvoyant and Jupiter Eye, but it was still annoying.

“It’s slow, but...something’s there?”

This was taking a long time. The doggos were getting all upset every time they fainted into nothing. To be specific, these dogs fainted straight into becoming spellstones, surprised expressions still on their faces, as if they were asking, “What?” Coming at me to ask me “what” was annoying! I was the one who deserved to get upset. I was being attacked at high speed by what-ing dogs! *If you don’t want to faint into nonexistence, start sensing presences, you damn doggos!*

As I ranted about the damn doggos, we descended downstairs. The others were glaring at me. I supposed that, technically, the only deception involved was on my part.

“Come on, guys! With the combination of Area Analyze, Presence Sensing, and Clairvoyant, there’s no way I could miss? Those damn doggos acting all surprised...What’s up with that? Am I right?”

Shake shake.

As we went downstairs, I checked out the 75th floor with Area Analyze and Presence Sensing. Looked like we’d be in for a mass battle in a large hall against more dogs. We started the fight I dared not lose—time for rock-paper-scissors to determine our formation! After a mighty hellacious heave-ho of a rock-paper-scissors game, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl took the vanguard, and me and Slimey took up the rear in a box formation. There’d be no one behind us to fight in this formation. It was best to not think about it. Whoever won got to go in front. It was as simple as that.

“I’m off!”

“Let’s go!”

Large, agile wolves circled from a distance, constantly changing positions. High-speed wind whipped around the bodies of the “Gust Wolves. Lv: 75.”

Group battles were all about formations. The wolves moved to enclose us. Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl moved to prevent them from doing so, and me and Slimey provided backup. The wolves that leaped through the air at us were severed in half at the torso by Miss Armor Rep. The wolves circling us at a

distance got bound and lashed to death by Dancer Girl's chains. The duo were intent on stealing all the fun!

The gust wolves had their bodies Entangled with Wind magic. This enabled them to fly in rapid bursts, but they still couldn't get past the vanguard. Meanwhile, the rear guard waited in our cool battle poses!

The eager wolves rocketed through the air like bullets but got thrashed by the seals. Miss Armor Rep used the blunt edge of her sword to bat at them like she was playing baseball instead of cutting them. Translation: there was absolutely no point to me and Slimey's cool battle poses!

The wolves dashed as quickly as they could to try to attack us from our blind spots, but they couldn't get behind us without getting cut to ribbons. The wolves whined and whimpered as they ran at us from both sides, seized by the chains. They tried to surround us, but they didn't reach the back half. Sure, the box formation was technically designed so the vanguard could protect the rearguard, but this was *too* much protection. The front didn't intend to let a single wolf get past them.

As soon as Slimey and I gave up and switched to long-range attacks, the vanguard advanced, cutting through the pack of wolves. Flustered, the wolves ran through the new openings in the flanks, but Dancer Girl and Miss Armor Rep cut down every last one. *There's no hope of winning...at rock-paper-scissors, that is!*

"The 80th floor boss hasn't respawned, so we can go straight to the 81st floor," I said. "That's where the real fight starts. It's not like losing every rock-paper-scissors match has warped my view or anything. No way?"

I lost *every single time*. The fourth place in rock-paper-scissors had to go to the far rear of our diamond formation. That was where I was, in the back, forever alone with my cool pose. I killed three whole wolves with my Fire Bullets. That was it.

We made it to the 81st floor. *A labyrinth-style floor! Finally!*

"I should exclusively get action while acting alone. How am I so crap at rock-paper-scissors that I've lost every time? My luck stat's above the freaking limit?!

How come I can't see the outcome with Clairvoyant, either?"

I pondered these mysteries as I roamed and noticed that this floor was a circular shape with Map. I may have roamed, but I wasn't romancing. That was for later?

No matter how good your equipment was, the level difference eventually caught up. Level 30+ monsters were menaces to me, so everything in the 80s were true terrors. I was sure the others didn't want me to have to fight them. Since I couldn't level up, gaining battle skills through experience was my only way to get stronger.

"If you get killed, strength really doesn't matter. You can't kill if you get killed? I think?"

I swung my staff and my body broke. I guess it was more like my staff swung my body? The drool-spluttering level 81 Red Wolves bared their fangs and howled as my blade sliced through them like a hot knife through butter. It cut *that* well even though it was only a wooden stick. The attack was a far-cry from Life or Death, but I felt no resistance at all—I sliced, and they died.

"I guess it's working."

This time I met up with the others without being too late. Probably because the red wolves attacked me before I could get my sick battle pose ready. I was finally starting to control my skills and equipment. I only had one approach: the Art of the Bonk... If the bonk didn't work, I'd get bonked, so, yeah. I was the one who bonked! The world in which I got bonked in my attempts to bonk was for my nightly practice. Those were the most thrilling tests and most brutal bonks of all. In order to prepare my nightly revenge, I whipped up some new cheerleader outfits complete with pom-poms! Oh yes, I had something to look forward to. Cheerleaders awaited me at our training sesh tonight! They had no intention to support me, of course, only of bonking me. It was too late for them, though. I had made preparations for my revenge before the bonking had even begun.

DAY 88

AFTERNOON

It was confusing that this minor regional doggo was so similar to the other doggos.

DUNGEON

WE ADVANCED QUICKLY, but I was bored. Dog, wolf, dog, dog, wolf, dog...

Along the way, we fought some dogs that could walk on two legs, which seemed suspiciously un-dog-like. Putting those doubts aside and kicking their asses, we made it to the 90th floor. This was the final floor, so we'd be facing off against the dungeon king.

I fished around for goods in hidden rooms. What I found was pretty solid but not extraordinary. Since all the monsters were dogs and wolves, they didn't have any drop items. I supposed the dungeons were in a recession now. Noisy howls echoed from below, but we were trying to have a pleasant tea party.

Could you please shush?

Dancer Girl and Slimey faced off in an eating contest, various types of fruit cream crepes lined up along the table. Miss Armor Rep watched the two with a pained expression. She had cream smeared around her mouth and nose—she'd already lost. Everyone liked the crepes.

"Personally, I much prefer fresh cream over whipped cream," I said. "At the rate this stuff is vanishing, whipped cream's stock must be on the rise."

Jiggle jiggle.

I prepared some more mushroom tea. Teatime was fun if you let yourself forget that the only flavor available was mushroom. It would have been great if we weren't rudely interrupted by howls from below.

I figured it was some sorta doggo. I blew some vinegar vapor downstairs, but that didn't work... Boy was it making a fuss! And during teatime too. An

untrained dog, apparently.

“Isn’t it supposed to be the king of this dungeon? I sure wish it could bark quietly. Have better manners, for heaven’s sake!”

Wiggle wiggle.

We went down to the vinegar-reeking 90th floor to find the dog struggling and gasping for air. Its massive, multi-headed body quivered and writhed. I thought it was another Orthrus, but it was Mawiang, a Southeast Asian dog god.

“I remember this thing showing up in the legends of the Melanau people of the state of Sarawak on Borneo. It’s a local god that stands guard at the world of the dead before the gates of heaven. Come on, who’s ever heard of Mawiang before?!”

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl had each taken off one head already. Slimey was gobbling them up but didn’t like the vinegar and was bouncing angrily about it.

“Well, I don’t think we have time for one more, so let’s head back,” I said. “I didn’t get enough training—as in dungeon combat—since actual training inexplicably exposes me to unspeakable violence, but I’m going for an equipment-less, handicapped training sesh today. Not that it’ll be much of a handicap, since I’m never landing hits in the first place, and I can already clearly see the outcome of getting pommied by the sweet pom-poms of my cheerleaders without a single song of support with Clairvoyant?”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Boink boink!

They liked the plan. They didn’t want me to fight much, but they wanted me to train? I got that fighting monsters was dangerous, but I suspected the real reason was that they wanted to bonk me themselves.

Back at the inn, the flow of time slowed with the beating of my heart. My body grew heavier and time slower. Wisdom activated High-Speed Thinking as I dodged the slashes in the slow-motion world and lined up a Life or Death,

razing this fraction of a second with a single stroke.

My wooden stick opponent caught the blow and knocked it away. Our sword blows moved so gently, the sticks seemed on the verge of halting altogether. I passed through air that clung to my skin like syrup as I manipulated my body and controlled Magic Entanglement to wriggle through the heavy rain of blows before unleashing an all-out Life or Death.

Calling these consecutive attacks was too crude. Calling my sword-dance swordplay didn't fit the bill either. I wanted to know how long I could stand against them, but I had lost my sense of time altogether, caught up in the need to repeatedly attack and dodge with Teleport. Our swords battled one another never-endingly.

I was fighting Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl two-on-one. It was a hellscape of swords. I fought through it to get to them. I mean, I had to—they were dressed as cheerleaders! It was a dazzling dance of fluttering miniskirts, their exposed thighs gliding as they dodged my blows. I passed through several thousand attacks and knocked back millions more all for the view. I struggled with everything I had, gathering all my powers and entangling them around my body, throwing all my might into leering my eyes off!

I saw the limits of the universe where infinite time pulled my concentration to its limits. Those quivering thighs dominated my vision as I perceived them from every imaginable angle with Jupiter Eye, taking care to not miss a single detail. My powers of concentration, my confluence of skills, would only allow me to slip the bonds of time for that purpose. I dodged the attacks of the dungeon emperors as I ogled their thighs. In this fantastic world with infinite sights to see, I only cared for thighs. I stared, and I stared, and I stared. My thoughts sped up, taking me to the limits, past the limits, surpassing this world without missing a beat. And all of a sudden, I got bonked!

“Very good, concentration. You look, creepy!”

I looked creepy? That must've been some problem with Jupiter Eye. Eternal Preservation wasn't a function of Jupiter Eye, unfortunately, but I could never get enough of thighs!

The two of them rarely praised me, so I must've fought well. I could use Life

or Death better now. The problem was how to get my concentration to reach those levels against monsters. Staring at monsters wasn't fun at all!

"Welcome back. Y'all hungry? It's a bit early, but I'll make dinner? Or do you want to get bonked? I can't tell you how to escape the cosmic cycle of chunking up on nutritional excess despite burning calorie after calorie, so you may as well take a ride on the eternal fat-burning train of forever bonkage? It's got sexy thighs, too, so that's pretty great? Ya know? I saw them myself!"

"Hey, Haruka-kun," said Class Rep. "Why are they dressed as cheerleaders?"

"Those outfits are so cute! I want one!"

I could sense that my classmates had gotten back to the inn and were watching the battle. I didn't have the breathing room to pay attention to them, but during my hyper-focus, I could sense that they had arrived. I was focusing so hard on two pairs of thighs—adding twenty more took me into hyperdrive. Yup, it was the forty thick thighs stuffed into compression shorts that overloaded my consciousness!

This world was nothing but a series of tests for a teenage boy's limits. What kinda teenage boy could've handled that?! No teenage boy could fight while focusing on forty-four thick thighs and twenty-two tight asses! If I could've, then that'd prove this'd been a BL all along!

The girls decided to do a one-more-set sesh before dinner. I spent my dinner preparation dodging diverse simultaneous orphan-launcher attacks. The orphans came back from their work in droves, shouting, "I'm here" and joining the orphan-launcher. Piles of orphans pushed in around my feet. I danced wildly through the air to dodge them as I made dinner. The nannies had joined the one-more-set sesh, so I had no back-up against the endless barrage of orphan attacks! I could easily dodge the jaws of a few doggos after facing off against *this* every day.

The nerds, whom the orphans had previously been pestering, scampered off the moment I became the target. Since they couldn't use Airwalk to dodge the orphan-fire, they got buried quickly. We taught the girl orphans that the nerds were too dangerous too approach, so they shot after the meatheads while the boys shot after the nerds. Once I'd arrived, though, both sides locked in on me,

and a volley of orphan-cannon fire blasted in my direction. I hadn't cooked anything yet, so I couldn't even use cookies as a distraction!

"Thanks for the food!"

Everyone came back, and we had dinner. As chaotic and noisy as it was, I was happy that everyone was in high spirits. The orphans' eyes sparkled as they dug into the food. They no longer held any of that fear in their eyes or distrust on their faces. I supposed the one-more-setters would plunge back into the Re: One-More-Set series as soon as the meal ended. *I don't think they're escaping the cycle anytime soon?*

"It's so good!"

"This is food from the black-haired country."

"Wow."

I didn't know how the people in this world would like it, but the heaps of sweet and sour pork and gyoza ended up getting demolished in the blink of an eye. The meatheads tossed out their chopsticks and started using shovels to dump the food into their buckets. *They're getting smarter—or maybe dumber?* I could trust Class Rep to chastise them on manners later.

"So friggin' good, bro!"

"Has your cooking gotten even better?"

"Yup. One more set..."

Weeping ensued.

They devoured the additional mountain of shumai. Class Rep, who calculated the cost of the meal, had her head buried in her arms. Dessert was still on the way. Ragnarok had indeed not yet come for the one-more-set cycle.

I took a bath and went to my room to find the arts club girls already waiting. I was surprised that this seemingly modest group all wanted bikinis. Bikinis must have been a fad in this world. Except for the fact that bathing suits didn't exist here yet?

They had gotten more muscular but still had slender frames. Those introverts waited quietly...and unleashed their Jiriki Hongan Revolution!

“Make us bikinis that give us beach bods!” they shouted.

“You’re trying to break the laws of physics!” I responded. “It’s forcing me to sort out all the paradoxes!”

Did they think I could make bikinis that could change their body shapes?!

“With a one-piece swimsuit, I can narrow the waist, support the butt, or pad the breasts. The whole point of the bikini is to reveal all those parts! What do you want me to do?!”

“Something! Anything! We want bikinis, but the other girls’ bodies outclass ours!”

All four were already in great shape from all of the workouts. Their proportions were no less solid than any of the other girls. All of them had been beautiful to begin with, and their bodies used to be fine, too. They had inferiority complexes from being surrounded by girls with model-level figures, though...and somehow expected me to solve that for them?!

“You’re all skinny, so I can do something about the surface-level appearance, like make the legs appear longer or emphasize your skinny waists with a low-rise. I can also make the bra section wide to create a larger visual from right to left, which can make the breasts appear bigger, but it’s going to end up being a thoroughly, shockingly revealing design? A sexy one?”

“We’ll take it! As sexy and busty as possible!”

If that was what they wanted, I had to deliver. When the results were as stimulating as I’d planned, I decided to make the design for Dancer Girl and Miss Armor Rep, too. There was absolutely no need to make those two’s bodies appear better than they already were, but I supposed I may as well, ya know, make it anyway and stuff? It was going to be a long night of constructing them, getting them wet, looking at them, taking them off, et cetera, but this was my inescapable fate. *High-cut, for heaven’s sake!*

It was a new design, so I needed fresh measurements. This was dangerous, so my tentacles measured equally dangerously to extract exact measurements.

“The neighbors will get upset if you scream like that,” I commented. “On the other hand, voiceless screaming is bizarre. Your mouths are open like you’re

screaming, but nothing is coming out. Well, except your tongues. It's an immodest look for girls your age, to be honest... Although my eyes are totally closed, so I'm not looking. Obviously."

At the moment, two certain individuals were trying their hardest to force my eyes open. They were pulling hard.

"Book Club President, are you sure you're okay with a design this revealing? It'd be easy to make any adjustments now, so put in any requests you have."

"No," she said. "I was hoping for a high-cut leg design from the beginning. Class Rep and the others forbade us from T-back bottoms as well as a slingshot bikini, micro-bikini, Brazilian bikini, Y-string, and O-back. Isn't that crazy?"

"The only crazy thing here are your bikini ideas! The idea of you planning to request a Y-string or a slingshot bikini is scary, and crazy, and terrifying! Please don't order those things from a teenage boy, okay? The only possible result is disaster! It's guaranteed to unfold in the simple process of making it, and there'd be no escape! I mean, those are literally just strings, not clothing! Wearing nothing altogether would be more modest!"

Making any of those designs would end in something way worse than a lecture for me. Class Rep understandably rejected them. Honestly, the high-cut, low-rise boomerang design seemed wholesome in comparison. Seeing a G-string would just... Yeah, it'd be all over for me.

"Okay, now each of you get into the tub one at a time, and I'll make adjustments. Just let me know if anything's tight."

"The bath's warm," said Miss Armor Rep. "Some lotion?"

"Why would lotion be necessary for swimsuit measurements?!"

"I know you love it."

"Well, we *don't* want it now!"

I ignored their chatter and went to work. These girls were dangerous opponents. Meanwhile, my so-called blindfolds were trying to add lotion to the bath! *Get back on task!*

"Get rid of this fabric here," Book Club President said. "And I want a T-shape

on the back.”

“Rejected!” I cried. “You’ll be arrested for public indecency and get a lecture to boot! That’s worse than a T-back, that’s a T-*front*!”

I opened my eyes to look at the results. Why did I feel like my eyes were never blindfolded for a single moment? *Seriously ladies?! Stop adding lotion like that! No churning, either!*

“It’s getting nice and soupy in here,” purred Book Club President. “If you cut back on the surface area a little more and pull it up farther here, it’ll be exactly to your liking, Haruka-kun...”

“There’s barely any surface area to begin with,” I protested. “If we cut it back as much as you’re suggesting, you’ll wind up with a Y-slingshot! Don’t show me your legs like that!”

The rest of the arts club girls had passed out in the tub, so how was Book Club President so composed? Her face was red and her breathing ragged, but she kept repeating her dangerous requests like it was nothing. She was starting to twitch and shudder, and soon started to moan. Eventually, she bit her tongue, and went quiet.

If I didn’t finish things quickly, I’d enter dangerous territory. I needed to deal swift punishment to the two girls currently adding lotion to the bath! Slippery, sexy bodies twitching and writhing in a thick, juicy bath was the very opposite of wholesome swimsuit production!

“Can y’all stop that?! You’re clearly trying to create a seductive atmosphere! I’m using my eyes for these adjustments, so don’t lower the lights, please? It’s hard to work by candlelight, and it’s turning me on! I’m literally begging you to stop?”

Eventually, Book Club President couldn’t speak. Once I finished, the five of them checked out their new suits in the mirror. *Sheesh, they’ve gotten so burly!*

“Our legs look so long!”

“My butt seems perkier, too.”

“The bust is still embarrassing, but look how narrow our waists are!”

The high cut design emphasized their already-long legs, and the low rise showed off their narrow waists. It was a design that highlighted their slim, well-built figures. I designed the bra section to open in a wide triangle, making the breasts look ample and enhancing their proportions with a sprinkle of bonus sex appeal. The bust part was a visual effect, but that was all I could do with a bikini design.

I supposed they liked their bikinis, since they were entranced by the reflections of their lotion-drenched bodies in the mirror. Their figures surely entranced me because I was consumed by the creative couture possibilities. The work was done, but my creative vision remained.

By the time I was finished, I had reached my limit. I took a thirty-minute break, during which I engaged in a supernova of appropriate lotion punishment. I focused so hard, it went by in a blink! We couldn't have any more delay. The two of them were twitching and unconscious.

They'd deserved it and all, so I hadn't held back. I supposed the combination of Sensitivity, Essence Surge, and Nerve Sharpening was a lot to handle. I'd think it'd break the spirit of anyone besides the two dungeon emperors, to be honest. Even with their dungeon emperor status, they hadn't been able to keep up with Revival and were twitching on the bed? Yikes?

DAY 88

NIGHT

I decided to cut myself some slack and concluded it was an optical illusion resulting from eyestrain.

WHITE LOSER INN

THE GIRLS WAITED in the tub. After I finished my punishment, I moved Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl so they could sleep in the bed. Five bikinis remained.

“You two seem lively for being unconscious,” I said. “Yup, that’s a lot of twitching. Here, I’ll go right ahead and a stuff mushroom in each of your mouths.”

For some reason the scene seemed suspiciously sexual, but I decided to cut myself some slack and concluded it was an optical illusion resulting from eyestrain.

“The problem is you two don’t reflect on *why* you received your punishment. You shoot straight for continuing the cycle of revenge! I mean, I don’t know what else to do about it besides try my hardest. Hardest in a teenage boy sense, that is?”

Well, they still couldn’t move besides the twitching, so I covered them in sheets.

“I gotta do a little more, so after I do it, I’ll come finish you off. Ugh, the meanies are a-coming.”

Those graceful, doll-like, slender legs and small heads on long necks. They had wide shoulders, but skinny figures, and balanced proportions. Their skin was clear and gleamed like porcelain from the bubbly body soap, casting the room in a strange, alluring glow. *Here it comes: the mean girl rush.*

I felt like I was at a fashion show with the five of them all lined up, except for the fact that they weren’t wearing any clothes. Of course, I had my eyes closed

tight as I measured. I used my Magic Hands and Area Analyze to conduct the bodily examination as I produced 3D models in my head.

“Why do you seem so unenthusiastic about our turn for this?!”

“What’s the mean girl rush?!”

“Why are the two of them twitching like that on the bed?!”

They were right that this wasn’t the time or place to be making swimsuits. I wanted to get it over with. The mean girls were especially sensitive to my Magic Hands, so it always took forever. Mean girls always put teenage boys in an awkward position. It was a classic trope.

“Let’s get this over with. Come on, tentacles! All right, I’m jumping straight into the adjustments and revisions. Which means you’ll feel various... sensations. But good luck? Here goes nothing?”

“H-hang on! Just wa-wa-waiiiiiiiit!”

“Wha— Ack! Aaahh, ah, ah!”

“H-hunnggh... Urrrrmm... Mmm!”

“Eep! Ah. Ahh. Eeeeehh...”

“Ah! Mmm. Ah—aaahh!”

The mean girls had the most dangerous voices in the class. Listening to their moaning was always a challenge, but their silent writhing was arguably scarier. Their gasps and groans were uncharacteristically cute and girlish, but the silent chorus of gasping, twitching, and bending was a challenge for me.

“Come on guys! Don’t change personalities on me like that. Be...meaner or something, I dunno.”

“H-h-how, many, t-time do I n-need to—*aaahh*—tell you that w-we’re n-n-n-not...meeeeaaan!”

“Ahhh! Mmmm! Aaaaaahh!”

They stopped being able to respond not long after that. Having them talk to me turned out to be unexpectedly perilous.

“Just let me know if there’s a problem. Not that you’d be able to do that right

now. But I'll make the rest of the adjustments in the tub. Try to ignore all the lotion in there? I will not ignore it, and the two responsible are still twitching and reflecting on their sins over there, but they're in for a second round of punishments. So ignore the lotion and soak in the tub?"

Queen Bee gasped for air. "O-okay... The s-size is...f-fine."

"W-we don't mind...a b-bit of lotion..."

I opened my eyes as Queen Bee made her way to the tub, still catching her breath. *Uh...can you not crawl on all fours to get there?* Opening my eyes didn't make things any easier!

"H-hey! Ahh! Eeeeeeeeeaaaaaaaaahhhhhh!"

Queen Bee lay face down in the lotion-filled tub, with nothing but her ass above the surface of the water, trembling like crazy. She didn't need to flex like that. I was only making adjustments. Where was I supposed to put my eyes? Things were getting hard again.

"Ah, mmm! Urg! Uugghhhh!"

Mean Girl A lay on her back, arching upward and quivering like crazy. I was making adjustments. She didn't need to try for a bridge. Come on. Couldn't she make it easier for my eyes to have a landing spot? Things wouldn't stop getting harder!

"Uh, Mean Girl B? No matter how you spin it, doing 'happy baby' while getting your swimsuit fitted is a bad idea. Why is this yoga pose so trendy?!"

I guess they were about the age where they had a thing for thighs? I supposed it was easy to make adjustments when she was in that position, but this was still problematic!

"And Mean Girl C! I know Dancer Girl started doing yoga lessons, but that's a revolved head-to-knee pose! I don't recommend doing that in a bikini!"

"Aaahh! Aaahhh! Eeek, eeaaaahh!"

We finally finished. I'd thought it'd be no big deal, but that had been pure insanity. Mean Girl D was straight-up doing a crane pose! I was certain she couldn't do that outside of a fitting!

“Doing poses like that while completely alert, much less twitching like crazy, and *much* much less while literally unconscious, should *not* be possible. Ugh, it’s gonna be so hard to carry them out of there.”

Yoga was really booming for some reason. They all passed out in atypical poses, making it very challenging for a teenage boy to move their bodies. All I had left to do was the swim team duo, but I couldn’t take anymore. I was at my teenage boy limit.

I figured doing swimsuits would be easier than underwear, but since the bathing suits needed a special weave for elasticity, it required a lot of adjustments. That meant increasing the usage of my Magic Hands, which created more reactions from the mean girls and then more movements in response. They ended up getting touched and stroked and pressed by my tentacles a lot more. The resulting damage was considerable. I almost felt bad for them.

“Your tentacles are even more precise now. And there are more of them!”

“No one could keep still while getting touched like that!”

I had become able to take more precise measurements, but maybe I shouldn’t have done them with that much Magic Thread. I could make precise adjustments down to the millimeter with this technique, though. It was a supreme accomplishment of a fitting, but the mean girls seemed to have an issue with it?

When I tested out the Magic Thread enhanced with Sensitivity, Lascivious, and Sex God, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl seemed to like it quite a bit. *Quite* a bit. The mean girls didn’t feel the same way? I made sure to barely graze their skin and minimize sensory impact, but they still weren’t fans?

I washed the lotion out of the tub and moved them out of the room. I decided to test the minimal-touching Magic Thread technique as round two of retribution. All that lotion made things *way* harder for teenage boys everywhere, so they deserved a Re: Retribution as repayment for my difficulties.

Boy did I test that Magic Thread technique out. I unleashed pandemonium all night long, collapsing and reviving as Magic Thread entangled them in a

frolicking fun-fest. In between sessions, I upgraded the Mawiang's drop item with mithril, now the "Judgment Fang Spear: All stats +30%. Physical Defense Weakening (large). Magic Defense Weakening (large). Penetration. +Attack." It seemed like a solid item for anyone. I decided to discuss it with Class Rep later.

Before long, the two of them revived themselves for another joyous sesh with Magic Thread, then nighty-night again? I made the bento for the general store lady—which, by the way, had gone from "urgent priority" to "extreme urgent priority"—and then the two of them were back up for another round of Magic Thread experimental retribution before fainting in agony and then back to sleepy-sleepies. I went back to polishing up equipment.

"It's so late now. I'd better get some sleep myself," I said. "But before I lay down, there are two ladies I must lay!"

Yup, I did my best. The experimental subjects later reported the following comments: "Magic Thread is so ticklish! Too ticklish! I almost died!" and "I lost sense, of everything! I lost my mind! I thought I was going, to die!" Okay, so the Magic Thread was OP.

DAY 89

MORNING

Life-saving battle preparations sure involved a lot of jiggling.

WHITE LOSER INN

THE NEXT MORNING, I was in for a world of lecture and retribution. Miss Armor Rep pinned down my arms with her legs, and Dancer Girl pinned down my legs with her legs, so I couldn't move. Just as the rumors claimed, seven did, in fact, eat nine in a one-two for five of sixty-nines, at least seven out of eight times! It was an inescapable situation of submission for a teenage boy for multiple reasons, a positively impossible missionary impossible!

"All I did was try my best at my night work, and I get ceaseless revenge to the point where a max level Revival can't keep up... Waaahh!"

They were dirty to the point of despicability! Greatly damaging my teenage boy stamina in the process! *I know. I've been defeated.* If they hadn't been wearing cheerleader outfits, then—*Waaagh!*

Ka-plunk. The Sex God fell back asleep.

Ah, what a refreshing morning. Something refreshing must've happened before I opened my eyes to such refreshment, but Re: Fresh this! I'd figure out my Re: Venge later.

"Morning, and stuff?"

"Good morning," replied the girls.

"You don't need to add 'and stuff' to everything. It's 'good morning.'"

I made cutlet sandwiches, mushroom salad, and soup for breakfast—a simple and speedy buffet. While I was making it, I rushed together the upgraded equipment for the nerds, making the adjustments as quickly as possible. Looking at armor on guys was no fun? Maybe it'd be more fun if we put some spikes on the inside instead of the outside?

“Don’t!”

“That’s too iron maiden!”

“Well, there’s not much inside that’s worth protecting. I mean, what’s the point of the armor resisting abnormal ailments when the inside is already this abnormal? Should I try killing you guys just to check?”

“Check if this armor is *safe* for us first!”

“No need to kill us! No thanks!”

“P-put away the Universe Staff! That nullifies all defenses, so it won’t test the armor at all. It’ll kill us!”

“Yeah, we’re stealth units, so we don’t wear heavy armor.”

What a struggle. I handed over the light stealth armor and they took it and ran off grinning. Stealthy indeed. Still, I had Jupiter Eye, so I could target them just as easily.

“St-stop! We give up! We give up!”

“Give, did you say? Give you more attacks?”

“Not that!!!”

“This isn’t testing the armor! This is trying to cut us in two!”

“Well, I’ll be worried if I don’t give it a serious test? How else will I know how much it takes to kill you through the armor?”

You couldn’t entrust your life to armor until you knew how much it could take. Hence, the need for testing. *So I’ll just try to kill them!*

“The armor will be useless if you kill us!”

“I’m pretty sure he understands that!”

“He doesn’t care if we die! He’s trying to kill us!”

“The people being tested are way more worried than the tester in this case!”

“Y-yeah, test out the three of them instead...”

“Traitooor!”

The meatheads sprinted away the moment we made eye contact. They had the danger-sensing instincts of wild animals. I thought I'd at least get the nerds, but for some reason, they didn't want me to kill them, I guessed? *What a shame.*

"I suppose I could always give it a test in a dungeon... Sneak in a kill from behind..."

"We have to worry more about our allies than the monsters?!"

Everyone was busy getting fully equipped. These were courageous, vital, life-saving battle preparations.

"Okay, so, the leg piece... This is the right one, isn't it?"

"Crap. My shin guards are messed up."

"H-hey, don't pull like that! My shorts will slip!"

"Someone take those gauntlets."

"Eep! Did someone touch my butt?!"

"This is really digging in. It hurts right there."

"Hmm. I think my bra is, like, suuuper tight."

"Oh, now *isn't that nice!*"

"Where'd my sword go? Come out, come out!"

They were prepping for battle by donning the overflowing compression shorts. There were many challenges here. Leaving the boring guys' equipment aside, why was putting on equipment so hard for everyone? Watching this, you'd think all my gear was totally inadequate. Needing to make more would put me in the real teenage boy battlefield of life and death.

The girls planned to join the frontier army and imperial guard today. They got an official commission from Mr. Meridad. For some reason, they didn't need me?

"Uh, what's so surprising about that?"

"You don't help at all, and you're impossible to understand. You'll confuse everyone!"

“But Slimey and Angelica-san won’t take orders from anyone else.”

Jiggle jiggle!

Merimeri specifically asked the girls to join them. She left out the guys, but they planned to try fighting on the lower floors for themselves. I’d let them go as far as they wanted, and then once we ran into danger, I’d make them go farther. If that wasn’t enough to take them out, I planned to push them even farther. If worse came to worst, I could always pin them from behind and help the monsters finish them off.

“Our rear guard is trying to kill us!”

How else would I be able to take out their party? They always ran when the going got rough, going off of pure instinct. I wouldn’t know how well their armor was working if they went home damage-free.

“Okay everyone, it’s time to split up,” said Nerd A.

“On it.”

“Roger!”

These guys were too good at not dying. The meatheads did whatever the opponent hated the most, and the nerds could hold out against the enemy until victory was guaranteed.

“Oda, come closer!”

“Understood. I’ll shift right.”

After the nerds had to kill for their own principles, they’d changed. It wasn’t just about protecting themselves or defeating the enemy anymore. They came to kill now. They didn’t just use their force field for defense but for traps and as an offensive weapon as well. Between the four teams, they had two force fields and one sacred force field, as well as every force field skill available, including stealth ones. They had strong defenses, but were capable of turning their defense into a weapon. Now that was some cheat-level stuff. An invisible shield made for a crazy dangerous weapon.

“Get their arms or legs first.”

“I’ll finish it off. Stop its movement.”

“Right away!”

The 81st floor had level 81 Arms Mantises. The meatheads chased them down, while the nerds cornered them with force fields and crushed them one at a time. They made a praying mantis guillotine in between their force fields.

“Let’s get the rest!”

“Let’s goooo!”

The mantises had six arms, two of which held a pair of scythes, spears, or swords. I didn’t know if the arms part of their name referred to all their *arm* arms or their ‘arms,’ as in their weapons, but that didn’t matter to their hunters.

The meatheads instinctively coordinated their movements in the most problematic possible way for the enemy, killing the mantises as they helplessly waved their weapons around. If one mantis stabbed with a spear, the meatheads grabbed the end of the spear and pulled it in. Then they cut off the mantis’s legs, and stabbed the exposed neck, beheading it easily. If a mantis came in swinging with swords, the meatheads went for the sides. If a mantis kept its weapons at the ready, they used throwing javelins to cut it down from a distance. Sheesh!

“How many times do I have to remind them that the weapons they’re throwing are halberds, and the ones they’re swinging are boomerangs?! Even the mantises are smarter. Maybe we should do a brain swap? That one’s dead already, but I’m still sure its brain is more useful?”

“Don’t swap our brains, bruh! And stay outta the way!”

The mantises twisted and swerved, wielding the scythes, swinging the swords, and stabbing with the spears. They had shields but weren’t able to use them to deflect the meatheads’ attacks. With their ultra-light armor designed for stealth, the meatheads had polished their movements to be even more - efficient, easily slipping past the mantises’ strikes, making them stumble out of their stances and landing fierce counters. The nerds were doing just as well with their force-field guillotine strategy, which both blocked attacks and finished off mantises simultaneously.

Those two actions—the meatheads’ dodge and parry technique, and the nerds’ guillotine—were model uses for my shoulder shields. Still, I didn’t like the idea of learning anything from the guys. I mean, the meatheads were grabbing the severed necks of the mantises and using them as shields! *They’re the worst!*

Beating this floor was a breeze with weapons that could 100 percent defeat the enemy and armor that was capable of taking all but the worst attacks. The guys kept on chasing down the enemy in whatever form was most favorable. This fierce, murder-specialized hunting clan of villainous scoundrels advanced past both the 88th and 89th floors without a hint of danger. *Whoops, there they go running?*

“Haruka-kun, save us! We can’t beat these guys!”

“Haruka, your turn! Peace!”

They friggin’ dined and dashed! Now those were sharp instincts. They overwhelmed enemies they could beat and fled from anything that seemed dangerous. They didn’t fight unless they knew they could win and didn’t strike until they knew they could kill. Even the hedgehogs seemed surprised that their enemy got up and ran. These level 89 Venom Hedgehogs were packed with ailment-inflicting abilities and had Resistance Nullification.

To be honest, the chances of level 89 Resistance Nullification and Poison breaking through level 100+ ailment-resistant armor was close to zero. With quills that skinny, though, I couldn’t deny that it was possible for some to penetrate the armor and inflict Poison.

If the hedgehogs also had Penetrate, then a force field might not protect them. I supposed the nerdbbrains would fight back if they got chased down, but they’d flee if possible, and they were able to make snap decisions in a pinch.

I’d be the one doing the pinching! Now that a good enemy finally showed up, I lent the hedgehogs a hand by hemming in the nerds from behind—or so I thought. They got away *again*! Their danger-avoidance instincts were stronger than those of wild animals!

Wiggle wiggle!

At least Slimey seemed happy that the nerds had fled the battle. No matter

what you called it—foresight or instinct, inspiration or cowardice—they had a talent for running away.

“Come on, you nerds could take out these hedgehogs in less than five minutes!”

Wiggle wiggle.

“You could beat them in ten minutes and take practically no damage,” I said. “If you were incredibly unlucky, like less lucky than the most miraculous bad luck that you could possibly imagine...sure, you’d die. Definitely?”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

It was unlikely to the point of being impossible, but since it was *technically* possible, it was better not to fight. If they had to fight, they should come up with a 100-percent-safe strategy to win. Everything was wrong with those nerd-lords, but they were right about this.

“They’re coming!”

A storm of quills torpedoed in my direction. It formed a dense black cloud of quills. They filled every possible space in the air, making it impossible to dodge. The quills were also too thin to knock down. I used Vanish and let the cloud of needles pass by. Slimey sure seemed to enjoy eating them? Miss Armor Rep could strike down the whole cloud that passed in her direction, and Dancer Girl spun her chains fast enough to turn them into a greatshield to block every last one.

That was the difference. If the girls were here, they would use their shields and take the blow as they advanced forward. They took on any challenge no matter the risk in order to get stronger. They didn’t run at the hint of danger, even when they could die if things went wrong.

If something repeated an infinite number of times, the unlikely outcome would eventually occur, no matter how low the chance. It could always happen the first time, too. If instant death happened just once, it was over. Vice Rep B’s

Resuscitation might be able to make it in time, but its massive MP requirement meant it could only be used once. If something miraculously unlucky occurred and two people died at once, she'd only be able to save one person. If the chances of death weren't zero percent, running was always the right decision. The nerds knew how easily people could die, having killed people themselves.

"Wow, that was impressive."

"There's no way the needles shouldn't have hit them, but they didn't!"

"Well, so long as you're using common sense and the people in question constantly defy it..."

"This is the definition of the word 'cheat.' I'm sure of it."

"No stat, skills, or cheat code can do that!"

Why did the friggin' nerds get me so well? I wanted to burn them but they ran away before I could. That pissed me off even more!

"Yo, Haruka, the next floors look kinda wack, so we're bouncing," one of the meatheads said. "Let's smash the mid-floors of the next dungeon."

"Good work. Well, I did the good work, actually, by chasing you into that last fight, which I suppose I shouldn't have done if you weren't going to fight anyway. Don't lay that on me, 'kay?"

"Uh, you aren't even scratched..."

I supposed there was always a chance of getting sent straight to the next world with their current equipment, especially without something like Perfect Defense.

"Don't go below the 80th floor," I said. "If ya do, no dinner."

"We ain't, brosef. And make barbeque beef bowls for dinner!"

They couldn't have been more excited to run away. They'd be fine on their own. The only chance of them dying was if they were trying to protect someone. Otherwise, they'd be safe and sound here on the frontier. They had the right to make their own decisions. There were burly chicks and furry beast girls out in the world, and I couldn't stop them from pursuing 'em.

Not gonna lie, part of me wanted to join 'em, but I couldn't leave these frontier dungeons. The girls had numbers, but they risked their lives going at it alone. I couldn't perfectly guarantee everyone's safety without giving them a bodyguard attachment of two sets of Miss Armor Reps, Dancer Girls, and Slimeys. So long as there was a chance of the darkness appearing, I couldn't leave the domain. *Furry girls... Fluffy ears...*

Glares! Come on, all the sexy wisdom in this world said a teenage boy must behold the beauty of furry girls at least once in his life. *I gotta see for myself!* The beefy chicks were hot, too, but the vibes they gave off were way too similar to the meatheads. Easy choice: beastfolk girls. I didn't think the meathead chicks had much in the, well, brains department? We had lots of workouts back in the inn already.

DAY 89

NOON

Even dirt could read the room in fantasy worlds, so why were wild animals and bullied kids so socially incompetent?

DUNGEON

90TH FLOOR

THE NERDS RAN OFF, so we were down to the usual squad of four. Just as the wild animals and bullied kids had anticipated, the floor boss was a bad one. And not because of abnormal statuses. It was a literal trap.

“Adhesive Golem. Lv: 90,” was a mud automaton. Mud golems were a weaker class of golems, but this was a different beast. Anything that touched it stuck to it. There was no hope of ever getting it back. That went for weapons, too. It also spewed an adhesive substance onto the floor. Touch it, and you’d get stuck and mowed down by Herculean Strength.

“The nerds made the right call here,” I sighed. “Why are their instincts so good? If they could apply those instincts to daily life, they’d be social geniuses. Instead, they’re completely clueless.”

There was always a chance that the lower floors had a unique monster variant with very specific weaknesses. For the girls, their limit was the 80th floor, or more ideally, the 74th. There were a lot of variables in monster strength besides floor number, but deeper still meant deadlier.

“Giving you no place to stand is nasty... But this thing is way too defenseless?”

The sludge-like monster let out a growl so low it was more like a vibration and spurted out lumps of sticky, poisonous dirt. I dashed around avoiding it. Slimey seemed to like the mud monster and was very happy to eat everything in sight?

Jiggle jiggle!

Turned out that when you hit the 90th floor, bosses developed social competence, 'cause this fortress-like beast awaiting us turned on its heel and ran from an even more terrifying sticky substance? I supposed getting eaten wasn't within its realm of expectations.

“Gooooaaaaaarrrrrrggghhh!”

I flew right over the adhesive glue covering the ground as I whirled around the room. I twisted as I dodged the projectile mud, kicking at the air with Airwalk to zigzag and waltz my way to safety. I evaded the struggling, endlessly regenerating massive mud arms. Once the barrage of mud ended, I started using Weight magic on its head from above.

If I became a decoy and froze the golem in place, Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl could launch in with their blades to start shaving down on its body, with Dancer Girl's magic interfering with the adhesive ground to sink the Adhesive Golem into its own mud pile. The two of them preferred the front lines, but one of them literally had Spell Goddess, and the other Heretic Saint, so they could hold their own when it came to magic, you know? They normally charged right into battle, weapons drawn. In this case, however, they didn't want their precious weapons to get all sticky.

With the golem's legs crushed and its body sinking into its own quagmire, I continued to press down enormous weight from above. Slimey clung to the monster and gobbled away as destructive magic continued to barrage the beast. *Once Slimey acquires Adhesive, is he gonna start making sticky sounds, too?*

“There we go! As in, there it goes. This morning started with a very aggressive, violent coming and going that caused me torment and suffering. I mean, how were high-level Alpha Male and Super Horny so easily overcome first thing in the morning anyhow? Hey, cut it out with the smug grins! You don't regret what you've done, huh? I can tell by your faces. Oh, and now you're literally crossing your arms and smirking at me? Seriously?!”

Jiggle jiggle!

Slimey finished his meal, and I pet him as we went down to the 91st floor. I vowed to light a fiery fuse to explode this feeling of defeat tonight. But lighting

my own fuse would only end up exploding me, too, so did that approach make sense?

It had been the cheerleader outfits that'd made me let my guard down and led to my defeat. And I was the one who'd made them! Still, I had no regrets. I wanted a rematch!

"This floor's a maze. Wanna go through it all at once?"

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

Now, I *could* do it, restricted to right now, at least. Not at full throttle. But if I kept everything under control, I could fight without damaging myself.

Now I was trying it all: the "Sorcerer's Bracelet: Intelligence, Resistance +30%. Magic Defense Multiplier (large). Magic Control (large). Magic Equipment," the "Snakecharmer's Necklace: Can insert seven items. Intelligence +40%. Snake Replication (Three snakes grow from the body with MP). Poison Production. Scale Hardening. +Defense," the "Grotesque Necklace: Perversion. Grotesquemorphosis. Phlegm. Phlegm Resistant. +Defense," and the utterly sealed-off and forgotten "Monster Bracelet: Powers up all abilities" plus the "Reflection Shield: Reflection" and the "Teleportation Cloak: Teleportation."

I focused on the items one at a time, enveloping them with Magic Entanglement. I could feel the difference when using Magic Entanglement on each one. With my higher Intelligence, the complete boost from the Monster Bracelet seemed to be working better. Even with my focus and awareness, the control was unstable.

"It's unstable, so while I can't control them, I can manipulate them. Man, control would be nice!"

I turned my Magic-Entanglement-enhanced awareness to the monsters. They looked like giant jaws. Or more like mandibles. Or like big, spiky mouths. They gnashed and crunched loudly, ogling at me with their creepy compound eyes. *Look away!*

“Compound eyes should mean you don’t need to look at me to see me. Kinda reminds me of a certain someone’s Jupiter Eye. Yeesh?”

Those dark-red, blood-fed, demonic-dead level 91 Knight Ants were more bad knights than good nights, standing up on two legs. Human-sized ants were dangerous without any grossness resistance. These two-legged, four-armed, ant-headed monsters were equipped with swords and a shiny armored exoskeleton and were super gross!

“I’ve heard that if you chill ants, they stop being able to move. But I need to squeeze in some practice, so hang in there, me?”

They supposedly also disliked alcohol and rubber, but we hadn’t found any rubber in this world yet, and as a minor, I didn’t have any drinks on me.

“I’m not using any of my precious cooking sake on ants! There’s supposedly no drinking age in this world, but I’m still a minor!”

The ants could move quickly, but they may as well have been standing still in my slow-motion world. That meant I could see their grossness in disturbing detail. I didn’t want to fight them close-up, so I extended my Universe Staff to ten feet long for a sort-of-mid-ranged fight. I spun, knocked three ants back with my staff, leaped forward, and landed a heavy blow. As I swung in a circle, I leaned into the centrifugal force and jumped, striking two swords out of the hands of the nearest ant. Then I returned my bent body back to an upright position, slamming the ant into the air from below its armpits as I stood.

“Oh, it blocked me? I guess they are level 91.”

It blocked my attack, but now its shield was down. I approached it head-on, swinging up to knock away the remaining two swords. Now the ant was defenseless. I brought the staff full circle and cleanly chopped off its head.

Using my momentum, I moved on to the next ant. I executed a technical turn and a spin, once again riding the centrifugal force of the staff to slam into the ant. Then I turned back to my original position, whirling and whiplashing along the way. I shifted away and danced back toward the ant. My blow knocked away its arms and exposed the chest. I finished my rotation and sliced the ant from head to foot.

“Tai chi baton twirling wasn’t included in the high school curriculum, but whatevs?”

My body hurt, but I hadn’t lost any health. I flew to the third ant straight away and struck hard. I then rotated the staff mid-strike, adding centrifugal force as I slid my grip down the staff, changing the center of gravity to pull me in and hack the remaining ant to death. Catching my breath, I tried moving, confirming that I still had full HP. With this level of activity, I could even shift into a Life or Death attack without any issue.

Balance. I suspected that the Sorcerer’s Bracelet’s +30% Intelligence and Resistance boost and the Magic Equipment effect were aiding Magic Entanglement. I could still use Magic Entanglement, even after activating all that equipment. I also had the 40% Intelligence boost from the Snakecharmer’s Necklace as well as the total boost from the Monster Bracelet. Maybe those were compensating for my low stats. It all worked surprisingly well.

I had the Archsage title, a requirement for the “Life Jewel: Tempers the body for tasks including training, alchemy, and lovemaking. Essence Alchemist, Archsage.” But body tempering sounded suspicious. Well, the lovemaking part sounded *especially* suspicious, but ‘tempering’ implied body modification, something that surpassed stat modification or body strengthening and turned the user into a homunculus or immortal demi-human. I had sealed that one off from myself to preserve my very humanity.

I still didn’t get the point of the Grotesque Necklace, although it was a very natural complement to my Magic Hands. I still had nightly revenge on the agenda. I could make use of it tonight.

“Hey, y’all, I only fought seventeen of them, and I’m still last. Oh, ants are gross, so you killed them as soon as you could? Well, shall we continue?”

“Um...” The three of them looked at me. “Did you increase, your equipment?”

Oh, so they noticed. I had inserted everything into my basic equipment, so I wasn’t sure if they’d be able to tell. Oh yeah, the necklace must’ve given me away? Still, controlling the items wasn’t the problem. Grotesque Necklace would only be causing problems at night. That much I knew.

“Well, ya know, I got better at controlling my attacks. I wanted to test out if I

could keep everything in check when I added a bunch of items?”

“This is too much, for your body.”

“You’ll hurt, yourself again!”

“Nah, I’m all good,” I insisted. “I’ve got Revival at max, plus Healing and Regeneration, so it really works? I didn’t hurt myself just now, so it’s all good! Probs? But thanks?”

They were worried about me. Dancer Girl had seen me totally destroy myself before and all. So I gave them some head pats. Miss Armor Rep had always liked those, and Dancer Girl seemed to enjoy them as well.

Next up was the 92nd floor. I mowed down the level 92 Bind Plants with a series of focused Life or Death attacks. If I damaged myself in the process of defeating them, those two would worry. I slowed down the flow of time as much as possible and unleashed consecutive Life or Deaths. I kept the activation basic, but that was the challenge. I had to maintain focus and control over my body. I needed to finish the slash by the time I took the step, shifting into slaying the next bind plant in that very instant.

I kept a full grasp on the enemy’s movements with Jupiter Eye as I maintained control over my body, skills, magic, and equipment’s skills. Wisdom’s Parallel Thinking and High-Speed Thinking enabled me to adjust my instantaneous movements with Teleport, creating a world of slow motion for more precise control over Magic Entanglement that I folded into the Life or Death combo.

I almost lost my handle over my consciousness a few times, but if I didn’t show the three of them I could fight casually at this level, I’d only make them worry. I wiped out all the bind plants, over one hundred in total. They didn’t say anything, so I supposed that meant I’d passed. I knew that it didn’t erase their worry completely, so I’d give them sweets and head pats later.

After that came the 93rd floor. We needed to investigate why the dungeons were getting so deep. Adventurer’s lives could be put at risk if dungeons we thought were shallow ended up going into the mid-floors. I had previously decided to ignore any dungeons that were less than fifty floors because there wasn’t much risk of a deluge. On the way back, I needed to tell Mr. Meridad.

Actually, I needed to talk to his advisor.

DAY 89

AFTERNOON

I had business with the sad old loner dude, so I talked to him, and he got attached to me?

MURIMURI CASTLE

TRAINING GROUNDS

I KNEW THEY WERE STRONG. As the boy's comrades, I expected their excellent combat abilities. They proved their strength by defeating dungeons down to the mid-floors one after the next.

Their ability to adapt a variety of combat techniques to any given situation was astounding. A force of five hundred frontier soldiers and imperial guard elites were wiped out by twenty girls in training. Twenty black-haired damsels. *It shouldn't be this easy for them!*

"Center force, charge! Left flank, pinch in and make a crane wings formation!"

"Aye aye!"

"Right flank, pull back! You're getting split up!"

"Aye aye!"

From rumors, I had anticipated a well-constructed military strategy, but their tactics were both ingenious and devised on the spot. They overwhelmed the hardened frontier army in a matter of moments.

"Right flank, advance! All units, close in! Left flank, crush them!"

"Aye aye! Left side, going into action!"

"Surround them! And fiiiight!"

The army had no hope of squeezing in training. The soldiers were getting overrun and had to flee. The girls had broken up the army's formations, making

fighting back impossible and dismantling any hope of cooperation. They'd rendered our forces defenseless.

"Right flank, charge!"

"Center, attack!"

"Rotate into a comma formation!"

"Aye aye!"

The twenty-one warrior maidens ran at full speed. Lady Shalliceres, her maid, and Merielle were also a part of their ranks, but that still only made twenty-four of them. They were this strong even without the unbeatable boy and the nine young men who had dismantled the elite legions and vicious mercenaries from the Merchant Kingdom.

I hadn't taken them lightly as opponents—not even close. How could I? Yet I had still failed to anticipate their strength. They were stronger than the strongest warriors we could have imagined. None of us knew that fighting like this was possible.

"We wiiiiiiin!"

"Good job, everyone!"

They'd taken out the entire frontier army and imperial guard in the blink of an eye. They could only watch in dumbfounded amazement. You'd need a bird's eye view to have a guess at what just happened. Anyone on the battlefield simply got knocked out, and that was all they knew.

"Do you understand now, Father?" my daughter asked me. "We must learn from Class Rep. This is the military prowess that we must aim for. If we aim for Haruka's might, the army will self-destruct. If they could achieve his skill level, then our whole kingdom would be doomed. If anyone else can achieve what Haruka can do, this world is done for! We mustn't try it!"

"This is battle strategy, eh?" I mused. "We did get the book on battle strategy from the boy, which I read... But from my perspective, it was all preposterous."

I couldn't totally understand what had happened, but the scene was burned into my memory. Individual strength wasn't all that mattered. Cooperation,

fueled by a capable commander, allowed their strength to surpass the sum of any individual effort.

“Lord Meropapa, what do you think?” my advisor asked. “Those tactics were honed over long generations in the land of the black-haired people, and this is the result. Our approach to battle is in its infancy by comparison. To us, they appear to be impenetrable, devilish schemes.”

“Indeed. I saw what transpired. Their nation must have a very long history. Thank goodness it’s not nearby. I’d be grateful for any nation of warriors with long-honed tactics such as those to stay far, far away. I heard that their country doesn’t have any monsters, which makes sense. Those tactics would be more than enough to exterminate all monsters from their midst.”

These girls and boys weren’t soldiers, or so they said. Those tactics were supposedly common knowledge, known by the general populace. What kind of fierce warrior country did they hail from?! Going up against such a nation would be the last thing our military ever did. Even if our whole continent united against them, we would get kicked around before we’d even had the opportunity to point our swords at them.

I did recall Haruka-kun saying, “I haven’t managed to recreate our food or massage chairs properly. I mean, I’m just an average high school boy without any expertise. Pretty much anyone can do this where I come from. Probably?” It was shocking to hear, and while I’d like to visit such a country one day... *I need to stay away for my own good!*

No, not if they had the most glorious massage chairs in all the world. It would be an understatement to say that a country populated with people like that boy would be dangerous. I would not dare approach a country with such vicious, terrifying commoners. I was deadly serious when I said it was a relief that we were so far away from that nation.

“Lord Duke. We can only do so much in a day, so please refer to this manual for military training and group tactics. This will mark the beginning of true strategy for the frontier army. With enough practice, they will be able to execute maneuvers like those you saw today.”

It was the lovely girl who led the boy’s classmates, whom everyone called

‘Class Rep.’ I supposed that had to be a title signifying the highest post of military command. Even she was no more than an ordinary student. *What in the world do they teach their children?!*

“I cannot thank you enough for assisting in our training. You had a magnificent victory today.”

I heard that their nation was peaceful, safe, and highly developed. Understandable, since no other country would dare attack one full of warriors like them. That went for within the country as well. Everyone must have been so concerned about retribution from their fiendish countrymen that they had no choice but to live in peace and harmony. Everyone received a supreme education. There was reading and writing of course, but also arithmetic, history, and music. I had never heard of such a developed metropolis. As a duke, I would surely benefit from visiting to learn from them, but I suspected I would not survive the trip.

“Defense in depth! Faster! Frontier Unit Eight, you’ve backed too far off!”

“Aye!”

“If the enemy enters your ranks, maintain distance. Defeat the purpose of their infiltration. Now draw the opponent in!”

“Aye!”

“That’s right! Right at that distance!”

“Yes, milady!”

They taught; they demonstrated. They gave commands and criticisms after our soldiers practiced. They praised our soldiers when they succeeded. And they repeated it all until our soldiers improved. It seemed that it was better to practice one maneuver at a time until mastery rather than learn multiple tactics at once.

Even from here, I could see the movements of our units improving. If an enemy unit infiltrated the ranks, it would take considerable damage before breaking through. I could tell watching from a distance—if you were to come up against this formation, they could easily decide to draw you in and polish off your soldiers in groups. What terrifying tactics!

Then, there was the mid-range crossfire tactic. The left and right flanks focused on one enemy point, creating too much force for heavy infantry to hold out against. Taking out a concentrated point on the front lines made it considerably harder for the enemy to launch an offensive, forcing them back on their heels.

“A peaceful country...? Truly?”

If I had to guess from their tactics, their country seemed to adore killing. They carefully thought out and mastered ways to kill, tested them out so comprehensively it was hard for me to imagine. They must’ve only achieved peace after killing every one of their enemies. That wasn’t impossible if their nation was full of people like the boy.

“Next up! Center flank, delay and allow the opponent to break through. The rear flank needs to pursue them. If they manage to circle you, your comrades will die!”

“Yes, milady!”

They purposefully delayed their movements and struck, decelerating further if they took damage, then began the pursuit from the rear to defeat the enemy. The enemy would have to give up on encirclement and run away, but that would expose them from behind to getting swallowed up, resulting in a retreat battered by heavy losses. *Devious!* Yes, I decided to stay far, far away from that country. Even their civilians were terrifying.

“The most important maneuver is the retreat!” Class Rep called. “You must learn to protect yourself and your allies. There is no retreat without protecting whomever you can protect. You must cover each other’s backs as you retreat. If you run away, you’ll die. Don’t run! Retreat instead!”

“Yes, milady!”

What would victory require? More than numbers. More than fighting talent. No matter our advantage in those areas, we could not win. We needed tactics. The mysterious words written in this manual: “Always use a strategy that could win with your weakest soldiers.” Ordinarily, no matter how many weak soldiers you had, the level gap overpowered any numbers gap. The words didn’t make sense. Tactics supposedly had the power to overcome both numbers and level

gaps. There were tactics to corner, shave down, and destroy—to kill without fighting.

“That’s how he managed to clear out the monster forest and the Ultimate Dungeon before reaching level 10,” I said aloud.

No, that was different. Something was fundamentally different. Like Merielle had said, we could not follow his lead—there was something that could not be imitated within the boy.

“Everyone’s thrilled with their new instructor.”

“They must be grateful. They can feel themselves growing stronger.”

The morale of our soldiers went up and up. Even though they had been defeated by the small group of girls, my troops were overflowing with confidence at learning their way of fighting. They felt themselves getting stronger. Every soldier had a glimmer in their eye. If we called in the boy...all their eyes would turn to Xs. Yes, all that confidence and pride, smashed to dust.

Merielle could fight on the level of the other warrior princesses, but watching him in action had crushed her. Lady Shalliceres felt the same. They’d had blank, vacant stares the entire next day. What kind of hellish training did that boy undertake to be able to defeat legendary level 100 monsters at a mere level 24? I’d never know how much suffering he’d gone through to win, but witnessing whatever it was had left the two speechless.

The boy—he had given us our domain, reborn anew, smiling all the while as if it were a joke. The boy had taken on the burdens of calamity and brought peace to our realm. That boy, Haruka-kun, had undergone hell to protect the girls in his class. If the girls couldn’t keep up with him, we had to at least get to their level before we could think of repaying our debt.

The girls continued to fight against monsters on the lower floors of frontier dungeons. Deeper than our most talented soldiers could go. Much deeper. We needed to become stronger. Not just as soldiers, not just as an army, but as a domain. For the sake of the one who fought beyond what the individuals and entire realm could match, we had to become collectively stronger, or we would never be able to repay our savior.

“Lord Omui,” said Class Rep. “We’ve finished training. Should we shift over to individual lessons? It might be testing the limits of the soldiers’ stamina, but learning to fight in groups of three could considerably improve survival rates on the battlefield. By fighting in trios first, your soldiers will soon be able to cooperate in larger groups. What do you think?”

“If you could teach them the basics, I’m sure my soldiers would be eternally grateful,” I said. “Aren’t you all tired, however? We’re asking a lot of you, so don’t go overboard.”

“Father, I’ve been training with them, so I can teach the troops as well.”

Ordinarily, three unskilled soldiers would get eviscerated if targeted directly. To think they could be this strong with cooperation! The right group tactics could overcome an enemy with high-speed movement.

Their nation had a professional standing army, and these children were mere civilians. A nation where even Haruka-kun was a commoner. Hell must be a pleasant place in comparison.

I could see my soldiers growing more skilled before my very eyes. They learned the best strategies for taking on monsters. I saw the terrifying force of these level 100+ girls in perfect cooperation. In the previous civil war, the imperial guard led by the princess also managed to defeat a dungeon deluge, but these girls achieved the same feat with no more than twenty fighters.

We awarded them the title of Black-Haired Warrior Princesses, but they possessed the same prowess as veritable war goddesses. Merielle and Lady Shalliceres’s improvements since training with them were remarkable. That was why we requested that they train our army, but I still couldn’t have expected this. *It might be my imagination, but Merielle seems to be studying their dresses, too. Oh no, she’s joined them in the battlefield in full armor.*

Only seven individuals in the history of our nation had achieved the title of warrior princess. It was hard to imagine the two we had in modern times *receiving* training. It was all unimaginable. The one who insisted we watch from a distance to learn the commands, and who refused to let me fight with them was now going all out in training with the group... She brought armor, but only her own!

“Aw, Mr. Meridad’s all left out. I feel bad for you on the sidelines, as in the side of the battle and stuff, but you’re just an old dude! It’s your destiny and junk? Also, tell your advisor, ‘the dungeons are getting super deep and bad,’ for me. Got it?”

The boy appeared nonchalantly out of the blue with the two girls and the slime. However, he had come to deliver grave news.

“Ah, Haruka-kun. I appreciate the help your classmates are giving. Deeper dungeons are a huge problem. Are you certain about this? You don’t need to tell me to tell my advisor, by the way. I’m the duke. He’s normally the one who tells things to me. How many floors do the dungeons in question have?”

“I prioritized the ones that had more than fifty or so, and that’s where we’ve been going. The ones that were under ninety floors before all have over ninety floors now. The deepest had ninety-nine floors, and today’s had ninety-five. Shallow dungeons with less than fifty floors are getting deeper too, so accidentally venturing into a mid-tier dungeon could be risky. The monsters suddenly increase and get a lot stronger after fifty, so you gotta be careful, or like, just bounce? I’d recommend sending a squadron of old dudes as scouts, and if they make it back safe, then it’s fine! Well, besides the old dudes. If they don’t make it back safe, then we’ll know things have gotten mad deep and the old dudes got buried. It’s a win-win strat?”

I needed to send a message right away. He was right; my advisor needed to know. Hang on—my man was already writing a message to deliver the news. Why did my subjects obey Haruka-kun? I had neither told anyone to follow his orders nor had he asked me to tell them to.

“That initial strategy is far too mean to middle-aged men,” I responded. “Though I suppose many of our soldiers and adventurers are middle-aged... Anyhow, I’d rather not bury them all down there. All the dungeons were deep, you say?”

“Ooh, good point. The dungeons might start spawning old dudes. We don’t want that. I’ve gone to close to ten dungeons now, and all were deeper than expected. I get the sense that they weren’t as strong as their level suggested, but things get rough in the 90s. The drop items and treasure are so crappy given

how deep they are, too! They're growing new floors without any of the benefits. Those are unfair labor practices! I want to complain to the dungeon kings, but I've already killed them all!"

He had already completed ninety-plus-floor dungeons, even killing the dungeon kings. He was destroying them for us. He wasn't an adventurer, so he still couldn't earn a reward, and yet he defeated floors even the warrior princesses were prohibited from entering.

"Thank you very much!"

Training ended. The soldiers were all exhausted, but I saw the confidence in their eyes. It was one day of training, but every one of them felt like they were stronger than yesterday.

Haruka-kun invited us over to his house the next day. Merielle and Lady Shalliceres had been invited previously and told me his house was in the middle of the monster forest. I simultaneously did and did not want to know how he could possibly live in the middle of such a dangerous place, but I had no right to decline an invitation from our benefactor.

I couldn't count the number of days I fought hopelessly in that forest. I never could've imagined getting invited back there for a party. Life was certainly full of mysteries.

DAY 89

EVENING

I have my doubts about how the firm calculated this 5:2 ratio.

OMUI CITY

HARUKA-KUN'S GROUP went to the 95th floor and beat the dungeon king there, clearing the dungeon. That was not what I wanted to hear about, though.

"Haruka-kun...won? Against the dungeon king?"

Before, he'd used tricks to fight but ended up nearly killing himself in the process. Something was fundamentally broken about his approach. His body couldn't withstand his own strength. He had been reckless from the very start, trying to be the strongest even though he was weaker than everyone else. He'd almost died as a result.

"He didn't, even hurt himself," said Angelica-san. "He still, fought above his limit."

"With more, equipment, too! His will, even stronger," Nefertiri-san chimed in.

He fought monsters in the 90s while still being level 24. He hit his limit and fought regardless. Now I was hearing that he had gone further—gotten even stronger.

I believed them. He'd never had a limit. Not really. When I first ran into Haruka-kun here, he was level 5, saving us in the monster forest with a rain of flames. I was so shocked that I couldn't understand what happened at first. We tried to go help him in the Ultimate Dungeon and ended up getting saved ourselves. The image of him fighting monster after monster in the deluge was forever frozen in my mind. *I'm envious of him.*

He wasn't *strong*. His body was as weak as ever, yet he always won. Whatever limit existed, he'd always been above it, shouldering all the peril while acting like it was no big deal. He put on a strong face for our sakes.

“Why doesn’t he ever tell us, when it hurts?” asked Angelica-san. “When he’s hurting?”

“That’s why, we’re his slaves! To help him!”

“Why doesn’t he ever tell us?!”

He kept fighting in his fragile, self-destructing body until he couldn’t fight any more. He abandoned his strength and learned to fight all over again so that he wouldn’t destroy his own body. He got better and better until he was stronger than ever before. His body was still frail, but he had surpassed a whole new limit.

“His body can’t handle the skills. Wouldn’t putting on new equipment hurt him more?”

Angelica-san shook her head. “He wasn’t injured. He could...actually...fight. He controlled, succeeded. He still, hurts. I know, it’s painful, I’m sure.”

He supplemented skills destructive enough to break his body with *more* equipment. He could still recover as soon as the burden was lifted, and so even though he was safe, he wasn’t okay. He must’ve suffered an unbearable amount of pain. He’d done the same this whole time, taken on unthinkable horrors, suffered unimaginable injuries... And now he’d made it worse.

“With his frail body, all by himself...he bonked the dungeon king.”

“I’m sure he managed to break the monster’s brain before his own body broke down,” commented Book Club President.

“He’s never fought along any calculable line.”

Even though he learned a way to fight without stressing his body, he decided to use even more skills than before. Even though he knew how much it hurt, he wanted more strength.

“Did he recover?”

“Did the dungeon king totally *explode* at his touch?” asked Vice Rep B.

“He’s in, good spirits. But I know, he’s faking.”

He was okay *for now*. Disaster could strike at any moment when fighting at

this level. Agony, pain, suffering—he went through it alone. Despite everyone’s worries, he went zooming around the lower dungeon floors in high spirits!

The dungeon king was a level 100 Shadow Claw. It was a shadow sword master in the shape of a human. It didn’t contain the dreaded ‘darkness,’ but just in case, Haruka-kun had gone off to fight it alone.

The jet-black shadow wielded a black greatsword and released pitch-black crows from its body. Yup, Haruka-kun enjoyed having his G*ndam funnels dance around in an aerial duel with the shadow crows, while he went spinning through the air in a high-speed sword duel.

“He made many, poses.”

“He could’ve just fought, but instead, so...many poses,” sighed Dancer Girl.

“He’s way too into it!” the others exclaimed.

A flying shadow swordsman was a dream come true for an overexcited, fantasy-loving middle school boy. They told us that he made all sorts of excited grunts and groans and “hiyas!” as he fought. *He has God’s Sword, so that was unnecessary!*

Not only that, but with Dimension Blade, he didn’t need to fly, either. Instead, he’d made a full-on anime duel out of it from start to finish.

“Even though it was pointless, he used his sword, as a gauntlet, while screaming, to catch a blow. He could’ve just, dodged!”

“He’s a total weeb!” everyone yelled.

“He’s using his superpowers to try to look cool!”

Haruka-kun must’ve had mutual interests with the dungeon king. Maybe they would’ve been friends in another life. He played with that level 100 dungeon king. He got stronger. And for all the pain he went through... All in all, he seemed like he’d had a lot of fun.

We went back to the inn, listening to the tale from the dungeon emperors who’d gotten to go with him. We ran into Haruka-kun coming back from town buried in a mountain of orphans.

“You’re heavy. Too heavy! Tiny Tanuki, get out of there! You’re making this

too heavy!”

“Don’t call a lady heavy!” Vice Rep C shouted. “And I’m not a tanuki!”

That’s where she was? Haruka-kun continued to scream. The pile of kids must’ve been trying to bite him. *He’s getting a lot faster at carrying the orphan mountain, though.*

“Waaaaaagh, don’t bite me, Tanuki! I’m not trying to do a round two in here! I mean, I was all like ‘Don’t make me use it! I will if I have to!’ That’s not what this situation is! Read the room. Don’t go flying across it! And stuff?”

Maybe the two situations were the same. The bigger problem was the “it” in the “don’t make me use it,” since he was already using Magic Entanglement on everything. No, he wasn’t bothering to hide that part.

Today’s dinner was grilled beef bowls! Dinner was the true battlefield. Yup, we’d need to do one more set! Y(ikes)ummy! We took the round-bellied orphans into the bath, washed them until they were sparkling clean, and dried them off so they wouldn’t catch colds. *Oh, wow, are those new towels?* They dried amazingly well. Haruka-kun must’ve imbued them with Absorption. Otherwise, using a towel alone wouldn’t be enough to dry hair. *I’ll need to order one!*

“Night, kids!”

“Good night!”

We went back to the bath and started our girls’ meeting. The topic of discussion was the new ability Magic Thread.

“It’s squirmy, sticky, slippery, slimy! My head, burst!”

“I don’t know, don’t understand, my vision went white!”

Burble burble burble burble.

That sounded rough. A lotion scolding and spanking. The two of them nearly died many times last night. For a dungeon emperor to be on the verge of death all night long... Maybe they were actually weak?

“I couldn’t even get measured with that! Hell no!”

“You can’t tell where you’re getting touched or with what!”

“I don’t know why I was so sensitive to it! Every inch of my skin tingled!”

“Yeah, it was like an electric current was running around my whole body. I couldn’t think straight!”

The Magic Thread was powerful enough to do *that* to maidens without Lascivious or Sex God or Vibration or Sensitivity activated. His powers were already wild...and now they’d surpassed wild!

“Tonight...we are going...to die...lose our minds...”

“I just want a bathing suit! No matter how crazy it is, I can handle it! I’ll take it!”

The only two remaining victims were the swim team duo. Haruka-kun built the pool for their sakes and had made swimsuits for everyone, no matter how embarrassing it was for him. He didn’t do it so the rest of us could hang out at the pool but so that they could swim. That was why he was making suits for the two of them tonight.

“The tentacles have, the two of you all to themselves?”

“They made the five of us faint! It’s just the *two* of you?!”

“You’ll be feeling their power in a 5:2 ratio!”

“Eek! Shut up! I’m already on the verge of tears!”

Haruka-kun used a variety of knits and fabric types so far. Tonight, he planned to make adjustments while the bathing suits were on. He was gonna make the Magic Thread rustle and slither all over their bodies to change the whole mold into a seamless suit!

“Whole-garment seam-free knitwear fitted!”

“What kind of technology is this?!”

He had achieved the peak of clothes making! A peak so high that the bodies being fitted stood no chance at surviving the precise and penetrating technologies! He was going to send an infinite number of slim threads slithering over their bodies, wriggling and coming together into a single suit... Yeah, that

was what was coming for them.

We had our picnic tomorrow, we just had to make the final adjustments to the schedule. The swim team duo went off to Haruka-kun's room in tears, tense with anticipation for the supreme swimsuit fitting sesh. *I'll go pick them up later.* They wouldn't be able to walk by the time he was finished. Not a chance.

DAY 89

NIGHT

We were fine until the ultimate finale when the pecking ruined everything.

WHITE LOSER INN

NOW THAT WAS A FINE FIGHT! A fight befitting of a fine teenage fellow such as myself. That shadow claw had been the ideal opponent. It was a jet-black shadow that wielded a sword as dark as night and sent pitch-black crows at its adversaries. *It really understood me, ya know?*

I flew around the room clashing against its greatsword while my G*ndam funnels engaged in aerial combat with the feisty crows. That monster knew what I liked! Being able to activate my funnels to fend off the crows while executing high-speed movement maneuvers in a sword-fight? This was the best practice I'd ever gotten! I wove and danced through the air, controlling my shoulder shields as I crossed blades with the obsidian shadow warrior. I mean, the shadow was wielding a gigantic katana! He *got* me. He really got me. I felt fifteen all over again. I went straight back to middle school with all its ensuing diseases.

Despite the level of difficulty, it was incredibly valuable to have a battle in which I used Body Control and Strengthening with Entanglement while manipulating the shoulder shields. The thrill of constantly analyzing the surrounding space while responding to multiple moving targets, maintaining control over Magic Entanglement while engaging in a dance of blades!

"I feel like I kinda got the hang of it."

It was a different kind of fight. It was about positioning. The logic of the battle was ruled by getting better positioning, better timing, and attacking at the correct time and place.

It felt strange—I was starting to see things I had never noticed before. I had so

many abilities, but I was only now getting the hang of them. I was able to look down at myself and my movements from above and observe myself objectively. Oh, and I did a lot of sick poses. That was important!

“I mean, come on, nine shadows rose into figures and charged at me, and when I cut them down, the shadow crows flew out of nowhere. That thing *got* me. I’ve got a serious sickness now.”

It was so important that I finished the fight with a “Farewell... Thanks to you, I’ve reached higher heights than ever before. Heh.”

The two ladies glared at me though? At my various dope poses I struck in the middle of the fight? I’m a big fan of glares, but I didn’t appreciate their judginess. What was the point of a badass pose if it didn’t convey my badassery?

“You were so close to being perfect,” I sighed. “If your crows hadn’t tried to peck at me in the end, I was going to ask you to be my friend. When they started pecking, I accidentally bonked you. Our swords were locked together as I said, ‘Your life is mine. Become my prey!’ Then I got pecked! And I bonked!”

That’d really stung.

“You made real shadow crows appear, but they were smokescreens. Up until then, they were just illusions... Oh, but I suppose you can make the illusions take physical shape. Is Shadow Scowl an upgraded version of the thing where Maid Girl glares at me from the shadows?”

The shadow claw understood my vibe right down to its drop item. Calling it a good friend wouldn’t be wrong. I mean, it had the perfect item to make a teenage boy’s heart throb when he had middle school fever: the “Shadow Cloak: Speed, Dexterity +30%. Shadow Crows. Shadow Incarnation. Shadow Manipulation. Shadow Manifestation. Shadow magic. Shadow Scowl. Presence Isolation.”

I combined the Shadow Cloak into my cloak but tabled upgrading it with mithril. I wanted to, but that would drastically increase the burden on Wisdom in combat. Even Maid Girl rarely used Shadow magic—it was a real pain to use. I was *this* close to being a teenage boy who got to literally hide in the shadows, which sounded very suspicious and perilous for my sex appeal.

I felt a presence outside of my room and heard a knock on the door. It was Miss Armor Rep, Dancer Girl, and the swim duo.

“We’re back. We brought them. Now we will, blindfold.”

“Everyone ordered towels.”

“Heya. Let’s get started right away, shall we? I mean, Fish Girl and Nudist Girl? And I wonder why you two seem to be questioning your role as blindfolds, huh? I question how good a blindfold is while it’s having an existential crisis, but you guys are worse! Come in, I guess.”

“Excuse us? And why can you still not get our names right?!”

I filled up the tub, closed my eyes and started using Area Analyze. The entire space filled my consciousness, with all the contained objects manifesting in my awareness. Well, I didn’t need to use Area Analyze to know that two girls were taking off their clothes, and two others were trying to tear my eyelids open.

“First draw a design for your bikinis. I’m gonna go all out in making them, wielding all my manufacturing prowess...but remember, these are for fun, right? If you want to go all out swimming or racing, you need to use the other ones I made you. I could also upgrade your school swimsuits, although the fact that I’m a teenage boy making school swimsuits and putting them on for high school girls has already done enough damage to my sex appeal. Still, I can upgrade those if you want?”

“Yes, please!”

I needed to do it all at once. For these two, I needed to do serious, precise labor and take minute, thorough measurements. I didn’t have leeway to go easy on them. The adjustments and revisions would max out in terms of intensity. I made school swimsuits for Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl and had them swim to confirm the necessary water resistance for the fabric. Things got a bit squirmy midway through, but I gathered plenty of data.

The two of them were terrible at swimming! I supposed it made sense because they never took modern swim lessons. Terrible swimmers, but still very fast. They had sky-high stats and a crazy swimming style that threatened to tear the swimsuits in half and put insane amounts of water pressure on the fabric.

We're talking jet-ski levels! They did some crazy fusion of the butterfly and breaststroke?

"The swimsuits barely managed to hang on to the two of them, at least until I took them off for some immeasurable (teenage boy) water-breaking (teenage boy) activities... Anyhow, this design should be able to take the water pressure."

These two were competitive swimmers. Nudist Girl had been a candidate for Japan's Olympic team. Fish Girl, meanwhile, learned everything she knew from Nudist Girl. Fish Girl didn't have the body for swimming, so she could only compete on the national level, but she'd learned everything there was to know about swimming technique from Nudist Girl. In this world, they were now powered up by their level 100+ stats. After testing, I renovated the fifty-meter pool into a five-hundred-meter pool. Which was still too short for them... That was how quickly and powerfully they swam.

I had to do it all at once: precisely fit their bodies with needle-thin thread and minimize all gaps in the fit no matter how much they moved. For that purpose, exact measurements were indispensable—I had to scrutinize every millimeter of their bodies, precisely measuring the size and movement range of every muscle. Then I had to poke and shake their bodies as I draped them with fabric. Next, I pushed and rubbed and adjusted and corrected them over and over again in a steady rhythm of adjustments. Then I soaked them in a glorious fitting. To account for the intensity of the water pressure, I had to blast them with a furious stream of fluid to model the dynamics of liquid all over their bodies.

I needed to do my most intense measuring yet. I've heard the legendary saying, "If you're going to do it, bring calamity upon the universe in one fell swoop. Never bit by bit!" I did try bit-by-bit with the mean girls, and admittedly, it hadn't worked at all. I needed to bring calamity in one fell swoop—*Magic Hands, do your worst!*

"Ack! Ah, ah, ahhhhhh! Ahhhh, nnnngh, ah... Ah, ah, waaaaahhh!"

Plunk.

Calamity fell, as did their bodies. Their moist eyes seemed to be staring off at some faraway land. Probably to tomorrow, when they'd finally get to swim?

Where are their pupils? They probably were getting teary-eyed because they had spent their whole lives swimming. After being separated from the water for three months, they could finally... Hang on, were they drooling?

“As a teenage boy, I’d rather not be seen fiddling with teenage girls’ bodies, but I need to do one more round of adjustments?”

“Eeeeeee... Nnnnngh... Ahh!”

I endlessly measured, adjusted, and fitted their swimsuits. It was a bit tricky, given that they kept twitching after they’d passed out, but I tried to control my Magic Hands as gently as possible as I made the necessary revisions. *It’s so strange the way they can writhe and bend their backs like that even though they’re unconscious!*

“At least with that much muscle contraction, I could get the exact measurements I needed. It’s great, except for how terrible this looks? Yeah, what’s up with that?”

By the time I put them in the wave tub, they were completely immobile. Even their faces were slack. I gave them sports-bra-style bikinis, sturdy designs that could handle plenty of water flow and pressure. For the school swimsuits, I reached the pinnacle of precise craft and creation technique in cumulative glorious constructions. These remodeled swimsuits were every bit on the level of competitive suits. So why was I getting yelled at?

“What the hell are you doing?!”

“Why are you pinning down girls who are unconscious *and* twitching by the arms and legs?!”

“You stuffed mushrooms in their mouths too! Nothing is okay about this!”

“No one will ever marry them now! Not after making those expressions!”

“And what did you do to the school swimsuits?!”

Oh, hello there, Miss Angry Rep. I got as close to perfect as I possibly could, and somehow, she was still dissatisfied. If I didn’t pin down their arms and legs, they might bump their heads on the rim of the tub and all? That was dangerous! For the tub?

“Well, fainting and unconsciousness is a biological mystery, along with dark scientific secrets behind lolling tongues. You were like this too, Class Rep. Actually, you were quite a bit more...intense? Your face was, er... Well, once I stuffed a mushroom into your mouth you were all right? Even after fainting, some powerful force within you persisted, so no matter how many times you collapsed, you kept muttering ‘don’t stop, don’t stop’ while you were twitching and moaning and bouncing around. I did my best? Ya know?”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

Bounce bounce.

Vice Rep B was joining in on the response! Understandably so. *Oh crap! Bloodlust!*

“Wh-wh-whaaaaaaa?! Aaaaaaagh! What the? What are you talking about?! Y-you did it! It’s all your fault! Are you saying you were watching me? You were watching? H-how-how dare you! Eeeeeek! Waaaaaahh!”

Bonk, smash, thrash, screech, splurgh, splatter, smush, slice!

She heated up, as in beat me up? It was certainly a beating and was certainly executed with a morning star. Meanwhile, Fish Girl and Nudist Girl had regained consciousness. They were red-faced and teary-eyed but happily enjoying the scene before them. Yeah, Class Rep was blood-red and *real* mad?

DAY 90

MORNING

It was a bunch of overprotective teenage girls over-complaining about bikinis and a real orphan tilt-a-whirl.

MONSTER FOREST

THE MONSTER FOREST: the realm of demons. To enter this forest was to exit the world of human civilization and enter the realm of monsters. To intrude on their domain. To leave behind the society of humans.

“Damn, this neighborhood has a bad reputation. They talk all about it in the intro lectures at the guild. The neighboring villages do too?”

Jiggle jiggle.

Come on, it's got a road and everything.

“The hard-working demon scythes cleared the woods here, and a hard-working, very good teenage boy paved the road. You could express your gratitude, but instead, the hard-working, swimsuit-crafting, good teenage boy was subjected to a bonking of outrageous violence? That was pure terror!”

We followed the road through the woods, taking out any monsters lurking in the surrounding trees along the way. After trimming the forest, the demon scythes cleared the way for a road straight through to my cave. They demanded a ton of sweets as compensation. *Can demon scythes gain weight?*

The carriage shook—er, nothing else shook! Nobody's fat; I was just thinking! We advanced through the woods, heading for home sweet home. All the girls were praising the scythes and giving them sweets. *How about some praise for the boy who paved the road?*

“Ahem, Haruka-kun... Why is there a sunlight-dappled, stone-paved road in the monster forest? I'm sure the monsters are just as surprised as I am.”

I invited Mr. Meridad and Mrs. Murimuri, too. Only because I dropped by

their place yesterday, of course. Mrs. Murimuri ran the orphanage and Mr. Meridad was the business administrator, so they were close with the orphans. Plus, I had built a house in their domain without their permission. This way I could show them why I was qualified to do so.

“This is the way we came over to Omui all those weeks ago, isn’t it?”

“Yeah, and now it looks like a tourist attraction.”

“This was the exact path we took!”

“Wow, I remember that so well. All of a sudden it’s a nicely paved street!”

“When we last came this way, it was overrun with monsters...and now we can go on a pleasant day trip!”

“The way the forest is so nicely thinned out... Haruka-kun put some real artistry into this.”

“Yeah, the sunshine definitely isn’t supposed to come through the canopy like this in a monster forest!”

The girls chatted about the good ol’ days in the forest. We enjoyed a pleasant carriage ride, with my six G*ndam funnels out on patrol just to be safe. The orphans were also enjoying the ride.

“Are we sure it’s okay for the orphans’ first field trip to be to the monster forest?”

“No, it’s not okay. But it’s also the only place to go to out on the frontier.”

“Yeah, the kids from the capital haven’t ever really gotten to go out and explore nature. They seem happy about it.”

“I’m more concerned about the education they’re getting from the bloodcurdling screams of the goblins the carriage is running over!”

Poster Girl and Stalker Girl had come along in the hopes of going for a swim in the pool and were also enjoying their first time in the monster forest. The sunlit road created an elegant contrast with the towering mushroom-and moss-covered trees of the shadowy woods. We peacefully proceeded down the stone path through the ancient, untrodden woods. My home being in territory untrodden by humans was the most worrisome part. Didn’t all us *humans* come

here before?

“All righty, we’re going to take a little break for breakfast in the forest park up ahead,” I called.

“Yaaay!”

“He made a park in the forest?!”

“He’s giving the monsters modern amenities?!”

Unfortunately, the monsters didn’t have any time to enjoy their amenities since they’d gotten cut down along with all the trees. It wasn’t really a *public* park, either. I know. It was stingy of me.

“Thanks for all the food!”

Wiggle wiggle!

The kids stood before a sea of assorted sandwiches. Meanwhile, my classmates charged at the food with wild abandon. There were no overflowing compression shorts to distract them today, so the guys were going all out too.

“By the way,” I called, “I got all your sizes down to a T, so there’s no excuse for not being able to fit into clothes anymore! Bikinis don’t cover the stomach, though, so it’s all-you-can-inflate there?”

“Hey! Swimming will burn all the calories we eat now, so it’s fine!”

They intended to ration their exercise but not their appetites. This was an endless battle without a victory, but I supposed they’d gotten more fit overall. Maybe they were in the right? *Fantasy worlds are amazing.*

“H-hang on. You have to put on the swimsuits *before* you swim! They’re gonna expand!”

“Didn’t we tell you to shut your mouth?”

I sped up the carriage after we finished breakfast, and we headed straight for my cave. I was a bit disappointed there were no sexy female knights in my *Glamor-Model Glorious Hottie Female Knight Enthusiastic Reception DX Rolling SP Liner* carriage with the imperial guard here and all. I knew that women could take a while to get ready, but this wait exceeded all expectations.

“Wow...”

I supposed Royal Girl, Maid Girl, Merimeri, and Elf Girl had all never seen a pool before. They couldn't move for some reason?

“Uh, you gotta move to burn those calories? Standing still isn't helping!”

“This is like a freaking water park!” the girls shouted.

“Yeah, this is a whole different level from what I was expecting.”

“I mean, I needed a pool big enough to handle your level 100+ stats, so this was necessary,” I protested. “We've got one hundred orphans, so I needed to make the kids' section big too. And there had to be space for the water slide. Anyhow, the land already had a natural slope, so it was easy to make diving boards and water slides to get into the pool. Ya know?”

Making the fancy version took the same amount of effort as an ordinary backyard pool would. I rolled with it and went all out. It was also, like...by the time I finished, I realized I had already gone a bit overboard? I also mass-produced colorful inner tubes and floats out of waterproof cloth. I lined deck chairs and tables up poolside and used all wood to give off a high-class Bali resort kinda vibe? Yeah, I made water-hyacinth-pattern sofas, baby!

The girls took the orphans around the pool, and then went straight in via water slide. The meatheads kept jumping in off the diving boards. As expected, they appreciated that I built them so high. Man, they would've even pissed off En.

The girls changed into colorful bikinis, creating a diverse, flourishing world of varied bouncing and jiggling as they jumped around. *That was some hard work*, I thought. The pool was inundated with a flowering flood of gorgeous girls, with their smooth, sparkling skin catching the eye even more than their colorful swimsuits, although not as much as the various shaking objects, but there weren't any wardrobe malfunctions. *That's how hard I worked!*

“Now what do you want to do?” Class Rep asked the orphans.

“Waterslide!” they all shouted.

“Agreed!” yelled the girls.

Water splashed up to the sky. Thick thighs shot into the pool. Appreciated body parts appeared. Sumptuous skin dripped as everyone played their hearts out.

“Let’s grab floats and go swimming now!”

“Get one of the big boats, too!”

“Woo-hoo!”

The swim team duo were giving swimming lessons to the orphans in the shallow pool. Royal Girl, Maid Girl, and Merimeri also joined, not as teachers but participants. Hang on, I thought they weren’t going to swim! I didn’t give them the fully modified bikinis! Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl joined in, too, and were learning freestyle.

Poster Girl and Stalker Girl also joined the lesson, but I couldn’t possibly use the Magic Thread on them, so I’d given them two-piece swimming suits. I used Jupiter Eye to evaluate their sizes, so the suits still fit them way better than any standard size on the market. There wasn’t any risk of them tearing their swimsuits just by moving around, so it wasn’t a big deal.

“We all assumed that the fantasy world group would suck at swimming, but two minutes later, Elf Girl is doing the butterfly in the competitive pool! Rock on!”

Jiggle jiggle!

Within five minutes the nerds were lounging on the deck chairs. *Uh, are you guys high schoolers?!* This seemed a little age-inappropriate. *Are y’all old dudes?!* I got that they were tired, but... The real old dude, Mr. Meridad, was getting all cozy with Mrs. Murimuri in the hot tub. I’d have to blow him up later.

I thought I’d go for a swim, but when I walked over to the pool, I saw a “Tentacles Prohibited” sign. Since when was tentacular discrimination a thing?

“Seriously, who put up the ‘NO squirmy squirmy!’ and ‘Do not throw lotion into the pool’ signs? Not that I would, but still!”

Wiggle wiggle.

I got on a raft and drifted around with Slimey. Within seconds, the orphans—

who had learned to swim at the astonishing speed that only children can—started surrounding me!

“Orphan torpedoes!” I gasped. “The sheer technique! They’ve got me surrounded!”

No, calm down. Focus. The water should have slowed down their maneuverability. *I won’t get held down by the water. I’ll hold on to the water instead.* Yep, I let my magic penetrate the entire pool until I had all the water with Holding. After that, I only needed to wash them all away with Water magic.



“Whirlpool, whirl these pool children away from me! Water magic: Spiral Wave! Hang on, I’m using Water magic, but it’s just giving them a good wash?”

“Stop using Water magic on the children! They just learned to swim! They could drown!”

“Wahoooooooo!”

Soon I was surrounded by bikini-clad guardians, a bunch of psyched-up complainers. Psych! There were no wardrobe malfunctions, even in the whirlpool. My swimsuits were that good. They were too close! Things were touching me!

“If any of them start to drown, I have my tentacles. Plus, I can see 360 degrees with Jupiter Eye, and Wisdom allows me to grasp the individual situation of each of them perfectly. My tentacles are the perfect (squirmy) safety net? Ya know?”

“Didn’t you see the sign that said tentacles are prohibited? And you need to save the kids *before* they drown, obviously!”

My idea was shot down. The kids were having a blast riding the big wave, but the girls weren’t willing to get on board. They were close and surrounding me and poking me? Now I couldn’t get out of the pool for various teenage reasons?

“Come on. Let me save the kids to wash away the tentacles’ bad name, and wrigglingly reclaim the tentacular glory of squirmy swirly and stuff.”

“Your tentacles aren’t life savers! They’re maiden slayers!”

Surrounded by prismatic floral and polka-dot pattern bikinis created with the Pattern Print ability, I was amid a very squishy, high-density, high-skin ratio, psych anti-tentacle, lecture stampede. It was none other than the thrilling show, “Gadzooks! Swimsuit Teenage Stampede, Featuring a Lecture and Special Guests: The Surfing Orphans!”

“C’mon, big bro, more!”

“Spin around, you little children! Spin and swirl in the mighty waves transcending the might of whirling typhoons and yay! And stuff?”

“Weeeee! We’re spiiiiinnniing!”

They were having a blast? As was I in a very objective sense with the ratio of bare skin squishing up against me, but I did not have the leeway to take a step back and observe the kids from a distance.

“B-b-b-butts! Butting against me! This isn’t like, oh, you accidentally backed into me. This is, like, your ass is assessing my butted body! I think you’re trying to headbutt me, but with your butts? It’s very squishy!”

“Stop spinning the kids like that! Don’t make a whirlpool!”

“O-okay, I got it. I’ll stop, so you stop too? I mean, it’s not what you think, as in it was exactly what you think. I’ll stop the spinning, so you stop the molesting? Ya grow? I mean, ya know? I mean, come on, I did everything I could to prevent wardrobe malfunctions for you!”

“We’re not molesting you!”

The pool was so wide. Why couldn’t I use ten tentacles? I needed to fight back against these anti-tentacle protestors, or we’d all be in trouble.

After that, it was barbecue time! How could you go camping and not have a barbecue? It wasn’t a barbecue on the beach, but a poolside barbecue was a good enough barbecue! A meat and mushroom barbecue! A shish kebab barbecue! A rice ball and grilled rice ball barbecue!

“Barbecue! Barbecue! Barbecue! Barbecue!”

“Thanks for the food!”

Jiggle jiggle!

The orphans had been much paler than expected after washing away all the dark grit and grime they’d had on their skin when I first met them. Now that they were eating well and their blood circulation had improved...they were still too pale. Even after coming to the frontier, they worked so hard every day that they rarely had time to play outside. After work, they helped with all the chores at the inn, too.

That didn’t make them good kids. Good kids needed to play and laugh until they couldn’t move any more. They’d spent their whole lives in the shadowy slums of the capital and were now working their butts off in the frontier. They

needed to *play!* They needed to eat their fill, play until they couldn't move a muscle, go back home with smiles on their faces, and then play again until they fell asleep. I made sure to feed them properly. Today, I made doubly sure I cooked more than enough.

DAY 90

NOON

They required a relative ratio and raised resistance, so it's not my fault things got all slippery.

MONSTER FOREST

THE CAVE

HOME SWEET HOME. Miss Armor Rep, Dancer Girl, and Slimey all had their own rooms. It was our house. Slimey's room was like a weird automaton cat house, but he liked jiggling around in there. I wanted everything to look good, so I constructed the whole house in an art deco style, Slimey's "room" included. Was he going to get any visitors in there?

While Miss Armor Rep in her black bikini, Dancer Girl in her white bikini, and butt-naked Slimey were all romping around outside, I tried shutting myself in. I cleaned up and started prepping dinner. I had everything I needed in terms of cookware and dishware. It was hard to believe this cave was going to see over one hundred guests. Whatever happened to my loner life?

"My gosh! I don't have the time to get attacked by a loitering, huffy bikini beauty right now! I'm too busy! Or at least I was... I mean, I'm not a shut-in or anything, so cleaning is a big problem, so give me thirty minutes. For cleaning, obviously! Definitely? Don't wield the broom and mop like swords! Y-yeah, I made those... Shadow Incarnate, Shadow Crows, go!"

Ker-bonk! Ka-pink!

A dungeon king's techniques wouldn't work on dungeon emperors. Yeah, the shadows were getting bonked! They couldn't hit my Shadow Incarnate though, so it would've been faster if I got the hell out of there!

I thought it would take thirty minutes, but when I tested out the Grotesque Necklace last night, the furious, fiendish excitement might have been a bit too

much for them? Yeah, I very much did boost the Poisonous Glove with all its ailment inflictions with my Sensitivity-boosting Lascivious-imbued tentacles... If I put in any additional stimulation, their jerks and writhes would've knocked down the walls. We broke my re-designed, double-strengthened, Alchemy-upgraded bed. *Clean in two, too!*

I had no regrets. My sticky, slippery tentacles entangled Miss Armor Rep's white skin, crawled all over and caressed Dancer Girl's amber skin. I may have gone a bit overboard with the sensations in the dripping and twitching fury, causing the glowing, sticky naked bodies to writhe and faint in a frenzy. This fluid-covered, sticky teenage boy smashed the bed in two out of loneliness. Yeah, I strengthened it with magic steel thread, and it still broke? *Turns out I need to upgrade fantasy world beds with mithril?*

"Well, it's hard to dispel the idea that a teenage boy who grows tentacles and spouts sticky fluid is bound to have sex appeal challenges. Also why do I suspect that Perversion and Grotesquemorphosis aren't helping?"

Jiggle jiggle!

Maybe it was because we woke up so early or that they were out of strength, but they didn't attempt a morning revenge. I had a lot pent up in teenage boy terms after seeing all those bikinis and being pressed against by so much bare skin... No more fun for me? Night was a long way away.

"Okay, all clean. I'll go swimming. Today's a day off, so the kids don't need to help, they can just play. I need to show the kids that playing is okay."

Wiggle wigggle!

Ah, nice wiggle, Slimey. I was sure a lot more jiggling awaited me in the pool. So much jiggling that the nerds had to practically vanish into thin air.

"It'll defeat the whole purpose of meeting the furry chicks if they hide like that!"

I built a separate pool for the orphan girls out of eye shot with plenty of anti-nerd repellant defenses. Far away from the kids, the meatheads were jumping into the water. I didn't need to worry about those guys hitting themselves in the head because they couldn't become any stupider. I *did* need to worry on

the safety front, though. They kept using Earth magic to throw the orphan boys off of higher and higher ledges? *Maybe I'll take all the water out of the pool the moment the meatheads jump next time.*

“Haruka-kun, is everything ready?”

“Let us know if you need anything.”

“The inner tubes are super popular, so all the kids are fine. They don’t need that many people to watch them, so we can come help.”

“No, everything’s done,” I said. “It’s an energy recovery menu: pasta and mushrooms à la carte. Despite the à la carte menu, I’m anticipating an anti-à la carte (aka order everything) stampede from the teenagers, so I got plenty of giant plates ready. They’re strengthened to prevent plate-smashing too? Although it’s faster to make extra regular plates.”

I explained the deal to Class Rep, who was in her red bikini. It was black a few seconds ago, but she enjoyed playing with the prismatic fabric. I could charge 50,000 ele for thirty minutes to stand *next* to this pool and still get people lined up. I mean, I would buy those tickets. Maybe even a season pass! This was my house, though, so who could I buy them from?

Slimey was floating in the pool with Vice Rep B. I’d love to go into detail about what else was floating and how, but my senses told me I was currently surrounded by aquatic morning star might? *I’ve experienced this bonking from Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl before.* Meanwhile, a column of water rose up out of the five-hundred-meter competitive pool.

“As suspected... Hmm?”

Fish Girl and Nudist Girl were swimming. Looked like they were having a good time. They were like different people. Normally, competitive swimmers didn’t splash when they swam. They moved efficiently, so they left behind a quiet stream. Water blasted up behind the kicking feet of those two. Their transformed bodies were having a very different effect on the water despite using the same technique. They had much more strength and speed but their arms and legs were the same length. Only their motors had gotten stronger, causing a veritable vortex to rampage behind their legs.

“Hey, should I make some tailfins for y’all? I’ll include webbed fingers for a complete fish anthropomorphosis plan?”

“Hey, Haruka-kun. We got a lot stronger, so we can’t keep good form like we used to. But swimming with strength is fine, right?”

“Yeah, it’s like, kinda hard to swim... Like, I’m barely moving. The water resistance feels so weak that I can’t get a grasp on it.”

Yup, the water resistance wasn’t enough for their level 100+ bodies. The fact that water felt so light to them now meant that they couldn’t swim in it the same way humans couldn’t swim through air.

“There is a solution, you know?”

“Really?!”

Before long, they were swimming. Properly swimming. Just like what I’d seen back in school every day. The two of them swam their hearts out. Their shadows darted across the water. They looked like they belonged there in the pool. Seeing them swim like that really took me back. I’m sure they felt it too—nostalgia, wistfulness...and anger?

“What?! Why are they swimming in a pool full of lotion?! What’ll we do if the kids try to imitate that?”

I bumped up the viscosity by dumping in lotion. That was the only way for them to get a workout! Their bodies had changed too much from back then.

“I mean, how else was I supposed to (slurpy) raise (squirm) the relative (squirmy) resistance (slurp)? I mean, sure, they’ll be dripping and glistening in wet lotion when they get out of the pool, but what else was I supposed to do? I can’t believe I dismissed the combination of school swimsuits and lotion... Lemme keep a recording of this forever in my brain?”

“I don’t care if it’s helping them swim. This is way too much!”

Everyone got tired and went to take a rest. I passed around some tropical juice in glasses garnished with various types of fruit for a multicolored mocktail. Since foods taste different to humans depending on the appearance, the fruit topping also helped add extra flavor. They were technically fruits from the

monster forest, so they weren't tropical, but the monster forest was jungle-esque. *At least they can't lecture me while they're drinking juice.*

"Here's your towel," I said to Elf Girl. "How was your first time in the pool?"

The crowd of teenage girls lay out on the deck chairs, exposing themselves to the sun in their brightly colored bikinis. Of course, that was when the previously vaporized nerds decided to go swimming. Although they probably couldn't get out of the pool anymore. No matter the stimuli, they were fine when vaporized, but they were way too sensitive now that they were in three dimensions!

"It's so much fun!" replied Elf Girl. "Swimming is the best. It's like a dream! This is like a never-ending dream come true!"

Given how long she was sick, I understood why she was so happy. All the times I'd stuffed a fat mushroom into her mouth had been worth it in the end.

"I'm glad you all learned to swim," I said to Royal Girl, Maid Girl, and Merimeri. "If you couldn't, then all the effort I put into the upgraded bikinis for you would've been for nothing. Here, towel and juice."

"Thank you."

"We had to have the same outfits as everyone else!"

"Making the princess wear something so revealing is a revolting disgrace, but swimming is fun," said Maid Girl.

The three of them were high leveled to begin with. Those levels jumped higher after they started fighting in dungeons and training with my classmates. Forget the swimsuits. It put a strain on their ordinary clothes. Only prismatic spellstone-coated fabrics could withstand their strength.

"The orphans are all sleeping?"

"They must be, like, so tired. It's totally the first time they've gotten to play so much."

"I'm glad that they can laugh so much now. Look at their smiling little faces."

I had laid out beach towels for the orphans to lounge on and gave out a towel and a juice to each member to the orphan protection squad. *Now, let's see...* Just how long were those idiots going to keep jumping? They were over thirty

feet in the air now. How were they not hurting themselves? *Maybe I'll drain the pool when they jump.*

"It's your guys' day off too," I told Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl, "so go ahead and hang out with everyone. I don't know how to explain to everyone that you can have fun and join everyone else who's having a day off in a fantasy world like this, but that's normal back where I come from. If you get invited to a party, it's good manners to enjoy yourself."

"Thank you."

The two of them could converse fluently with Slimey nowadays. While their sentences were a little stilted, we could all converse. They still spoke overly politely to me, but maybe that was simply the way they talked. How did they learn polite speech when nobody else around here was remotely polite?

After a long rest, everyone went back into the pool, screaming their heads off as they went down the water slide and splashed into the pool. The orphans playing, the teenagers who should've been enjoying life all along instead of fighting in countless bloody battles—they were having a blast. I wished this could be normal and not just a one day thing.

"One more hour until dinner," I called. "We're going back after eating, so get your fun in now, 'kay? Well, I'll make it a heated pool, so you can come back anytime?"

"Okay!" everyone shouted.

Everyone was enjoying themselves. All that pain I went through making those bikinis had been worth it. Where to rest my eyes was still a precarious matter, as a teenage boy and all. All of those lounging, bikini-clad bodies leaped up from their towels, jiggled over to me, and asked to take a towel home. They giggled exclamations about how well they dried, and wiped their perky butts down comprehensively. I shouldn't have been looking in the first place! It was a precarious world of 360-degree, high-def, scantily clad body vision with surround sound! I had already seen it all—I'd checked the bikinis after having made them blindfolded. But when surrounded by a crowd of them like this, where was a teenage boy to look? I couldn't stay there! Like, I had to leave? *Quick, dinner!*

“Thanks for the food!” everyone shouted.

“It’s so weird being back at this cave. Hang on. Since when was it so big?!”

“It used to be like camping. Now it’s a beach resort. It turned into a freaking luxury hotel!”

“Our original rooms are still there. This is the living room where we slept at first, right?”

“Wait a second. What kind of luxury life were you all leading in the monster forest?!” gasped the nerds.

“Well, it was, like, reaaaally hard to get to this point?”

“Yeah, after you guys left, it was real wilderness survival.”

“Thanks for everything you did!”

“No, I mean, we just set up a tent back then...”

“I’m sure living in a tent was tough after you saw this cave.”

“He made, my own, room.”

“That’s great!”

“He made me, one too.”

“Show us later!”

Boink boink!

“Even Slimey has his own room?!”

“Didn’t the cave used to have a modernist vibe? Now it’s like a tropical resort!”

“Wow, Haruka-kun made all those individual rooms.”

“I wanna seeee!”

Everyone started exploring my house in groups of two or three. Or exploring my dungeon. One or the other.

“The dungeon emperors in here are fearsome, so don’t try to clear out the floors, ‘kay?”

“Uh, I don’t think we would attempt to defeat a dungeon that has literally three bonking dungeon emperors in it!”

“You must be pretty guilty if you need to make a house that’s more dangerous than any dungeon!”

Slimey’s room was popular with the orphans, but they were the only ones small enough to play in it. I had set it up to be a maze-like series of ladders and holes and monkey-bars. A cat playground: Slime edition. It was an art deco play space, currently overrun with little children. I decided to make the kids a playground next.

Meanwhile, the girls had split up into tea parties in Miss Armor Rep’s art deco European-style room with a canopy bed, and Dancer Girl’s Egyptian-style room with Middle Eastern carpets, fabrics, and sculpture. Mrs. Murimuri lived up to her reputation as an experienced mother and played with the kids as they clung to her. The teenagers had trouble taking on the role of parents, but the kids looked safe and sound with her...and the useless Mr. Meridad. *I should’ve invited his advisor instead.*

We put the sleepy kids back on the carriage and went back to town. The girls were all exhausted, too, but they had satisfied looks on their faces.

I thought we all deserved a true day off like this. We were all high schoolers—this sort of lifestyle should’ve been the norm, not fighting against monsters.

Time to go home. Well, this technically *was* my home, but town was everyone’s true home. I was still having problems paying rent, though. Just how long would they let my tab accumulate? I used every penny I had on this party? Yikes, right?

DAY 90

EVENING

Looks like they should've aimed for getting summoned into two dimensions, not a fantasy world.

PLAINS

I DIDN'T WANT TO GET ON A CARRIAGE full of those chumps, but I did. Chumps as in nerds?

"Did you decide?" I asked them.

"Yeah, we're gonna head to the capital. It's over to the east, so we can always come back here."

"We'll have people to train with over there. Plus, even if the dungeons are small, we can't just leave them there."

"We'll be able to crush any dungeons up to fifty floors."

For having empty skulls, the meatheads sure seemed to have thought it through—their excuses, that is!

"I know you're just after the macho soldier chicks, you bastards! You're never interested in girls, so I thought your story was on the path to BL until you lost your cool. Now you're so hot I thought you were gonna go phoenix and burn to ashes! Who knew you were into Amazonians? I guess you hadn't met anyone like that..."

"I dunno, man. Skinny types never got me going."

"Yeah, I feel like frail chicks would snap in two, ya know?"

"They need to be able to fight."

"For sure. I gotta be able to tell that they can fight for themselves at first glance."

When they put it that way, none of the girls in our class looked like they could fight to the death at first glance even though there were buff sports chicks among them. *Thank god?! Then we'd have terrorists in our class!*

"I mean, if you're into strength, the girls in our class are stronger," I pointed out. "They're beautiful, too, and they win in terms of sheer, overwhelming power. Especially when you measure lecture power!"

"Their lecture power is *too* strong!"

I supposed they liked tall, macho chicks. Oh, who were ready to fight to the death at moment's notice. *A girl like that would terrify me?* I'd keep their tastes secret.

"Oda-kun, your guys' trip is hella long, ain't it?"

"Well, we've got a ship, so that helps."

"Of course y'all nerds are going," I said. "I mean, beast ears and all? Of course you're going for the furies? The nerds have an official invitation from the Beast Kingdom, so make sure to bring yours too, meatheads?"

"No, the official invitation was addressed to the black-haired commander!"

"I'm pretty sure you threatened to sink our ship unless we brought back miso!"

"Plus, the invitation requested the princess be in attendance. We've got a long way to go."

"First, we need to bring them aid as well as bring goods to the market."

"Okay, well, I know you guys won't be able to talk, so how about I graffiti 'Furies, be my bride!' and 'I <3 beast girls!' on the side of the ship?"

"That'll turn them against us! Please don't!"

I'd heard an envoy had come to the capital to thank us for the aid we'd sent, and the letter of thanks had been passed along to us. If we could stabilize relations between the Kingdom of Diorelle and the Beast Kingdom, then official parties would be sent to each nation, designating the black-haired commander as the primary leader. Yeah, because of that move we'd made, everyone thought the black-haired commander oversaw and was allies with the nerds.

What a stain on my reputation!

The kingdom had also received requests for aid from the Beast Kingdom. Unprincipled pirates started roaming the rivers recently, so we decided to send the nerds and their sturdy ship. That'd work well enough, given they were pirates themselves.

"An otaku king of the pirates!"

"No, I don't think there are any otakus that aggressive in Japan!"

Forgetting the whole black-haired commander thing, we had an invitation. The Beast Kingdom exported rice and soy sauce, but they'd never sold well in this region before. To the resource-poor, export-poor Beast Kingdom, the renaissance of cooking using soy sauce and akazake was a huge economic boon. I'd happily go shopping there if the Beast Kingdom also had miso, tofu, and bonito flakes, but I needed to prioritize the dungeons here first. I couldn't move just yet.

That was why I had sent the nerds to do my shopping. In addition to them having a boat, they were treated as heroes over in the Beast Kingdom. Or more like, I needed to make up an excuse or they'd never get over there. As mad as their passion was for two-dimensional beast ears, they got weirdly shy once three-dimensional ones had appeared? Maybe they should've hoped for a two-dimensional summoning rather than a real-life fantasy world?

"You gotta stay here, huh?" Nerd A asked.

"The dungeons are getting stronger or something?"

"Yeah, dude. Are you gonna be okay?"

"Uh, I mean I have Miss Armor Rep and Slimey, then you add in Dancer Girl... With that trio, nothing is okay. This fantasy world is screwed? Like, running to the edge of the world won't save you? These weapons are impossible to use? That's what it'd take to finish them off, so, yeah, there's absolutely no hope for any of us?"

"In that sense, I suppose you're right."

I tried making the guys my human test subjects for an experiment. The

moment they held the Universe Staff, it drained all their MP and they collapsed. All of them were fast asleep and out of the fight in half a second. They needed Holding or some other thought-manipulation skill to be able to wield it. Given that it had wiped out all the guys, I didn't want to test it out on the girls. Miss Armor Rep, Dancer Girl, and Slimey never tried to touch it. Nobody else could use this thing.

"You gotta come so we can have some good meals, bro!"

"Yeah, necessities outside of the frontier are crap."

"As for the rice..."

"Most people don't even have friggin baths!"

"We'll be back to camping again."

"Why is the food so bad in this world?!"

"We've gotten too used to this lack of common sense."

"We'll be eating stale bread every day."

"Things are good here on the frontier, but outside of it..."

They earnestly expressed their opinions and aired their honest inklings. In terms of teenage boy priorities, the bikini crisis towered above all else!

"That was mad dangerous!"

"The black high-cut one—"

"Oh yeah, that's for making legs look longer and stuff?"

"Her legs are already long!"

"Low-rise bottoms from behind are mind blowing!"

"For real! I couldn't get out of the pool!"

"Didn't Vice Reps A and C's look kinda bigger?"

"Oh yeah, I worked hard on theirs. Basically, I gathered all the muscle around to one point."

"That's a high-tech bikini!"

“That netting... Holy hell that netting!”

“Yeah, didn’t all that netting hurt digging into...?”

“Well, since Vice Rep B’s boobs are so big, she could only ever wear big bathing suits. She said she wanted to wear a normal bikini, so I tried to maintain that design while supporting her breasts with mesh. Keeping them within the mesh was one of my greatest challenges yet!”

“That was spectacular!”

“Since when were they all so fit?”

“I didn’t know where to look.”

“That’s ’cause all of their bikinis were nuts!”

“They not just fit. I swear they’re also hella curvy now!”

“Well, I’ve been providing shapewear to help them get perkier b—”

Oh no!

“We’re surrounded! It’s an assault! Enemy count: twenty-six. W-with two dungeon emperors! We’re not gonna make it!”

“*WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?!* ” the enemy roared.

By the time we escaped from the carriage, it was already too late. A meteor shower of morning stars blazed on us with a thunderous roar. To put things less poetically, they disciplined us with a morning star lecture. The meatheads, who had been a wall in front of me (I’d made them a wall in front of me), were blown to the skies. The nerds, who were the next line of defense (I’d made them the next line of defense), were blasted aside. The meatheads, who were a decoy (I’d made them decoys), were systematically downed in morning star strikes. The nerds hid behind me before they were flattened into pancakes. The meatheads whiplashed straight to the heavens. The girls were slowly whittling all of my defenses away!

“H-hey, I’m not being creepy! I was merely discussing the various challenges of swimsuit design! It was the meatheads who were talking about the netting digging into *there*, and the nerds who were talking about there being no gap in her cleavage! I was objectively explaining the technical functions of my

swimsuits and the various techniques and devices implemented in the execution of safe water-flow functionality, a purely technological, manufacturing-based, topical discussion in which I merely mentioned the eroticism of your voices when twitching and moaning in the sense of the inherently objective recordings I took in the spirit of scientific inquiry! So I'm not the bad guy here? If you reject my responses to your questions, I will happily attend a formal class hearing and retain my veto right with my teenage boy temperament! Refusing conclusions in this case in question leads to the general consensus that I am absolutely guiltless by law? I'm innocent?"

"Verdict: Guilty! On multiple counts of spilling maidens' secrets!"

Lecture ensuing. Please wait until the bonking finishes.

Yeah, they were pissed. For some reason, the trials and tribulations and real-life suffering of a teenage boy were less important than maidens' secrets. I mean, I wasn't a maiden, but I was still the only one forced to sit with my head bowed in the girls' carriage, getting a lecture. It was cramped, and they were close. For a lecture about embarrassing them, they sure were embarrassing themselves with the closeness of this lecture, which I will not discuss for my own safety! *The fickle whims of women!* I wished they would consider the teenage boy perspective sometimes.

"It's Lord Omui!"

"Thank you for today, Haruka-kun. What a wonderful pool. And the swimsuit for my wife! My goodness!"

Mr. Meridad had awoken to the glory of bathing suits. It was a one-piece suit with a wrap, chosen by Mr. Meridad himself. Merimeri had looked uncomfortable with how her parents were flirting.

"Lord Haruka, please leave the matter of the orphans to me," said Mrs. Murimuri. "We are fast friends now. They are such lovely children. To hear that such good kids were starving, on the verge of death! Are there any of those nobles still alive? I'll happily collect their heads!"

The orphans all loved Mrs. Murimuri. I supposed a real-life, experienced mom was on a different level. The girls were only big sisters, all things considered. The orphans wouldn't get attached to them like they would an adult parental

figure.

I called in my G*ndam funnels, which had been on guard, and gave the demon scythes some sweets as compensation for their work. They did a great job with logging and guard work. Thanks to them, everyone could have a great time. They deserved the Pool Party MVP award.

“I felt so bad for you guys, since giant scythes can’t swim. You’d rust and all?”

“...!”

We moved the orphans, who were all sound asleep, to their bedrooms for a good night’s rest. We needed to make sure they played every once in a while. Today, we’d succeeded.

Poster Girl was on the verge of falling asleep, and Stalker Girl was staying over. It was their first time swimming, so it was no wonder they were wiped out after splashing around so much. Just to be sure, I put some mushrooms in their mouths. For some reason, everyone got mad at me?

“You were all dead silent until I put the mushroom in! I announced politely, ‘There you go. Now open your mouth nice and wide so I can fit the big mushroom in. There you go, gobble it all up!’ It’s so illogical to get mad at such a well-learned, intelligent teenage boy for giving a great heads-up like that!”

“You know too much about perverted crap!”

Even though they’d already soaked in the hot tub, the girls went to take a bath. They needed to clean up with the bubbly body soap after all the UV radiation apparently?

“They can go to the pool whenever they want so long as they’re in the domain. Why did they give me a whole new stack of swimsuit orders the moment they got back, with a ‘Your Honor, more swimsuits, please?’ Is this a period drama or something? We’ve got a suggestion box and all, so they don’t need to misbehave like that. Speaking of which, I didn’t install that suggestion box, so why do I keep checking it?! At least I can make more designs without needing to take new measurements, but they’re still going to need to try them on and get the suits fitted, which they’ll ask me to do even if I say I don’t want to. And if I say no, they’ll get all teary-eyed? This poor, overworked soul is more

than happy to graciously accept generous glares but will heartily refuse lectures with open warfare if necessary! At least they haven't sent over drawings for designs yet, so for now, screw it."

Jiggle jiggle.

Slimey was jiggling fresh out of the bath. He must've been rubbing up against all those naked girls in the bath. *Good job, Slimey.* I gave him some pets.

Wiggle wiggle!

Say WHAT? A lotion bath was under consideration? I had to make that right away. *There you go. Finished!* I mean it was simple alchemical combination for an extra-thick, slippery, gloopy, juicy, lotion bath. Now it had to undergo comprehensive testing and daily refinements until the blueprint was perfected. I needed to toil tirelessly without rest and endure the throes and agonies of endless labor until I achieved a perfect, thick, syrupy production. At last, this world had recognized the glories of slippery lotion! *How marvelous!*

Testing subject interviews commencing.

What did you know? The two perfect candidates for a tub testing just returned from the girls' bath meeting. *Activate, Perversion!*

DAY 91

MORNING

The obvious high-speed rejection of a death game and a game of chance wasn't a cheat, it was a bug?

WHITE LOSER INN

THAT SECRET NEW ABILITY: Perversion! I needed to file a police report at once. The Perversion skill from the “Grotesque Necklace: Perversion. Grotesquemorphosis. Phlegm. Phlegm Resistant. +Defense” enabled me to freely transform my body with magic. Not just into tentacles, but into anything!

As you can imagine, the thrilling and stimulating fantasy adventure of a teenage boy infiltrating deep, dark dungeons, penetrating unknown depths and erupting in fierce fights unfolded. The Grotesque Necklace must've been relieved to finally get its turn in the sun. I could talk all day about my peerless teenage infiltration adventures, but when I did so, certain somebodies started to bonk to me to death in a rampaging lecture.

“Y-you'll kill, I'll die! Straight to hell! Fainted and die, again, and again!”

“I lost my mind, broke down. Go crazy, mind melted! That's too much, too evil, sin of madness!”

It was an unavoidable accident while testing. Just the inevitable pinnacle that emerges during the search for truth. In other words, I'd gone a bit overboard.

“Look, I spent all day surrounded by twenty-six girls in bikinis and two more in semi-bikinis. Think of how much I had been charging up all day! I had to try my best? Ya know?”

I was just a guy summoned to fight dungeons in a fantasy world, and I was doing just that. I was diligently applying myself to bursting over my limit and going down on dungeon emperors? It wasn't that I didn't recognize things were getting out of control, but the adventuring was so marvelous I had to repeat it

seventy-eight times. It was an episode of a fantasy exploration that would leave any teenage boy smiling. Yet they were pissed at me? *Scary!*

“Consciousness and memory in confusion, pleasure and madness mixed! Do you want, to kill us?!”

“That will break my mind, my spirit! Deathless, but dying over and over!”

“Look, you’re undead, so you can’t die over and over. I’m using Jupiter Eye to make sure your bodies don’t take any damage at all? I’m over my limit but within the safety limits, ya know?”

I could keep an eye on things by watching their HP. Both were undead dungeon emperors with Revival who trained on a nightly basis for high-speed Revival. They were definitely fine!

“It is not safe at all! Not safe for my soul, my soul is going to go crazy! This is not, about HP! The damage, is not physical!”

I went all out on tentacle manipulation, metamorphosis, and alteration, which they sure seemed to have loved at the time. But now they’d changed their minds? They must have been at a fickle age. *Can forever-seventeens get stuck in an age like that?*

“I underwent rigorous training for Lascivious to the point of agony for a heroic tale of deep infiltration tonight, and you guys are blaming me for it!”

This felt unfair. When they went all out on offering their Sexual Technique Mastery, they always looked plenty satisfied. I was making a slight adjustment to Sex God Technique Masochism! What was the big deal?

Tonight, the kids were moving to the orphanage. They had to go to school. They had lots of friends, Mrs. Murimuri, and the maids and teachers there—it was a good environment. Tiny Tanuki cried all day, upset at having to part with the orphans, but she could go with them and nobody would notice.

“Thanks for the food!”

We all ate breakfast together. Later, we’d go to dungeons, and the orphans would go to work. It wasn’t right. All they should’ve been doing was playing, learning, getting spoiled, and doing a few chores. When they were with us, they

always ended up working. They thought they had to try as hard as the big kids. We didn't have enough time to give to them, to play with them.

"Come on, Tiny Tanuki. Don't cry. Here's a hot dog? Once you grow up big, you can leave the orphanage! Once you grow bigger, you can explore the whole flat world, even get summoned to a flat fantasy world to solve your lack o— H— hang on! Waaaah!"

BONK!

"I'm not a Tiny Tanuki! And who are you calling flat?! My puberty is *modest*, got it? I'm not crying!"

She bit me. She friggin' bit me! That hurt? As they said? As I said?

I made my customary stops at the general store and the armory to collect my profits and swung by the guild in search of profitable quests for a nice glaring. I mean, those quests still hadn't changed! The custom of nobody reading that bulletin board had proliferated into a universal, eternal glarification.

After that, I turned into a gust of wind and swept through the dungeon. Not into a thousand winds. Then everyone would have to stand at my grave and weep! I was there, but I did not sleep. I drew out my power, chugged along on pure speed, and tore down everything in sight in a clean sweep. I managed to keep all the Magic Entanglement barely under control, 99 percent controlled. If I had that last 1 percent, I would make it through unscathed. I was still too weak.

My power didn't function like arithmetic but geometry. I needed to be 100 percent under control to avoid self-destructing. I mean, I was fully equipped in gear that knocked out level 100+ guys simply by holding it. With the additional boosts temporarily locked and loaded, I was hanging on by the edge of my teeth. If I wanted to go all out on top of that, I'd kill myself. The power compounded exponentially, so adding a small additional boost would get amplified out of control and put a burden on my own body. I didn't know how to quantify it all, but I could sense it. Mainly in terms of pain!

Dance steps: Two step, four step, closed promenade, progressive link, open reverse, turn outside, closed promenade, back corte and two step into open reverse, ready outside rock turn, natural twist turn, natural promenade turn.

Was that the routine? I led with my feet and made my body dance. I could see the enemy's movements, and they couldn't keep up with mine. I chose a routine that would keep me at an advantage, measuring the distance and matching the timing with my steps.

I was up against the battle-axe-wielding, ground-shaking level 81 Armor Axes. Their axes whipped around with terrifying force, but once they swept past me, I was in the clear. I could swiftly turn on my heel, and—strike! I leaped onto the dance floor of bonking, denying my partner the rhythm they desired. Pop in, sweep out, kill the monster, and plead ignorance.

“Ah, this feels kinda good? I've got a natural talent for this!”

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

One remained. I let it swing its axe and get caught up in the moment, then wedged my staff blade into its collar and brought it down. From there I could slice open the armor, flip it over, and finish the job. I wouldn't die if nothing could hit me, and if I could hit them, they'd die. That was the way I'd done things up until now. Strength? Levels? None of that mattered. The first to kill was the first to win. I won with speed and technique, and I fought to the extent that I could perfectly evade.

None of this involved unstoppable cheat skills, although it did involve literal cheating in the sense of tricking and swindling. A cheater was someone who did something improper to get their way, but there was no fair and proper way in a world this cruel and unfair. The monsters were the ones with the real cheats to begin with anyway.

“Like this? I mean, it's impossible to remember or understand those dance moves at first sight. It's literally impossible for Miss Armor Rep to have started off with such incredible sword skills. My only chance to keep up is with cheating and stuff?”

Yeah, I cheated. Life or Death was an irregular slash, a jump from no motion into instantaneous slaying. I supplemented the attack with the tempo of the

dance, doubling down on deceit with no-excess swordplay punch.

“From my experience so far, if something seems impossible, I combine and mix everything together into a single act of fraud. Do the killing until it’s done?”

“Good job, staying level. Your vertical and diagonal motion, improve axis of rotation.”

“Less power. The speed and smoothness of the turn. Build sword muscles, using awareness.”

Boink boink!

I get it. Getting bit by a flat Tiny Tanuki made me focus too much on horizontal motion. My circling movements were adequate, but I needed to move toward a sphere. In conclusion, Tiny Tanuki would never get two round objects of her own. I mean, she was already sixteen. If she did miraculously still have a growth spurt left in her, she was already over level 100—she was the poster child for slow aging!

My two dungeon emperors worried about me. From a different perspective, my whole way of fighting was a death game and a game of luck. Even though my defense was paper-thin in this rough world, I could leave it all to my Luck and my sick equipment, and win with blazing speed. Evade, elude, elicit attacks, and get out of their way. Take attacks at the perfect angle. Trigger the perfect vector to disturb them. Even if dodging was impossible, dislocation was always an option.

“Turns out I’m good at dislocation and relocation. The girls praised me as being elusive to the point of illusion... Hang on, is that praise? They were smiling when they said that, so I thought they were being nice, but that’s a diss!”

Wiggle wiggle.

Dislocate attacks with the Universe Staff and relocate them with the shoulder shields. Elude the enemy with the gauntlets, as in gloves, and illude them with everything else. Even the slightest grazes from attacks made my HP plummet against a level 81 power-specialized monster.

“Pfft. Don’t underestimate the power of maxed-out Revival! Through the endless nightly battles I’ve fought, I’ve surpassed the limits of Revival’s

possibilities and catapulted into the realm of getting falsely accused! Those wimpy grazes will never match the boundless limits of reviving that I've achieved in my nightly battle!"

Even the deflections of my own attacks did damage to me—that was how absolute the level gap was. I had to dodge the blocks to my own hits, accumulate attack after attack to cancel out attacks and delay attacks. And...*attack!*

"It takes way more than this to topple two dungeon emperors! I need to, or else I'll be subjected to a terrifying world of obscene counterattacks! A rave review! A long-form feature of 'em!"

Huh? I was getting glared at. Was I saying that aloud? *I better end this before they get angrier.* I was facing off against level 82 Whip Grasses, long and tough whiplashing vines. Their attacks packed a serious punch, but they were nothing compared to Class Rep's scolding whip! That thing was terrifying!

Slash, mow, dodge, and high-speed dance-step into a slice. I put together slashing combos as I whirled across the floor. The hardest part was curving toward the monsters without them anticipating my movements. I had to combine my parries into finishing blows. I'd be in real trouble without Revival, but since I had maxed it out, I could take a few grazes.

"I feel like I've managed to fine-tune this. As in, my interest in punishment from sexy chicks, not getting whipped by giant vines? No, that's not on the agenda?"

Wiggle wiggle?

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl were watching to find out where my limit was. I couldn't have them think too little of me, but I was good at deception myself! I could extend my limit with my limitless deceptive capabilities and attain limitless lies of limitless strength. Now *that* was Life or Death. Not a skill, but an idea.

Even so, they weren't going to let me fight in the 90s. Or possibly they couldn't stand to watch me run off on my own. It turned out they were worried about the monsters, not me. Slimey was getting hungry without any monsters to eat.

They were all chaperoning me at my classmates' insistence. The limit to their patience was the second floor! *They're invincible in combat, but they lack self-restraint!*

DAY 91

NOON

The dungeon-bucking, horse-surfing rodeo vibe turned out to be pretty popular.

DUNGEON

88TH FLOOR

THE GUARDIAN of the hidden room's treasure. It was the most dangerous monster on the floor, and massive. Since hidden rooms were hidden—*duh*—it was way too big for the room? The monster was so big that it could barely move, but that also meant I didn't have much space to dodge. It put me into a close-range, evasive maneuvering situation. I was distracted by the close-range pressing of teenage girl bodies. I didn't need more trouble from the close-range slithering of a massive steel-scaled snake! *Whoa, that tail!*

"Yeah, going into a small room with a steel-scaled snake as my opponent is way too reckless. I'm not opposed to wriggling and squirming, but I wanna be the initiator of the wriggling and squirming, not the recipient! There'd be all sorts of problems if I was interested in getting strangled to death by a snake! Since it's a snake, I'll refrigerate it? 'Cause snakes are reptiles and stuff?"

There I was, alone in the 88th floor's hidden room. Miss Armor Rep and the others had swept through the floor and run off, heading straight down to the next floor after having exterminated every last monster. My only chance to fight was now, in the hidden room. But it was a snake. I chilled the room, put it to sleep, and then went about breaking apart its body. I needed to do this quickly. The room was just so small!

"Yeah, getting all snuggly with a dead snake is not my cup of tea but neither is getting snuggly with a living one!"

As a teenage boy, I wouldn't hesitate to get all cute with a cute lamia girl, or a

hot older medusa babe, or an echidna chick, or a wild kankandara maiden. But a metal snake? No way!

In the treasure chest buried underneath the snake corpse, I found two “Protection Hairpins: Simple Emergency Barrier (limited number of uses).” I could sell them to the girls, but if I wanted peace of mind, I’d have to mass manufacture these. I only had two for now, so I’d give them to Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl.

“Sword swings, monsters scatter. That was Miss Armor Rep?”

Nod nod.

There were also chains and gelatinous variations of this theme, but I’ll leave those out. I’m sure those poor monsters on the 89th floor tried their best. They were up against three friggin’ dungeon emperors. I’m not specifying what they were because they were already spellstones by the time I got down there.

“O ye nameless spear-throwing monsters who fell to the sword, chains, and mouth of this small squad of relentless exterminators... I shall forget ye not? Not that I know what you were. What were they?”

All I’d deduced from the spears scattered everywhere was that they were something that threw spears.

“Good work, as in, I’m sure it wasn’t work at all for you. The enemy did a lot of hard work throwing all those spears? I bet the monsters got cut apart before they put in any work. Slimey, did you get to eat your fill?”

Jiggle jiggle!

Excellent. It was more efficient for them to leave me behind. Yup, that was how I had made it through these dungeons—getting left behind by my slaves to take a leisurely stroll through the now-empty dungeon floors?

I put the Protection Hairpins on the two ladies who started fawning all over me. These two were a whole new kind of hot and cold. The way they went hot and then bonked on me with all the bonking force of dungeon emperors. I thought this was an impossible game, but it was really a death game!

The pair linked arms with me and rested their heads on my shoulders as we

walked. This looked good for me in theory, but they were wearing armor. It was very hard? Also, they now had me trapped. There was no escape!

“All right, this is the 90th floor now. Maybe there’s a floor boss. I’ve been thinking about what poses I’m gonna do, but posing results in a pause during which the floor boss gets killed before I even have the chance to attack! Horse?!”

It was a horse!

“This could work with a carriage for the nerds. They might be into the ‘ride to the edge of the world and turn this land into a sea of flames’ sorta vibe. Yeah, I want it for the nerds, but it could cause some problems if we take it outside? It’s spewing poison, for one. I mean, *I* resist poison but not the poisonous lectures some teenage girls will spew at me if I bring it out?”

It had, like, eight legs and poisonous breath. Fangs grew from its chomping jaws. It could even breathe fire. *Yeah, this would be a nuisance to society in the outside world.* I decided to endeavor to be even more of a plague on the nerds’ existence in this horse’s stead.

Slimey went bouncing at it head-on. *He’s so adorable!* Miss Armor Rep went around to the left side and Dancer Girl to the right in the time it took me to strike a pose. *Shit.*

I was already too late! I pushed myself into the air, raced across the room over top of the horse’s head...and sat down. Yeah, I tried riding it? It was kinda like horse surfing, but I whacked it in the head from my position on the horse’s back. I dunno if it got mad about that or something, but it’d started to buck, and I got bored.

“Whoa there, boy! If you buck while I’m horse surfing like that, this is gonna turn into a rodeo!”

Wiggle wiggle?

I tried whacking the horse’s head as I focused on keeping my immaculate balance on the thrashing horse.

“Sheesh. I just wanted to ride you and all. This thing isn’t suited to be a monster.”

Jiggle jiggle.

I enjoyed my surf-rodeo while the other three lined up and waited. Hang on, did they want a turn? They all stood there, enjoying the rodeo. Then, when the horse was too tired to move...Slimey enjoyed a nice big lunch?

“I wish it could’ve given at least one more go at the rodeo, but this badly behaved horse lacked determination,” I said, sighing.

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

Yeah, I had been enjoying its jumps, sudden stops, and aggressive upright rearing, but it ran out of energy after twenty-seven of those.

“Well, that was a nice live surf-rodeo break. How about we go to the next floor? I’d love to make artificial waves over at the pool so we can go bodyboarding, but...the scope and construction required for surfing probably isn’t realistic with my limited resources.”

I wanted to keep practicing, so I bought time with the monsters on the 91st floor in exchange for crepes. Yesterday, my dainty, dodging, deflecting G*ndam funnels had gotten in some solid experience guarding the carriages. Oh yeah, they could rain Fire Bullets down on the enemy while maintaining a mid-ranged defensive position, too.

“They sure are useful now that I’m used to them,” I said. “They haven’t done much shoulder protecting, but they’ve got a lot of uses in combat.”

Chew chew!

Munch munch!

Gobble gobble!

Was that their response? All I heard were chewing sounds, but maybe that was just my imagination.

“I mean, slaves surely aren’t ignoring their master and eating treats. That must’ve been them acknowledging me, no doubt! None of them are looking at

me, but that's *surely* them responding!"

That had to be it. I had to believe it. *Oh ho ho?* Now there was a "Talon Glove: Speed +40%. Magic Talons. +Attack" in the hidden room. Now that was a talon-equipped glove worthy of a place in one of Cagliostro's teenage-boy-tickling tricks. Still, it would clearly get in the way of handling weapons. Yeah, as much as I loved this, I had to sell it.

We raced through the dungeon in a first-come first-serve fashion. *Cool poses really get in the way of this approach!* Everyone was already waiting by the stairs, which meant the 97th floor was the final one. That was the only reason they would wait for me there. I'd made them promise me that much. The last floor was the only one with the danger of the darkness. I warned them that if they broke their promise, I wouldn't make them dinner. That was how strict I was about it.

"Sorry for the wait. As in, you guys were the slaves who left your master and his dope poses behind all lonely? I know you guys are impatient, so I'll give you at least a little sympathy, though?"

Nod nod.

Rattle rattle.

Jiggle jiggle.

Ah, what a nice reply. Well, it was technically a reply, but it was also merely the sound of them walking. I slipped into my own single step and vanishing like mist, enveloping myself in all my skills as I swung my sword. The Universe Staff, Entangled in my abilities, lashed through the air and blasted through the empty space enclosing around my unfolding Life or Death. The very air shook. *Oops. Time to run away.*

It targeted my new position for a huge blow and started to swing downward, which I saw with Clairvoyant. I stopped my movement midway through and shifted my rotation to get out of its range. It somehow managed to lock onto my adjusted position for a second strike.

My six shoulder shields whirled through the air as defenses, warding off stabbing attacks and getting blown back one after another. I saw the direction

of the next attack with Clairvoyant, activated high-speed dance steps to dodge, and sent out Incarnate phantoms one after the next as well as some shadow crows. It could see through everything I did! It anticipated my Teleport feinting maneuver designed to confuse the enemy, seized favorable ground, and cornered me!

“You... Are you...? I know what you’re doing! I never thought the day would come when I had to use this! Thank you?”

It even shaved apart my invisible Magic Thread attacks with its greatsword. That cowardly bastard!

“You’ve got Clairvoyant, too, don’t you?!” I shouted. “That’s not fair! I’d rather you not look at my future like that! That’s a violation of my right to my own future, a clear infringement of privacy and various other bad things? Ya see? Yeah, you literally do see!”

What an unfair, illogical, dastardly bastard. There was nothing more cowardly than being able to see through the enemy’s attacks. If I hadn’t been using Clairvoyant myself, I would’ve been in real trouble here! This dungeon king was sooo unfair!

If we continued exchanging Clairvoyant-anticipated blows, the dungeon king would eventually overwhelm my defenses with sheer force. This was a level 24 versus a level 100, you know? I was a completely normal teenage boy, and this was a dungeon king monster. It didn’t matter how fast I was. Of course I couldn’t win in a battle of Clairvoyance! All I had was technique. I was at an overwhelming stats disadvantage. Any attack that got past my shields would cleave my arm straight off. Well, and get stuck to me? Even the choice to block an attack would get anticipated with Future Sight, resulting in the attack coming in a slightly different angle and at a different speed. I then spotted that with Clairvoyant, made the necessary adjustments, and so and so on in a loop of attack and parry.

See, understand, react. I couldn’t do anything about the fact that it could see my future movements, either. The shadows and smokescreens didn’t have any effect, so it must’ve had Wisdom Eye or something similar. Plus, it had the necessary stats to react on the fly. Fighting against it was hopeless. What I

needed was an attack so incomprehensible that it couldn't react even if it did see what was coming.

I let the skills accumulated, interwoven, and piled-on with Magic Entanglement unravel, then re-Entangled myself within them. It was a sudden change too great to control—an agglutination of chaos. Even Wisdom had no idea what was happening in the incomprehensible world of unimaginable strangeness. The monster could see what was coming, but the chaos crashed against it in a swing of the staff.

“Guh-graaaaaaah!”

It still somehow managed to see what was about to happen and used its devastating speed to escape. I extra *extra* exploded so it couldn't completely avoid the attack. It must've been so pissed off at how ridiculous that was, which was honestly fair—we both needed to vent our anger!

I enveloped myself in randomness and covered myself in combining vicissitudes of transforming skills. My limbs snapped and tore in eight directions. That was how ridiculous this attack was. Trying to comprehend it was a mistake? If you tried to block it, you'd miss. If you tried to dodge or teleport, it'd still come; the sheer randomness of Random Fire meant you shouldn't think about it at all. Even if you felt it, it'd still hit. It'd cut you down no matter what?

“Only Miss Armor Rep, Dancer Girl, and Slimey-class dungeon emperors have been able to dodge it, and even Dancer Girl still ate a Random Fire attack when she was level 1. You dodged, so I thought maybe you were a dungeon emperor at first, but no. You have Clairvoyant.”

Yeah, this thing was still a dungeon king, a whole class below dungeon emperor. Clairvoyant was a huge burden for such a little guy.

“Gu-graaaaaaw!”

Oof, you mad, bro? It was incandescent with rage, but I also had Clairvoyant. I could dodge its attacks, no problem. Cowardly warriors that only saw the future in order to win deserved a rough ending.

“Indeed, I love to stare my eyes off, but it is not in my nature to get stared at!

Yeah, I'm not into that sorta thing? I mean, I think I look dope in this cloak, but I'm not trying to flaunt it or anything? Is it really that much fun?"

It was true that a glancing blow from Miss Armor Rep could take out a level 100 Clairvoyant-boosted dungeon king if it made a mistake. It also had Mega Kill, which sounded awful, although that was probably the promoted form of Power Word Kill. Yeah, it couldn't so much as scratch their shadows. It wouldn't hurt three deathless dungeon emperors, not in a million googolplex years. But I wasn't going to risk it. *When it comes to probability, leave things to the Greatluck guy.*

"Yeah, judging from experience, you'd be better off landing a regular hit on me than trying to kill me with Mega Kill. That's never gonna work on me? It's seriously a 0 percent chance?"

Looking super upset, the level 100 Death Guardian died and turned into a spellstone. The danger of Clairvoyance was gone, but my allies were glaring at me? *Let's go home already.* The orphans were moving tonight, and we had to say goodbye to them. There was a lot on my plate.

DAY 91

EVENING

After all the effort I put into making that sign, they're already changing the name.

OMUI CITY

A FESTIVAL. Yup, a frontier-style temple festival. The frontier had become rich. Their sick had healed. The monster forest had been cut down. War had been avoided... The domain was peaceful now.

“Yet the falling and crashing situation seems to get worse every day! How about a recovery from the high-speed crashing crisis? A new unbeatable surpassing of the rushing speed situation—”

“Okay, a festival. We get it already!”

We needed to say a prayer—make an offering—to protect the frontier and our families and to bless the souls of those who'd lost their lives to conflict and calamity. It would be a festival to make all the families in the domain overflow with joy. All those souls and all the gods we'd ever needed were their smiles and laughter. To pay our respects to the dead, we'd put on a festival of joy.

Two bows, two claps, and a third bow. We didn't need a god. He didn't extend a hand to anyone in need around here. This territory was the result of abandonment. Even worse, god was a force of evil, what with invaders attacking the frontier in his name.

The frontier protected itself. The countless people who had given up their lives to protect this place, and those who remained here to happily raise children despite all the suffering around them. That was why the people here never gave up on the dream of happiness and why they were able to celebrate today. *Yeah, I'll call it the “Great Frontier Festival?”* It was such a marvelous name that I astounded myself with my own good naming sense. *Good thing I made all these signs!*

I was getting glared at. *Glare power from this many people is intense*, I thought. It was enough to make a Glare Scouter with its unprecedented, titanic glare-force!

“It was such a good speech. Even Father loved it. But ‘Great Frontier Festival?’” grumbled Merimeri.

“*That’s* the name for a clearance sale in gratitude toward the fallen souls...”

“Who let Haruka-kun decide the name?! This is what happens when you go along with the nicknames he gives you!”

“All he was talking about before was a festival... He went ahead and made the signs on his own!”

Festivals didn’t need names. A good name wasn’t what the spirits of the deceased longed for. They longed for the living to enjoy life, to live in happiness, to laugh, and to be grateful. That was all they ever wanted. Any name would do. Although the one I came up with was kinda long?

“Okay, then how about the ‘Great Frontier Memorial Festival? And Stuff?’”

The orphans were playing. The girls all looked beautiful in summer yukata. Paper lanterns and candles lit the path between countless food stalls. Passersby smiled and laughed. That was all a festival needed. All the people who had sacrificed their lives in hope of a better future longed for this. I got to see the girls in yukata, too, so all my suffering was worth it!

The way the slim neck peeped out of the cloth, the collarbone appearing and hiding itself time and again—it was mesmerizing. All the townspeople had their breath taken away by the sight of my classmates walking through the town in their colorful yukata. *Excellent! Booming yukata set sales are on the way!*

Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl clip-clopped down the road in Japanese geta sandals. The orphan boys frolicking in their happi coats and jinbei got scolded, but they couldn’t help themselves. They were having so much fun. The joyous orphan girls raced in circles in child-sized yukata, having the time of their lives.

“Whoaaa! Candied apples!”

“Oh em geeeee!”

“Look, a target-shooting game!”

“We gotta do it!”

The girls were also having a blast. I doubted kids ever reacted so happily to candied apples back in Japan. It was a memory they thought they’d never see again, never encounter, now realized... They went like flies. They flocked to the candied apples like flies to honey, and I profited? Yeah, most of the vendors here were supplied by my side jobs?

A target-shooting game... Didn’t these girls spend their days volleying arrows at monsters in dungeons? *Crap!* Elf Girl was going around to booth after booth, winning all the big prizes with her perfect marksmanship! Those were huge losses for me! I had carefully bent the shafts of all the arrows to distort their center of gravity, but she was still knocking me deep into the red with bullseye after bullseye! The orphans and the girls didn’t bother trying it themselves. Instead, they told Elf Girl what prizes they wanted since she kept right on winning. *I’m banning her next time!*

Everyone failed at ring toss and ball toss, as planned. I’d bent the throwing objects to mess with their centers of gravity in addition to placing an illusion on the targets to distort their actual distance.

Darts, however, was a different situation! I implemented a board that swung depending on the difficulty. A teary-eyed old dude was making it swing back and forth as hard as he could, but the rocket-fire speed darts still blasted into the board on target time after time. *I’m deep in the red!*

“Hey there, Haruka-kun.” It was the two festival sovereigns. “This is the first time I’ve seen so many people enjoying themselves like this. Our ancestors are surely grateful. Thank you.”



“Lord Haruka, thank you for outfitting not only Merielle in one of these yukata but me as well,” said Mrs. Murimuri. “Your comrades taught me how to put it on so I could help the little girls with theirs.”

I was thankful. After I had explained my intentions, they’d given me a permit and had delegated the event to me wholesale without any restrictions. The advisor was the one who had done most of the work, of course.

The orphans found Mrs. Murimuri and started hugging her and hanging on to her. *The orphan launcher doesn’t fire at Murimuri? What sort of discrimination is this?*

Beyond the dim glow of lit candles and swaying paper lanterns sat the former orphanage, now converted into a temple. The frontier’s deceased were enshrined there. Everyone lined up and bowed their heads, lost in memory. They gazed upon the guardian ancestors of the frontier. *That’s who we should be praying to.* Everything that allowed the frontier to survive and achieve happiness had been right here all along.

“Haruka-kun! Can I borrow some money from you? I’ve sorta spent everything I got.”

“Go ahead. I won’t make you pay interest, so here ya go?”

“No way! Thanks!”

If I spread money around now, all those riches would return to me! All this spending was an investment! The girls were the frontier’s biggest earners anyway. I could rip them off endlessly, no holds barred!

We were moving the kids to the orphanage tonight, so everybody wanted to make lots of memories. My classmates would break the bank for them. They didn’t understand what I meant when I said the former orphanage was now a temple. Assuming that they’d only be able to see the orphans every so often from now on, my classmates wanted to make tonight unforgettable for the kids.

Little do they know that the new orphanage is actually right behind the inn! It was directly connected, so we’d be able to see them every day. Yeah, I hadn’t told anyone that yet? I kinda made it without telling them?

Before long, I was surrounded by girls bringing me their promissory notes and subjecting me to much rubbing and squishing.

“Er, yukata fabric is thin, so you can’t get too close to me for teenage boy reasons... H-hang on, slow down. This is inexcusable—*incredible!* I can’t add in an order of underwear. You know that! And don’t stand so close to me!”

I was feeling some problematic teenage boy sensations. I had a yukata on, too, so the thin fabric allowed me to feel much squish and boing as if directly touching my skin!

“Who’s giving a teenage boy a direct-contact squishy boing? W-wait, whose hand is that reaching inside my yukata?! This isn’t the way it’s supposed to go! I’m getting molested! Who untied my sash?! We’re in the middle of the city! Get away, molester!”

I thought this was the Great Frontier Festival. Instead, it was the Great Frontier Molester! Teenage boy malfunctions were not needed here today! What I needed was an arrest warrant!

“Oh lord, that is some direct pinpointing! You’re making a teenage boy rub your butt. This is all wrong for so many reasons! The guy normally comes on to the girl, and in fact, that would also be wrong in this scenario for many reasons! A festival is not the right time or place for a teenage girl stampede! It’s turning into sexual harassment!”

I drowned in a sea of sweet scents and squishy pressure. Better off not knowing what happened while I was unconscious. I was scared to ask myself.

Exhausted, I sat on a bench at the far edge and watched the festival. I heard the shouts and laughter of the townspeople and the clamor of vendors hawking wares. Voices and laughter mixed. Yukata and jinbei flew off the shelves. The masks were also popular, although I admit I wasn’t expecting kobold masks to be such a hit. *I better increase production!* The cutesy chick masks were also popular, but why were they getting outsold by the kobold masks? Did people love how realistic they were or something?

The orphans played with the other kids. They ran around, shouting, laughing, buying things, and eating. A certain populace that faced an interminable rebirth cycle of one-more-sets were doing the same? They entered the temple holding

hands, lost in memory before slowly getting swallowed up in the laughter of the town. They couldn't stop smiling.

"The dungeons won't stop popping up, and the way they're getting deeper and deeper is kinda out of control." I sighed. "With such peace and wealth, everyone deserves to laugh like this. I can leave the rest to Mr. Meridad. He'll leave it all to his advisor?"

After that, I handed out sweets. Business continued to flourish at the festival, sending me into the black! Not as in accounting, as in despair! Yes, a black deeper than darkness itself.

My biggest regret was not making water balloons happen. The little kids with their masks and jinbei and happi coats, hot dogs and cotton candy in hand as they ran around—but no water balloons. Yeah, I didn't have rubber. Maybe rubber hadn't circulated in this world yet because other materials from plants were soft and durable. *Who knows what will happen to civilization if I don't find some rubber trees?!*

"Mind if I sit here?"

I looked up. "Oh, Class Rep. If you promise not to molest me, you can sit three feet away."

"Oh, come on! Everyone was over the moon about the festival and got a little out of control. Let it go, just for today."

With that, she sat right next to me, completely ignoring my plea. Yeah, she was acting like she was looking after me, but when I had been handing out manju, she'd been right in the thick of it with the rest of them!

"In fact, you were holding the line against me with gusto, if I recall!"

Yes, in terms of positioning, she was just as culpable as the rest of them! How dare she put on an innocent smile like that!

"Look how much fun everyone is having," she said. "I don't think anyone will forget today."

Her white neck and collarbone peeked out of her Japanese morning-glory-patterned yukata. Her black hair was tousled, falling out from its tied-up

position and onto her neck. She wasn't listening to a word I was saying!

"Now I'm gonna have to make an even more fun plan. The orphans will get bored with these events once they get used to them. It's necessary to devise strategies to bring in new customers and new avenues to highway rob big spenders. Today was a profit bust. I can't believe it!"

"Yeah, you don't need to try that hard," she responded. "But thank you."

With that, Class Rep vanished back into the crowd. She fled the scene without giving a single testimony about the sexual harassment case! *So long as everyone's having fun it's fine. But is it really?!*

DAY 91

NIGHT

The incident of the traditional move-in soba made by the permanently settled shut-in.

OMUI CITY

THE FESTIVAL WAS ENDING. The more I enjoyed myself, the more I settled into silence and loneliness. The clamor of the day disappeared as if it had never happened. The departed stalls left behind vast empty swaths along the main road. The red glowing lanterns—the last remnants of the festival—vanished into the night.

When the festival ended, the orphans had to move. The orphanage had a proper school in it and caretakers who would always be around. It was a much better environment than the inn, since we were always out all day. The orphans would no doubt be happier there in town with everyone else. While they'd be separated from the rest of us, we still lived in the same city. We could see them any time.

We all held little hands, tearing up as we walked toward the inn...only to find a new orphanage built right behind it. Did we even need to ask who the culprit was?

“Look, the former orphanage is already being used as a memorial to the frontier people’s ancestors. Plus with all the additional orphans coming in, it seemed a bit tight? They asked me to build a new orphanage, so I did? I’m just a hard-working teenage boy working his butt off at his side job. I’m not the bad guy here! It’s better for the orphans to be closer anyway so they can help with errands and stuff, and it’s all sneakily connected, so we’re technically all under the same roof? I mean, the literal roofs are different, but since we’re gonna be neighbors and all, I made some traditional Japanese move-in soba noodles. Although why a permanently settled shut-in is making ‘Welcome, neighbor!’

noodles is a mystery. I made some for the orphans, who aren't moving, so it doesn't make sense at all, but let's eat them? I got buckwheat flour and stuff? Just to make things clear, I didn't do anything wrong!"

"Let's eat!" the class shouted. "Seriously, tell us earlier next time! Everyone was crying on their way over here!"

Soon everyone was too busy slurping to lecture him anymore.

The culprit claimed, "The church orphans had to move out of a church anyways, and it's better to be closer, and having Tiny Tanuki join them was— Gwaaaah! Don't try to bite me *while* you're slurping noodles, please! My hair is covered in noodles now! I'm not trying to get noodly hair. Perms are definitely not permitted in my workplace, although that's here and I set the rules? Although I could teleport over to the staffroom if I got called there?"

Not an ounce of regret. His head was getting bitten, and nobody was trying to stop it.

"Don't you have any idea how sad Vice Rep C was?!"

"Yeah! Also, the soba is amazing!"

Haruka-kun had gone ahead and built the new orphanage behind the inn. He must've needed to ask the people living there to move and make them new houses in addition to doing all the preparation for the pool and the festival. He had been lining this all up since the moment we'd gotten back to the frontier. He hadn't said a word, though, so the biting continued!

Chomp chomp!

Jiggle jiggle!

"T-Tiny Tanuki, you're turning into a monster! Is it a soba allergy?"

Haruka-kun had made the soba from scratch with buckwheat flour. He was unhappy that he couldn't get fish broth, bonito flakes, or kelp, but it tasted great regardless. Book Club President said unorthodox but delicious was the way to go—a huge stamp of approval. Vice Rep C was happy but embarrassed that she cried so much. Now she was crying because it tasted so good and it made her mad. So, yeah, she bit Haruka-kun's head. Yup, she was that happy.

She was biting him way more than usual.

We had the light meal and dessert and moved the orphans into the new orphanage. Haruka-kun had already moved over all their luggage, so they walked over with their personal belongings. The two buildings were connected by a hallway.

“Good night,” we called to them. “See you tomorrow.”

Murimour-sama took the kids to their beds in the orphanage—*or should I say orphan wing?*—as they waved good night to us.

We’d see them tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. The kids had been playing brave, but there was no way they’d been ready. They had pretended they were so they wouldn’t bother us. Haruka-kun would never accept that. If they were sad, and Haruka-kun couldn’t go to the orphanage to care for them, then he’d have to move the orphanage here. We didn’t have to give up anything. Everything was okay now. He had made everything okay by sheer over-the-top force.

That was why a lecture was needed! I had a lot on my mind I needed to lecture him about—lots left over from earlier today, too. He had gone and put his life at risk again! We instantaneously surrounded him in lecture formation, but he vanished with a flap of his black cloak. Countless dancing black shadows swooped out and slipped through our encirclement.

“Seal off all escape routes! Watch out for illusions and trust your Presence Sensing!” I called.

“Aye aye!”

He managed to slip through our shoddy formation because we were dizzy from all the pudding we ate for dessert. *If I just hadn’t asked for seconds...four times?*

“H-hang on, I wasn’t being shady. I was using Shadow magic! All this damage to my reputation is gonna make my sex appeal vanish into the shadows!”

His black cloak turned into multiple dark shadows that scattered across the dining room. When we sealed off exits and captured the shadows, they split into black crows and flew away. He seemed to be aware that he deserved a

lecture—he was trying to flee at all costs. There was the orphanage thing but also that dangerous monster. He fought a level 100 dungeon king by himself, of all things! One with the ability to see the future and kill with a single blow. All by himself.

Even after surpassing his limits and deliberately weakening his body, he tricked his limits into letting him slip by, cheated his way to his former strength, and beat the dungeon king alone. There wasn't a single ounce of regret in his typical, incomprehensibly garbled, garbage statements!

“Look, I tried my hardest to kill it, and it was killed! I'm a killer! If a thing can be killed, ya know? It wasn't about regretting being killed, but regretting the killing before I got killed?”

“Put on the innocent face all you like. You can't fool us!”

He fled in a hurry.

Haruka-kun broke through to another level, attained new abilities, and risked his life. No matter how much we worried, he said “they got mad at me” and pretended he didn't understand, blaming our frustration with him on his lack of sex appeal. *He hasn't reflected on his ways one bit!*

We managed to get another half-hearted circle formed around him, which he broke through with shadows again, slipping through the gaps and disappearing. In the end, we let him get away. He gave us extra pudding and all, so we sort of had to.

“He tried, and he did it.”

“A killer of a thing can't be killed. That's scary!”

“Is he gonna try to 're-get' the killing?!”

“It's true that if he didn't kill it, he'd regret it, but how many times does he need to kill?!”

Nodding in earnest approval, he sprinted away again. With enough questioning, he always revealed himself as the most brutal, villainous murderer of them all.

“Stronger and sturdier than before, definitely,” explained Angelica-san. “He

fought reliably...with impossible attacks, and won.”

“It wasn’t, fair,” said Nefertiri-san. “The dungeon king was strong. But, his opponent, unfair.”

If the two of them weren’t mad at him, then he must’ve shown true strength. They didn’t have peace of mind by any means, but he’d shown them something in that fight—proper fighting technique and the outlandish scheming necessary to defeat a dungeon king. He’d achieved safety through trickery and had become a true warrior in the process.

He did easily slip through our twenty-one-person-strong formation, shadows wisping off into the dark without us so much as touching him. It was way overpowered, so we asked Angelica-san what the skill was. It turned out that it wasn’t a skill at all. It was Incarnate, Illusion, Shadow Incarnate, and Shadow Crows all at once, which he’d used to blind us and then escape by crawling under the table. *It’s a cheap magic trick! Simple misdirection!* You’d think that someone with much simpler skills than him would go for a trick like that, but creating a flock of shadow crows to dash and caw in every direction had us distracted. I thought I kept my eye on him, but I’d gotten distracted. In that instant, he’d used Incarnate to produce a body double as he dashed under the table. *This feels seriously OP.*

The kids weren’t here anymore, so we had a girls’ meeting in the bath. It felt a little empty. The topic of discussion was the terrifying dangers of Perversion. We got an inkling of how deadly that was based on the name, but the destructive capabilities were beyond anything I could’ve imagined, matching the evil imaginative prowess of the user in a crazed rampage of pleasure and madness.

With extreme interest, everyone got undressed and rushed into the bathing area. We girls washed our bodies with the bubbly soap, then went straight into the hot bath. Then we listened with rapt attention to the fear, to the horror.

“*What?! H-h-how? That, that, that, going in...*”

Kersplash!

“*L-Lumpy lumps wr-wriggling and t-transforming...*”

Burble burble.

“Seeping sticky fluid...c-creating a Sensitivity boost both inside and out?!”

Plunk.

“M-making mushrooms throb inside... The nubs vibrate...when in...”

Borble borble.

He had made them lose their minds by applying a Sensitivity boost with the ailment-inflicting Poisonous Gloves. Once they were out of commission, he had used the effects of the Grotesque Necklace to make them more sensitive *inside* with a secret fluid before inserting a special mushroom shape and letting it go to town. It was a brutal, nasty combination that was difficult to put into words. It was so stimulating that they couldn't even pass out, their consciousnesses tormented over and over again in a masterpiece of pleasure.

“It's SOS, need assistance. Get him, a wife!”

“We don't, have enough time, to revive! Two people, not enough. We need at least five, ten to match him!”

I shrieked. “Wh-wh-why is everyone looking at meeeeeee?! N-n-no way! I don't want to go crazy inside and out! D-d-definitely not! N-n-no. No way. I'm not getting hollowed out and melted and dissolved inside and out! No way, no way, definitely never! Why are you all offering me up without hesitation! There's no way I would do that, getting hollowed out by nubby nubs and lumpy lumps infiltrating me, vibrating and rotating on the inside. There's no way I'd—”

KERPLOOSH!

Healing commencing. Munch munch.

Sheer fearsome, evil power—now these were the terrors of a Sex God. The strongest dungeon emperors in this world could do nothing against this calamity as he drove them to the pinnacle of madness! We took the overstimulated, drowning girls out of the bath, dried off with our new towels, and went to our rooms.

“Ya knooooow,” said Vice Rep B, “so long as you have Revival, then no matter how crazy you go or how many times you die... You can tooootally keep

fighting.”

“We could also mitigate damage with a designated management system in place.”

“We can bring in everyone to apply a constant flow of healing and recovery magic.”

“With a medic on standby to stuff a mushroom into your mouth as soon as you pass out, you’ll be able to keep going, no problem!”

“Again, why am I the one who is going to be sacrificed for this cause?!”

The body tormented. Skin stroked delicately until the mind was brought to the brink of madness, caught between pleasure and lunacy. Tentacles infiltrating, causing anyone to overflow at their touch... Then skills that added even more pleasure from the inside, unleashing unrestrained penetration torment to wreak havoc! *Yeah, this is way too much!*

“Nerves go crazy, head lights on fire, lost my mind,” said Angelica-san. “Losing my mind, losing my mind, then it worse. Craziess...comes.”

“Over and over and over and over and over and over and over,” said Nefertiri-san. “Don’t know what’s happening anymore. It never stops!”

The freakiest part of all was that his whole body was weaponized. He even transformed his tongue to morph and secrete fluids. It went without saying that his ten fingers could transform and vibrate as well. He had too many weapons! It made sense that you’d need ten people to match him, and even then you might not be able to overcome such an atrocity!

“Need back-up. Someone marry him, save us from the brink of death!”

“If we don’t defeat him soon, he gets stronger and stronger. It’s already, out of control!”

With that, the two of them put on tight mini dresses. They were bare-shouldered. Their curvy, busty figures were on full display. Stockings were on their long, gorgeous legs. And like that, they went off to attempt to subjugate a sex god. They should have been at an advantage, so long as he didn’t have equipment, but it was impossible to topple a fully equipped sex god.

He was the ultimate sex god of this world. Even reinforcements weren't guaranteed to do the job. That'd be sending maidens to the grave. This sex god's eyes couldn't stop swimming around when we were all at the pool, and they sunk into a deep, deep ocean when we crowded him for orders. This sex god froze up when girls got too close to him, and when his blindfold went away in front of a naked girl, he desperately tried to keep his eye shut. No matter how clumsy or shy he seemed, his attacks were out of this world.

DAY 91

LATE NIGHT

I got sent to another world before I saw that I was at the age of seeing, but that level of see-through is still brutal.

WHITE LOSER INN

I MADE A BLUNDER. Did the dungeon emperors' grand illusion of deception fool me? Had I ignored the signs of danger? Perhaps it was that I simply let my guard down after experiencing the powers of Perversion last night.

Regardless, two gorgeous girls in strapless, form-fitting dresses approached me from either side and sat next to me. They closed in, licking and stroking. That was all it took to exert complete control over a teenage boy. No guy could resist that! I mean, if he could, he'd have his teenage boy qualifications revoked and receive an eternal banishment!

"St-stay back!" I cried.

"Our gift to you."

Long legs in stockings emerged from the minidresses and wrapped around my lap, straddling me. Soft, white cleavage closed in and then smothered me. Close-range stimulation and pressure were repeatedly applied from left and right—no teenage boy could be free enough of lust to struggle against this! I didn't think there are any teenage boys free of lust in the first place! Yup, they stripped me. I'd let my guard down, and they robbed me of my equipment, leaving a defenseless teenage boy pinned down by every limb and with no choices left!

Miss Armor Rep giggled. "You can't use High-Speed Thinking, if we don't let you think."

"We thought through, your weaknesses."

"Your thoughts out-thought me!"

The long-polished wisdom of thousands of years of conjurers and magicians developed a sound methodology to delude the human consciousness and muscle memory with illusion. Call it the mastery of manipulation of our most basic psychological and physiological responses. They got me with the ol' minidress misdirection! Of course I was staring at those dresses! The first thought I had was to stop thinking and stare my eyes out!

By the time I came to, my equipment was completely off, leaving a powerless teenage boy pinned down from both above and below. I was caught, tied up, and locked in a grapple, entangled and entwined from both sides. It was an extremely complicated and troublesome situation... I surrendered. Failure! At some point I started relying too much on my equipment, so having it stripped from me left me completely open. I'd forgotten to fight in the midst of battle!

"I mean, two dungeon emperors at once would usually be way too much for an ordinary teenage boy? At least let me have my neckla—"

Ammmf! Mmmmrff!

"Pah! Just give me my cloa—"

Oooomf! Ploomf ploomf!

"Aaah!"

Communications were down. We'd entered the phase of battle where words no longer worked!

"N-no, n-not there— Uuuugh. If you keep— Oh, ah!"

Kiss, slurrrrrp!

"Ah! No, I'm not done yet! I'll concentrate everything I have into conscious overdrive— Ah!"

Shlobber, shlurp!

"Mm..."

Lick lick lick...

The firm, juicy paradise of plump, soft, round rears that shook and swayed despite entrancingly tight waists. The splendid spectacle of butts jiggling and

bouncing into place every time they moved with thick, curvy thighs extending toward my face.

My palms were occupied with the sensation of soft, firm, smooth roundness, tight enough to send me bouncing straight away, moist enough to suction me in place, soft enough to make my fingers meld into the smooth flesh... With my arms pinned down by meaty thighs, I had no hope of moving. I didn't have the leeway to come up with a counter to this! Yup, someone had leaked the secret of teenage boys' taste, tastefully taking advantage of taken tastes and taking the lead with ease. *I knew what was happening, and I still couldn't help looking!* In fact, I was still looking!

Cries echoed late into the night.

Two softly smiling faces lay next to one another. Even without equipment, I still had means at my disposal, as I could see through all their weaknesses. I didn't stand a chance against their overwhelming strength. It was one-sided. They didn't stop until I was utterly annihilated, licking and sucking until Revival had exhausted itself. *So unfair!* The two-on-one rodeo session was just kicking me when I was down. I was the dungeon horse getting its punishment for misbehaving. That was the kind of true torture they inflicted on me. Two cowgirls surfing one hopeless bull, a calculated conspiracy!

Their graceful faces mumbled in their sleep. I wiped off the white fluid from the side of their faces, their tongues lolling out like works of art. I slowly got up. Unfortunately, this teenage boy didn't have any fuel left. Without any hope of revenge, I started to do my side job.

I investigated some of the equipment my classmates had left me with Jupiter Eye. I could see evidence of their strengths and weaknesses and fighting styles in the wear and tear on the metal. I took notes on where the materials were under more strain and where they frequently took hits.

I took the damaged pieces and strengthened the surface hardness with Alchemy. I didn't want to increase the movable joints of the equipment, or else the toughness and longevity would suffer as a result. I examined the unique parts of each piece, optimizing the mobile joints and buffing the defensive portions.

Experiencing taking hits from swords in a duel myself had drastically increased my understanding of armor. A curved design that would force blows to glance off the armor rather than simply taking them straight-on would be better, so I remodeled the armor to curve more. Now that I was working on this armor, I understood something.

“Those dudes aren’t even trying. They have some damage from their own attacks, but none from getting hit themselves!”

The meatheads’ armor had scratches. Not just scratches, in fact. Their armor was completely busted up. They were scratches from *attacking* the enemy. They used their armor as a shield, ramming into the enemy head-on—I could tell from the places on the armor that had received damage. Meanwhile, the nerds’ armor was spotless. The damage was... *My god, they’re using the meatheads like shields!*

By comparison, the girls had far too many scratches on theirs. Some deep cuts sliced almost all the way through. Plenty more scratches indicated they had barely managed to avoid getting cut to the skin. They weren’t operating within the safety margin. They fought to the point where the slightest mistake could have been fatal. They were cutting it far too close. *They’re overdoing it.*

“They don’t need to worry about me. I haven’t died yet! Not once!”

Why were they being so hasty? Judging from experience, my death rate was literally 0 percent. I hadn’t died yet.

“I mean, living people normally have a death rate of 0 percent. I’m totally fine until I die. In a sense, I’m immortal? Ya feel?”

I wanted to upgrade Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girls’ armor with mithril. The amount of mithril required increased with high-level armor, so doing their armor might use up my entire mithril stock. Still, we needed all the extra margins we could get. The deeper the dungeons went, the more risk we faced.

“My best bet is to go searching and digging for it. I haven’t found anything promising yet. I guess I’ll need to go over to a mountain and start digging as deep as I can until I detect something.”

I had found a couple places that had iron ore. If I dug a tunnel from those iron

mines, there was a chance I'd detect mithril somewhere along the way. If I left in the middle of the night, the three of them would get worried. They'd try to come along if I told them where I was going first, and they needed their sleep. I didn't want to wake them up now that they were finally able to sleep with smiles on their faces. After spending eternity alone in the darkness, unable to wake up from a never-ending nightmare... No, I couldn't wake them up now. But I couldn't get my revenge yet, either.

I was curious about the jewel the Death Guardian had left as a drop item. It was the "Abyss Orb: Clairvoyance. Wisdom Eye. X-Ray Vision. Understanding. Mega Kill."

"That's redundant. Clairvoyance and Wisdom Eye and X-Ray Vision."

X-Ray Vision was the problem. No teenage boy would be able to resist its capabilities, and it would totally neutralize me in the constant battle of blindfolds to protect my sex appeal! Although, if I thought more carefully about it, the blindfolds in question were neutralizing themselves in the first place. They were the wrench-your-eyes-open type of blindfolds! Who had picked those two for that job?!

"Incorporating Jupiter Eye into equipment? Fair enough. But Understanding seems to point to something beyond Clairvoyant. Something like Elf Girl's Emotion Sensing skill, maybe?"

I'd heard about the tale of a demon that could see through the human heart. The ink painter Toriyama Sekien recorded it in his collection *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki*, but it didn't lead to spiritual understanding, ya know? Oh, and having Mega Kill seemed like it could give me a nasty look in my eyes, ya feel?

"That Death Guardian had a nasty expression," I sighed. To be honest, I'd never seen a monster with a friendly look in its eyes, though.

The item was too dangerous to sell. At the same time, none of my classmates had any thought-boosting skills like Clairvoyant or Wisdom Eye. It was difficult to wield things that made unnecessary things show up in your vision, though. And with X-Ray Vision on the menu, it was definitely off-limits for the guys! I didn't really want the girls to have it, either!

Well, thinking about it wasn't helping, so I decided to seal the orb away for

the time being. I got the feeling that quite a few items had been sealed away by this point, but sealed was sealed. Sealing was the only option for items that threatened my sex appeal. Clairvoyance and Understanding did just that. *This orb is all about violating girls' privacy!*

I got to a good stopping point for my side job, so it was time to sleep. I'd been so busy preparing for the festival. Now that my side-job stuff had calmed down, I could focus on resting up for the morning—fully equipped, of course!

DAY 92

MORNING

Square One sounds like the name of a movie, but it's really a rhombus formation that I could bust out of.

WHITE LOSER INN

I PLACED EVERY CUBIC INCH of the room under the complete grasp of Holding. The screams didn't even echo... Just a little fuss in the morning made them this mad at me?

From the earlobe to the nape of the neck and collarbone to chest. From the belly, they arrived at the groin, and passed on to thighs. My procession of tentacles stroked their skin. My tentacles took on three-dimensional forms surpassing all levels of disturbing thanks to Grotesque and fluid secretion with Perversion, proceeding and marching and crawling across seductive skin as they warped and vibrated. Tentacle terror!

Soundless screams. Their pale and olive bodies were wet with fluid, arching far up to the sky as they trembled uncontrollably. Their bodies writhed in a frenzied dance as the transforming tentacles swept and squirmed all over their bodies, drenching them with liquid as they crawled over their smooth skin.

"Grotesque is amazing! I can't believe I never thought of suction cups!"

My tentacles sprouted small suction cups on their tips, pinching and pressing as they wriggled over the smooth peaks and valleys of the two girls' bodies. The tentacles clung to them as I lifted up their legs, suckling with every inch they crawled, making juicy sucking sounds.

Wrapped head-to-toe in my tentacles, faces in rapture, they continued to let out short twitches as the tentacles' mouth-tips teased them like wriggling sea anemones, eating into their soft flesh and stroking the smooth skin with countless buzzing bumps. They doused them in sensitivity-boosting fluid that made their bodies twitch and writhe and shake all over... *They're gonna be*

pissed later! This was even more powerful than I'd imagined.

If I didn't designate the resulting form, Grotesque would morph my tentacles into a random shape, automatically assigning Grotesque-imbued effects. Surely you could understand the beauty of their writhing bodies entwining with my tentacles, of their gasping faces and sizzling skin as they bent and twisted with every tease. Fat tears gathered beneath their swollen pupils, eyes wide open as pale drool dripped off of their bright red lolling tongues. Their mouths were half-open, but a full-blown stream of drool was coming out. *Yeah, they're gonna be hella pissed!*

After eliciting an unbelievable concentration of cries and convulsions in a short period, I let the two relax on the bed. They let out intense sighs. I wiped the sticky fluid off their gorgeous skin and the drool from around their mouths. I also changed the sopping wet sheets.

Their eyes were still unfocused, but once they came to, I knew I'd be subject to a tumultuous tempest of lectures...and that wasn't just a feeling. As the light returned to their eyes, they skewered me with killer glares. *Oh no, this is going to be the bonking sort of lecture!*

"Died a hundred times! Revenge, 101 times!"

"I'll make up for it, with everything, I have. Clear my anger, now, I'm coming for you!"

"B-but I'm really sorr—"

Kiss!

"—rrryyyy! A-and D-Dancer Gi—"

Sluuurp!

"—iiiiiaah! Ah, it was an accide—"

Shloop...

"—eaaaagh..."

Smooch, smooch. Suck, suck...

This is a large-scale lecture from ultimate Dungeon Emperor-class deities.

Please wait a moment. Or ninety-three moments?

Gasping for air, I stumbled out of the room and staggered down the stairs. *I can barely move my lower half!*

“What nice weather,” I sighed. “Is it just me, or does the sun look green?”

The strong beams of the sun fell on me. I was starving...and they were so mad! Their revenge for the fluid-secreting grotesque tentacles was as terrifying as what I’d done to them. *And just as sexy!*

“Good morning, as in it’s a bit late for that, but good morning?”

The orphans had come in their mass migration from down the connecting corridor.

“Good mooorning!”

“Morning. Did everyone sleep well?”

“Yeah!”

All the orphans ran down the hall. With all their bustling, mixing, and mingling, I couldn’t find that lost little tanuki in their midst at all. Vice Rep C was like a baby. As flat as the sea and endless plains, no peaks or valleys to speak of, she... *Er, let’s leave that aside.* I sensed an urge to kill from somewhere among the orphans! *Battle biting lust, to be specific!* Look, forgetting the whole flat part, she was still like a baby. Not in terms of appearance, but mentally. I suppose what I meant by that was that she was fragile. Vice Rep C was the one who had cried the most about getting dragged into a whole other world like this. She had been saved by saving the orphans. They’d also lost their families.

She couldn’t admit it to the other girls. That was why I’d talked to her before the orphans had moved. I’d put it to her straight.

“Look there, Little Tanuki. You don’t need to fight, you know? It’s peaceful now, so go work in the orphanage and be with them? It doesn’t make sense for a little baby tanuki to have to fight in a fantasy world to begin with, for one. I mean, what god goes, ‘Our world is about to get ravaged by a demon king. I shall now summon a baby tanuki!’ ‘Kaboiing, Tiny Tanuki time!’ Yeah, that’s not a standard development? So go be with the kids, ya feel? I’ll tell Class Rep, so

don't sweat it. I'll say, 'Tiny Tanuki went back to the mountains. Good for her! Yippee-ki-yay. And stuff?' and everyone will be on board, so it's all good. Ya feel —fe, fe, faaahh! No, not that feeling, as in the feeling of you biting me!"

And then she friggin' bit me!

"All of them lost their moms and dads," she'd said in response. "They got killed by monsters but made sure that their kids escaped first. Some of their parents got sick and died because the medicine wasn't good enough to save them. Some of their parents died because their villages got attacked by bandits. I'll fight for them. I can fight! I'll beat up bandits. I'll beat up monsters. I'll pick as many mushrooms as it takes. I'll do it for the orphans! I'll protect them, I swear! I'm not going to let any other moms and dads die!" Tears flowed down her cheeks as she glared at me.

She'd be going back to the dungeon today. That bad-tempered tanuki. If her purpose was to make sure that there wouldn't be any new orphans, then I couldn't stop her. I didn't have any reason like that to fight. I needed money, so I needed spellstones, so I was going into the dungeons. If the monsters could be tactful and leave useful items or turn themselves into valuable spellstones for me, I wouldn't have any reason to fight. They never turned into spellstones on their own without a fight, though. Ungrateful bastards.

I made a mountain of hamburgers, piling them on for a first-come, first-serve fest. The orphanage didn't have dining facilities yet, so the hungry orphans gathered in the inn's dining hall instead. Alongside perky-booty-overstuffed compression shorts, of course. The meatheads stuffed their own buckets as clueless as ever. Y'all know the nerds' sitch, right? Totally entranced.

In this brutal world of destruction, the least we could all ask for was some warmth of heart. The four of us did our morning exercises, then I got my morning dose of Receptionist Rep glares. I didn't know why Miss Armor Rep and Dancer Girl were also glaring at me, but the result was a veritable volley of sprightly morning glares.

"Yup, these quests have changed so little that I'm pretty darn sure there's a legendary tale of the immutable unchanging bulletin board! Truly, this bulletin board must be so sacred that only the chosen one could achieve one of these

forever frozen quests and remove it from the list. Can we get a normal one in here instead, damn it?! I don't have anything to report because these repetitive quests have tanked my rep!"

"You don't have anything to report because you're not an adventurer, and yet you seem to be repeating this legend of the bulletin board spiel day after day, becoming a legend in and of yourself. The always-sneaking supreme lord of the bulletin board. Go sneak after something that's worthy of legend to begin with! Nobody asked for your opinion anyhow! In fact, I don't want to hear your snickering about how you snuck in here to begin with!"

Rant rage! Rant, rant rage!

Next, I went over to the duke's castle. He owed me a serious explanation about why he'd exposed himself as a god-lover. Someone from the church was there waiting for us.

DAY 92

NOON

Without any objections from the person in question, they designated somebody to do one lap, but how did they decide how many laps to designate?

OMUI CITY

THIS PLACE HAD BEEN hell laid to waste by evil spirits of the wild wilderness. Now, it'd become a paradise overflowing with luxury goods and the laughter of children. The rot of the continent had become a joyful town. Its clean, colorful streets and shops were full of the finest clothes.

This region, which the Church had set out to vanquish in the name of purity, was a paradise of kind people and smiling children. Not one of them threw a stone at those of us cloaked in the robes of the Church. In fact, they greeted us with utmost hospitality. Not a scornful word among them. Yes, that was how they greeted us penitents, our guilt scorching in our bosoms, as we bit our lips and walked around the city drowning in our own repentance.

Soon after, we were taken to the frontier church of Omui. It was at once simple and sublime, a lovely white building. It was pristine, but the very opposite of the over-the-top gaudy beauty of the Church. Instead, it was a pure white building. The simple interior, gently clouded with light, was devoted to not God but instead those who lived, those who protected, and those who had lost their lives in the domain. Their names were carved on countless stones placed inside. Visitors left flowers on the monuments as they prayed. It was a deeply sacred place.

"It may displease you of the church to see that our house of worship is devoted to the deceased," said the duke of the frontier, Meropapa Sim Omui. This was the king of the frontier, a man whose name resonated across the entire continent: the legendary leader of the peerless frontier army. "However,

it is a necessary monument in a region surrounded by vicious monsters and a great gift that we have received. The room with the monuments is called the Hall of the Great Souls. This is a church for memorializing and offering our respects to all the people whom we have lost as well as to those who have died without knowing what they spent their lives fighting for. Please forgive us.”

He was at once grand and gentle mannered, a wise and kindly man. He treated us with respect; shamed, we fell into silence. We had made our way here expecting to be attacked and taunted, but this treatment... They didn’t appear to begrudge us. They had every reason to do so.

“I raise no objection,” I replied. “With the arrival of the upper ranks of the Church, and considering everything you have been through, I did not expect a monument to our God. Representations of God are prohibited to begin with. Furthermore, we knew we would have to lower our heads before you and face the full brunt of your well-deserved wrath. Lowering our heads is a pointless labor. We dare not presume to ask for forgiveness. Still, we have come to offer our deepest and most profound apologies in the name of God! In our vice, we brought tragedy to the frontier. As representatives of the Church, we are so sorry. We apologize from the bottom of our hearts!”

We came to Omui prepared to lose our heads. We were flustered, far from having expected to be treated as guests. We scrambled to prostrate ourselves before the duke, realizing at last that we hadn’t yet had the chance to apologize. That was why we had come.

No place could be more fitting for our apology and conviction. The Church was the source of the tragedy of the frontier. Everything the Church—everything the Theocracy—had done, ran counter to the teachings of our God.

“Raise your heads,” came the duke’s voice. “Unlike the leading faction of the Church, we heard that your faction holds no hostility for the frontier nor does it discriminate against the beastfolk. If that’s true, then we hold no ill will against you. We hear you tried to send healers. It’s enough to know that you attempted to extend a helping hand to our domain. As the ruler of the frontier, it’s my obligation to express gratitude—from all of my people, I thank you.”

Despite the fact we failed to do anything at all, he bowed his head.



“Do not waste your gratitude on the likes of us!” I protested. “To not hear a single word of abuse hurled despite all that happened is beyond surprising.”

The Church had proclaimed a holy war in the name of God and sent out the army to conquer the frontier. Everyone knew it was an excuse to go after spellstones. It was pure greed masked in the guise of purification. Yet the people of the domain interacted with us of the Church without a hint of disdain, treating us with dignity and kindness. How...? How could the people here, who should have been resentful and enraged, possibly proffer thanks? I had come here prepared to throw my life away and had experienced complete confusion.

“Ah...” The duke sighed. “We didn’t suffer any damage at all. You may find it difficult to believe, but not a single soldier died. We managed to resolve the issue peacefully without losing anything whatsoever. Of course, people are angry about the invasion and artificial deluges, but they are also thankful for your healers.”

“B-but there’s no one to heal! We couldn’t offer any real assistance whatsoever! There’s nothing to thank us for!”

In the frontier, precious medicines could be obtained inexpensively. The city of Omui was nothing short of an earthly paradise, free of sickness and injury. In the hopes of at least being able to offer healing in wake of the battles, our healing corps had decided to throw away their lives and come to the frontier. Instead, they hadn’t been able to offer any help and had been sent home dumbfounded. They had even been provided precious foodstuffs and sweets.

The duke shook his head, smiling. “You still offered your aid to us. You recognized how dangerous this place was, and came to our aid anyway. Everyone is thankful for that alone. The residents of this abandoned land, who live here at the brink of demise, know the meaning of helplessness.”

The Church had declared him the enemy of God and called for his head. We called his territory unclean, but all its residents were kinder than those of any other nation in the world.

“In addition...” He coughed. “How to put this? No matter how mad you are, if the person next to you is rampaging with out-of-control rage, you tend to stay under relative control. A certain someone explained it as, ‘Those with the most

to get angry about circle all the way past anger and back into laughter.’ We have sympathy for you. I’m not sure you understand... You see, there’s been a certain outbreak of happiness in our land, a disaster that we still haven’t figured out how to clean up. If this were sensible, I’m sure you’d understand what I’m saying, but I’m making less and less sense by the moment. Regardless, you are our guests. I will protect...er, protect, but...it will be difficult. No matter how hopeless it seems, I will be your shield, I can assure you that. Yes, this sword will be yours as well... Ugh, am I mad? What should I do?”

We had come to Omui prepared to be beaten and abused, but instead, the lord of the land treated us with sympathy and concern. It seemed impossible at first, so I thought I was misinterpreting things, but he was compassionate and worried about us. As the supremely confused noble leader of the frontier continued to chatter, he went on to declare that he’d protect us, despite having every right to feed us to the dogs.

When he mentioned those with the most to get angry about, he must’ve been referring to himself, the ruler of the frontier. Who else could pose any difficulty? He was renowned across the continent as a war god. What did he mean by “circle way past anger and back into laughter?” At last, we seemed to have arrived at the territory of potential reproach. Now that he knew that our healers provided nothing, and our hopes at apologies had been rendered null, all that could remain was for us to bear the brunt of his anger and resentment. He was in no position to protect us.

“The frontier must surprise you,” he offered. “We’re the most dangerous, longest-suffering region. It must’ve shocked you to find it peaceful, abundant, and full of happiness. We’re still surprised ourselves. I awake in fear every night, wondering if it was all a dream. Since the castle has also become quite the impressive building, I know that it’s not a dream the moment I wake up. I’ve started walking into the city the moment I rise every morning lately, just to look over the scenery with my own eyes. I live here, and I can hardly believe what’s happened. It’s only natural that an outsider would be surprised.”

At first, we thought that everything we had been taught about the frontier had been a lie, but judging from what the duke said, the impoverished, monster-stricken land that we had heard of had, in fact, been abolished. At

least for now. It wasn't just the city of Omui, either. Roads had been built all over the frontier, and towns and villages were equipped with robust defenses.

The fields produced abundant harvests, and trade flourished in the capital. It seemed impossible that the frontier had been poor until recently. Such sophisticated planning took years to realize, one small piece at a time. Everything looked new. It was as if all the new buildings had simply appeared one day out of the blue.

"The capital is indeed marvelous," I replied. "But I must say, I didn't spot a single monster on the way here. Not even a sign of monsters. The surrounding towns and villages are equipped with sturdy walls, and the roads have been constructed to connect everything with remarkable efficiency. Omui gives the impression of having left poverty behind long ago."

"Yes, I suppose it must," he replied. "We lie at the edge of the continent, so such urbanization should be impossible to begin with. You must've thought, 'This cannot be. It's impossible,' countless times, no?"

Countless times, I thought. We'd encountered nothing but the impossible here. There was so much impossibility that it overwhelmed us, our eyes gliding right over it. I was seeing now that the roads were far flatter than should have been possible—so flat that not the slightest bump or protrusion emerged. *No road can be this flat*. In addition, the city's buildings were beyond anything I had ever seen. Such tall, sturdy buildings shouldn't have been able to hold up their own weight. I couldn't begin to fathom a method to construct them. My party, thinking back on what we had seen, stared around at the city in astonishment. This was an impossible place.

"Merchants who came to visit tore at their hair in surprise. 'Impossible! Unbelievable,' they said. Those of us living here are used to it now, so we've given up being surprised. We have a natural disaster that inflicts happiness upon us all no matter how much we resist. By the time we realized what was - happening, it was too late. Everything has been born anew. I have watched calamity hail disasters upon us many times, but this was the first time I witnessed a calamity hail happiness. That was the greatest miracle of all—not this happy frontier, but the existence of someone who could spread happiness in this way. We've surrendered. We've given up, yes, but we'll never forget how

precious that calamity is or how precious this happiness is for the rest of our lives.” The duke nodded. “We don’t pray to gods here in the frontier. Miracles break out in our streets daily.”

I understood what he was trying to say, but I was neither able to formulate a response or truly comprehend. *Do such miracles exist?* If someone could bring such miracles—then indeed, they would be a miracle unto themselves. Just like a natural disaster, a powerful force impossible to fight against. That person circled straight past anger all the way to laughter... Suddenly he was here. Laughing.

I would never forget his smile. How could I? His smile was the gentlest I’d ever seen, and his eyes were terrifying, pitch-black chasms.



AFTERWORD



THANK YOU FOR getting your hands on this book. If you read it, thank you even more. If you *bought* it, I cannot thank you enough.

I'm Shoji Goji, which is an alias I barely remember even though this is the eighth freaking volume. It's a pen name I use so little I forget about it every time I work on a new volume. Through the grace of God, I've remembered to write it on my eighth try.

Here we are: the afterword. Yup, the afterword of a volume that somehow exceeded 130,000 words, to which my editor casually responded, "It's 120,000 words too long, but shave off 20,000." I shot him back a six-page afterword (winky face).

In Volume 7, the kingdom-wide struggles wrapped up, so we went back to the frontier and the daily life of adventurers. We did a bit of foreshadowing some future events at the end, too. It didn't bring us any closer to the ending, but after cutting away at the text more than ever before...I ended up with my longest afterword of all time, too. We have now witnessed the birth of such a grand and luxurious afterword that it may as well contain prologues and epilogues within its multitudes! (I don't know if it's going to be exactly six pages until editing and layout is finished, so don't hold me to it.)

Speaking of edits, we worked intently on revisions and shortening the text, then rewriting everything all over again for the print layout, shaving off the excess, snapping off lines, getting rid of and rewriting whole paragraphs that seemed too long even after the revisions, and thoroughly editing every single line in this very afterword. And I still ended up with six pages of afterward (oopsies).

My editor Y-san and I ran a three-legged race together through this process. Although I suppose it was more like I dragged them along on my runaway adventure, and we finished the 8th volume. I'm trying to express my apologies,

so why do I sense nothing but bloodlust from Y-san's direction?

I'd also like to thank Saku Enomaru-sensei for the fabulous drawings. I've decided that the fact that the manuscript came in late was 180 percent Y-san's fault, so kick them while they're down as much as you please. (Feel free to put in extra firepower if you keep your kicking to less than three seconds)!

Look, we did plan on getting this done a month ago, but as a result, we ended up doing a simultaneous release with Bibi-sensei's manga. Thanks to the managing editor for the manga series as well. Look, I'm so thankful to everyone besides Y-san, so the humility comes naturally.

With that in mind, I received plenty of space for the afterword, otherwise known as Y-san diss track zone. In light novels, there's an urban legend that if you submit your manuscript and don't hear back from the editor for more than a month, then you're on the cutting room floor. By the way, I'm sure the cheeky bastard will slip in a "btw, Volume 10 next year 'kay?" even though we haven't even released Volume 8 yet. I was daydreaming over how perfect it'd be to end on Volume 7 when they started asking about the status of Volume 8!

I mean, "We talked about doing it?" Come on! Ever since the arbitrarily executed Volume 1, they've started making a whole fuss, even though the current volume hasn't gone live yet. And with no specifics, either. Normally, an editor would look at the sales and make a decision about the next volume in a serious, logical manner. Nope, I didn't hear anything and got sent on into the wilderness of Volume 8. I know nothing about the sales of the series up to this very day. I didn't even know the total sales number until they put it on the darn book cover!

Some of you might think I'm joking, but I always see that number for the first time when I finish the afterword and look at the final cover with the placeholder text removed. Every time, it's like, "Holy crap, 1.3 million total copies?! Is that real?!"

Thank you for buying this book from the bottom of my heart. This cover is dedicated to the countless web-readers who were always on Team Vice Rep B. I mean, seriously. That was most of you. That was why we did it.

This volume was the fabled swimsuit volume. (Drumroll, please!) Well, there

was plenty of swimsuit stuff before the swimsuit volume itself, but I begged Enomaru Saku-sensei to focus all his powers on the illustrations this time.

I burned out after all the drama of Volume 7, but I've managed to get this far thanks to all of you. There are so many thank-yous that I want to write, but if I tried to write them all, I'd get so caught up on jokes that the afterward would easily go over a hundred pages. Six pages doesn't sound like enough now!

I discovered a new mathematical formula—one-hundred-page afterword = eternal editor resentment—but given that we've had more complaints about my afterwords than any poorly formulated text, I suppose I need to thank Y-san as well.

I've said this before, but many of you read my story before it ever became a real book. Now it has. I've made it to eight volumes as an utter amateur who doesn't know the first thing about writing. The only thing I've understood about this whole process is that my editor must be insane (yes, I was able to confirm that), but I still need to express my thanks to them for leading me through the difficult processes of revisions and edits. Oh, and for putting up with the never-ending six-page afterword Y-san diss track.

Everyone else talks about how well they 'cooperated' and 'worked together' with their editors in their afterwords, but the only thing I consulted Y-san on was what to do about Vice Rep B's bikini!

By the way, at first, I figured there'd be five volumes at most, and yet I somehow struggled to fit in everything into this eighth one. It was the longest volume yet, so how on earth is the afterword ending up that way too?!

I'm grateful that you read through so many excess lines, but I can assure you that it's Y-san's fault (the editorial team is working so hard that they seem like they've been transported to another world themselves, although the editorial address in the imprint hasn't changed as far as I can see).

Last volume, we dealt with the kingdom crisis, and in the next one (which, by the way, I must do without having any sort of official confirmation as of writing this), a new challenge emerges. So this was basically Volume 7.5: the in-between daily life stuff that you'd normally skip over.

Sorry if you felt like I was rambling. Part of it was that I wanted to give the

main characters a chance to live and be happy...and that's how I ended up with this unusual breather episode Volume 8.

Normally, the action rises and gets more intense as on the story goes on, but instead, I figured it was better to smash up the action into little pieces and then let it rise with a new strength... Uh, yeah, I just rambled for a full volume.

With all of that, we still had to find a stopping point, and it was quite the effort to work within that context. Typically, I'd get forced into that box by the editor and receive instructions on how to get there, but my editors just gave me the okay to roll with this and asked me about what I decided for Vice Rep B's bikini instead.

Er... Now that I think about it, the only reactions I get from them are, "The bath?" or like, "The underwear!" and, "Half-naked heave-ho?!" or, "A net bikini? Are you for real?!"

Before you know it, I've exhausted the six pages of my longest epilogue of all time, so I'll take this moment to thank you once again. It makes me happy that you've enjoyed reading about the lives of Haruka-kun and his friends. At the very least, I hope you enjoy it more than my long-suffering editorial staff.

—SHOJI GOJI



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