

# A LATE-START TAMER'S LAID-BACK LIFE

10

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A Late-Start Tamer's  
Laid-Back Life



# Chapter One: The Second Half of the Event and the Sunken Ship

I had completely forgotten my original objective.

We had come out here to catch the fish we needed for making a fish print. However, with everything else that happened, like finding a sea otter, getting chased by a shark, and discovering a mysterious rocky reef, that goal had totally slipped my mind. I still wanted to get the fish print done by the end of the day, though, so we were currently in the middle of doing some night fishing.

“Let’s hurry up and catch something big, then we can move on to exploring the sunken ship!”

“Honk!”

“Hum!”

We had gotten pretty far out at sea since we’d been chased by the shark, so we returned to the bay before casting out our lines. Things had been so hectic since we’d set out on the ocean, which was probably what made fishing in the tranquil bay now especially enjoyable. Unfortunately, we were unable to catch any high-scoring fish; all we netted were a bunch of small fry. *Y’all are tasty, but sorry. You’re not what I’m looking for today.*

“Hmm, maybe I should have bought some more detailed info instead of just a list of the high-scoring fish?”

But things would get boring if I bought information about every little thing... I had been the one who tried to look all cool by not buying the information Alyssa had recommended for a surefire win on the minigame, after all. It’d be too embarrassing to go back to her and buy it now. My only choice was to rely on my own fishing chops to get a high score.

As I mulled things over, I finally realized something.

“The fish that scored highest so far are splendid alfonsino and cod, right?”

I checked the list I bought from Alyssa—I was right. It was definitely those two.

“Pretty sure those are both deep-sea fish...”

That had to mean that even higher-scoring fish would also be deep-sea dwellers, right? Which meant there had to be a spot in this bay that had deeper water where I could catch those fish from, right? Yeah, that had to be it! What do you know, even my dumb brain worked sometimes!

“Perca! Reflet! Can you find a spot where the water’s deeper?”

“Honk!”

“Hum!”

The two of them stopped playing in the water to snap a salute before diving back underwater. Then, after thirty minutes...

“Got one! A splendid alfonsino!”

“Squeak squeak!”

I reeled in a fifty-centimeter-long splendid alfonsino. All thanks to Reflet and Perca’s brilliantly finding us a deep-sea fishing spot.

“Very nice. A splendid alfonsino. Let’s catch some more for us to eat!”

“Squeak!”

After that, we were also able to catch a cod. Drimo drew back when he saw the cod surface from water.

“Ha ha ha! Its stomach’s coming out of its mouth! Gross!”

“Squeak...”

“They really didn’t have to make this part realistic!”

“Squeak.”

I was so thrilled, I started getting weirdly hyperactive. Drimo looked disgusted as I reeled in the realistic-looking cod. As coolheaded as he was, there were things even he couldn’t handle. And the party didn’t end there—we caught more fish that ramped up my excitement even higher.

“Whoa, it’s heavy! I got a heavy one!”

I wound the reel as hard as I could, working against whatever was pulling so strongly on my line.

“Squeak squeak squeak!”

“Growl growl growl!”

“You two caught something massive with your poles too, huh?”

My monsters seemed to have gotten a bite at the same time I had. The three of us grappled noisily with our catch, and three minutes later—which was long for fishing in the game—the fish finally emerged from the water.

“Is this...an oarfish? Sweet! Oh, Drimo! You got a nautilus! And Bear Bear, is that a barreleye fish?”

“Squeak!”

“Growl!”

In addition to the resplendent, giant deep-sea fish called an oarfish, we also caught a nautilus, which had a distinctive spherical shell. And we’d even gotten ourselves the bizarre-looking barreleye fish, whose transparent head displayed its huge eyes in full view. We had ourselves a great spread of rare deep-sea creatures.

“Can I put the oarfish in a case...? I can!”

It barely fit in the Extra Large Terrarium. It wasn’t swimming, but was just floating in the tank, its giant body slightly folded up. The nautilus and the barreleye fish became similarly docile once they were in their cases. The sight of the deep-sea fish in the somewhat flimsy plastic receptacles looked a bit surreal. They were the type of cases made for critters like crayfish and insects, after all.

“Hmm, I wonder if we caught enough? It’s already getting late, though, so let’s head back to the village.”

“Hum!”

“Honk honk!”

However, at the time, I was oblivious. I didn't know what tragedy lay in wait for us...

"The fish used for the fish prints disappeear!"

That's right. Unlike with real fish prints, for some inexplicable reason, the fish used for fish prints in this event straight up vanished.

"I copy the entire fish for my fish prints, you see!"

This was all the fault of the game, or rather, some magical trickery at work. My hard-won oarfish vanished right before my eyes. *Nooo, that was my only one!*

"I'm pretty burnt out on fishing now, though..."

It was a huge disappointment, but I didn't have it in me to fish for another oarfish. If I found the motivation again by the last day of the event, I'd try to catch another one. I already added it to my encyclopedia anyway.

"It's fine. I've got my coelacanths."

While the oarfish was definitely rare and cool, coelacanths had it beat in terms of adventure. So yeah, a coelacanth was all I needed! As I was thinking that in an effort to console myself, the old man came over to me.

"Here, consider this thanks for the fish print. Oh, hmm?"

Was he staring at me or something? He looked me up and down, from the top of my head down to my toes. His gaze looked exactly like someone doing an appraisal.

"You've got a fossil and a nautilus, don't ya? Are you maybe the type who feels a sense of adventure in the ancient? If so, I've got something good to share with ya."

The fish print grandpa spoke up as he handed me an item called Authentic Fish Print Set. As I had expected, there was information hidden in this minigame too, with the trigger being having a fossil and a nautilus on hand. Speaking of which, a nautilus was considered a living fossil.

"Y'see, northeast from this island, there's another island where ancient

creatures still roam. If you go there, you'll likely be able to encounter several of those prehistoric creatures."

Yeah, I already knew that.

"The word is that on that island, you can catch the elusive, deep-sea fish known as the coelacanth. I know I would just love to make a coelacanth fish print!"

Right after the fish print grandpa said that, a selection window appeared asking if I wanted to hand over a coelacanth to him.

This sort of thing happened often in RPGs—that was to say, an event would trigger when you already had a key item on your person. It was a pretty common occurrence to already have the item you were requested to obtain for a fetch quest. Without hesitating, I selected "Yes." I had caught several of them, so I didn't mind.

After I made my selection, the fish print grandpa clasped my hands with great delight.

"Traveler! You have my thanks! Here, a token of my gratitude!"

*Ten thousand evets, huh...? Okay, not bad.* I accepted the reward, but the old man wasn't done talking yet.

"But you know, the coelacanth's not the biggest fish on that island."

"Huh? It's not?"

Actually, I *had* been wondering about something I noticed in my encyclopedia. The coelacanth wasn't the last entry on the fish page. There was still one entry right after it that I hadn't filled yet. Before that empty spot were the ammonite and the coelacanth, so based on the order of things, there was no doubt that the last spot was reserved for a sea creature from the Prehistoric Island. That must have been what the old man referred to as the biggest fish on the Prehistoric Island, but his follow-up information knocked me down to the depths of despair.

"Indeed. There's a giant lake below a waterfall. Folks say an ancient fish of monumental size, far bigger than a coelacanth lives in that lake!"



Oh, *hell* no! That lake was the residence of the Mosasaurus boss monster, okay? That thing would make me its snack the second I got close to it. It'd be impossible to find the chance to do any fishing there. When I told the fish print grandpa as much, he shared some more information with me.

“Up in the North Fishing Village, there’s a legendary angler who’s caught that fish. If you ask them about it, they may give you some sort of hint.”

A legendary angler. Now that was the sort of news that could get a man’s blood pumping. But I was a little scared. A legendary hunter was sure to be some scary, crotchety old man.

“But I *do* want to fill out the encyclopedia...”

*I have to be brave and meet Mr. Crotchety Grandpa (Temp Name)!*

Since I still had the sunken ship to explore, I had a lot to get done!

“All right, onward to the North Fishing Village!”

“Humm!”

“Honk honk!”

After doing some shopping in the South Fishing Village and registering the teleportation point there, we headed for the North Fishing Village. The curtain of night fell as we walked.

“These enemies are a little stronger now, huh!”

“Mmm!”

“This area must be where the northern part of the island begins. Guys, stay on guard, got it?”

Monsters became stronger at night, but even we could handle the ones that appeared around here. I stocked up on potions too, so we shouldn’t have to worry about a party wipe. We had to march forwards at a stricter pace than usual, but I wanted to reach the North Fishing Village before the end of the day. The old man had told me where to go, so we should have been able to make it there just fine as long as we didn’t dawdle, but... About halfway to the North Fishing Village, we hit a snag.

“Skeletons are popping up like crazy. What’s going on?”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Growl grooowl!”

We suddenly became enshrouded in a fog, and moments later we found ourselves surrounded by a crowd of skeletons. They were labeled as Skeleton Pirates. Matching their name, they wore red bandanas wrapped around their skulls and clutched cutlasses in their hands. They weren’t very strong, but there were a lot of them. Actually, was there an infinite number of them? No matter how many we defeated, they kept coming back.

“Hmm, what should we do?”

“Squeak!”

“Growl!”

I was debating turning back, but Drimo and Bear Bear both looked determined. They were shadowboxing, showing off how ready they were to take these things down.

“All right, let’s get ’em!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Growl!”

Throwing caution to the wind at times was one of the true pleasures of gaming.

“Everyone, we’re gonna force our way through!”

“Tra-la!”

“Hum!”

“Perca! Make them scatter with Penguin Highway!”

“Honk hooonk!”

Following my command, Perca leaped out. His skill shone super bright in the darkness of the night. Perca the cannon, enveloped in a blue light, sent the skeletons flying, cutting a path through the crowd. Since Perca didn’t have

much attack power himself, he didn't kill any of the skeletons, but his skill's Blow Away effect was still tremendous.

We sped through to the exit Perca had cleared for us and managed to break free of the encircling crowd. However, our surroundings were still engulfed in the white fog.

On the other side of the thick fog, I heard the dim sound of countless rattling bones. And it was steadily getting closer. There was no denying it, they were chasing us.

*Click-clack-click-clack!*

"Aagh! Run, run!"

"Mm-mmm!"

We ran away from the pursuing skeletons for several minutes.

"Did we...finally...lose them?"

"Tra-la..."

*Damn, I can barely catch my breath!* But we had managed to shake off the skeletons. It looked like they wouldn't follow outside of the fog. The skeletons abruptly stopped in their tracks and retreated back into the fog.

"Wheew... That was close. Also, pretty sure no one told us about that..."

None of the information I heard had mentioned anything about Undead monsters appearing, or anything about the fog. This was clearly some sort of event.

Afterwards, we walked around and did some investigating of the area. As a result, we were able to determine that the fog was covering a certain area.

"Aha, looks like it's around the western coast."

This event island was, roughly speaking, the shape of a pentagon pointing south. Well, there were variations to the shape, like a bay and a cape and such, so a pentagon was just the closest term I could use to describe it. The Bazaar was situated a bit east from the center of the island. The South Fishing Village, which we'd just left, was situated in the middle of the southwest area of the

pentagon. The North Fishing Village was probably near the northwest point. And the spot we were just in was right in between the South and North Fishing Villages. I had a suspicion the source of the fog was around the westernmost point.

According to the information I got from Alyssa, there were no places that really stood out on the western shore. There were no sandy beaches, only stretches of plains and rocky areas.

The fact there was nothing of note was actually what made it suspicious.

“The skeletons are weak, so let’s try and aim for the center of the fog.”

“Hum!”

“Honk honk!”

I felt like we should head back to the village first, but I didn’t fully understand the conditions that made this fog appear. If we left, I didn’t know if the same thing would happen a second time.

“All right! Bear Bear, Drimo, I’m counting on you two! We’re going to fight our way through!”

“Growl!”

“Squeak!”

Bear Bear and Drimo flexed their muscles in reply. Then, they posed like they were bodybuilders, saying to leave things to them. What were those poses called? Bear Bear was doing a side chest, and Drimo a double bicep pose? They were our dependable cuties. Or deputies, for short.

And so, with our deputies leading the way, we submerged ourselves once again into the white fog.

*Click-clack-click-clack!*

*Click-clack!*

“Squeak squeak!”

“Growl growl!”

We crossed through the fog as Bear Bear and Drimo mowed down the

swarming skeletons, one after another. I'd have been more excited if the experience we were getting was anything to celebrate, but these skeletons weren't exactly formidable foes. We'd taken down so many, and yet no one had leveled up, and each skeleton only earned us one event. They didn't even drop any items. At a rate like this, it would be much more beneficial to just hunt random weak event monsters.

Eventually, our unproductive fighting came to a close. After having fought for twenty minutes straight, we finally made it out of the fog. I heard the faint sound of crashing waves—we must have ended up right by the coast.

And that wasn't all there was.

"Is that...a village?"

"Tra-la?"

"Mmm."

Right before our eyes was a small village bathed in the moonlight. It looked like not a single lamp was lit, so I likely would have missed it if the moon wasn't out. We'd found ourselves another new location.

"Eine, can you check things out from above?"

"Tra-la!"

I had no information on this village, so we had to tread carefully here.

While we waited for Eine to do her thing, the rest of us quietly walked around the outskirts of the village. But there were no monsters around, and no items to gather.

*Could we be right in the middle of an ongoing event?* Was this related to that ghost sailor we met on the reef? Ghosts and skeletons. They were both Undead monsters. Oh, and maybe pirates were connected somehow too? It seemed highly likely that meeting the ghost on the reef had triggered the emergence of the white fog.

While I was contemplating things, Eine came back.

"Tra-la-la!"

“What’d you see?”

“Tra-la...”

I guessed she hadn’t found anything noteworthy. At least, she hadn’t been able to detect any sign of movement. With only that much to go on, I wasn’t sure if the villagers were just asleep, or if this was some sort of ghost town.

“There’s only one thing to do. Let’s go in.”

“Mm!”

“Squeak!”

We got into formation and slowly approached the village. The entrance gate was open, but there was no gatekeeper. That could have been enough to convince me the villagers were just sleeping, but it seemed strange to me that there wasn’t a single streetlamp lit. On top of that, there weren’t any NPC shops.

In the other fishing villages, lamps were suspended all through the village, and NPC shops were open even late at night for the sake of gaming convenience. So what did it mean that this place was lacking in both?

“And we can’t just trespass into anyone’s home...”

“Mm!”

“What is it?”

“Mm-mmm!”

Olto had spotted something. A gnome’s ability to see in the dark never failed to impress. It was just the sort of thing we needed at a time like this.

I walked for a dozen meters or so with Olto leading me, and we arrived in what was probably the village’s central square. There, we were met with a bizarre sight.

“Whoa, that’s gotta be a boss!”

There in the square was a massive zombie. It stood at over two meters tall, its skin was rotting and falling off at parts, revealing pink muscle underneath. Its right eye looked like it was about to fall out. I’d never seen anything so

repulsive and creepy. In its hand, it held a large, curved sword, likely the type of weapon typically referred to as a scimitar or a shamshir.

“We can’t turn back after coming this far. We’ll just have to steel ourselves and do it.”

“Honk!”

“Hum!”

“We even beat a dinosaur! We can’t let some stupid zombie scare us!”

We stepped foot into the square, and the giant zombie immediately reacted. A red marker appeared over it, signaling the start of the battle.

“It’s called a Zombie Vice-Captain...”

Not the Captain? So things probably wouldn’t end here, right? I guess we’d find out after we beat it.

“We have to beat it first, though! Drimo, Bear Bear, attack it from its flanks! Olto, protect us in the rear guard!”

Perca and I chipped away at the boss from the back. Reflet and Eine were our support.

“Rrrraaaaagh!” roared the Zombie Vice-Captain, its rotting eye glaring our way.

“Ack, so freaky! But you’re not as scary as the Tyranno! Everyone, we got this!”

“Growl growl!”

“Squeeeak!”

That’s right. For our group, who was evenly matched against giant dinosaurs, this oversized zombie was nothing but—

“Rrrrrraaaaaaaaaaagh!”

“Urgh...”

Nope, it *was* scary! It was a whole different kind of scary than the dinosaurs! This was straight out of a monster or occult horror movie! They were totally different genres!

Despite our fear, we all fought valiantly. Though in truth, I was the only one who was scared. For everyone else, this was just another regular fight. Olto blocked the giant scimitar with his hoe, Bear Bear and Drimo attacked the zombie from both sides, and Perca contributed some hit-and-run attacks when he saw an opening. Reflet's healing and Eine's buffs were also pulled off perfectly.

Me? Oh, you know, I was cheering everyone on in my heart. Look, the zombie's Roar skill had left me half paralyzed, okay?!

However, the zombie was weak enough that my monsters were easily able to beat it even without my help. It definitely wasn't as strong as it looked. The most chilling part was probably when the zombie dropped to half health, and skeletons started coming out in droves from the surrounding houses. But my monsters ignored those skeletons and continued attacking the zombie, and in a shockingly short amount of time, defeated it. In total, they might've taken about three minutes?

"Oh, what's this?"

"Thank you... You have released us from the regret that bound us..."

A semitransparent ghost appeared and had begun to speak quietly. That must have been what the vice-captain looked like when he was still alive. Though I couldn't be absolutely sure he and that zombie were one and the same. The ghost was much shorter and was a handsome, blond-haired, blue-eyed man.

Our surroundings also changed substantially. At some point, the village completely disappeared. In its place was now a Western-style graveyard, with things that looked like crumbling tombstones lined in rows. Each tombstone was in a sorry state, with the names and death dates difficult to read. The ocean breeze must've hastened their deterioration.

In the middle of the graveyard, the man continued to speak.

"The captains had us, who were injured and immobile, disembark the ship, and then they headed for that damned jellyfish... But the ship was never to return. It must have sunk near the cape... Say, you who defeated us, we have a favor to ask... Could you free the captains from their suffering that they still endure at the bottom of the sea? We beg you. Even if you refuse, we are still



indebted to you, our saviors. We thank you for that.”

*Ping!*

“Oh, I have to make a choice.”

I could choose whether to accept the quest or not here.

Would it tell me the location of the sunken ship if I accepted? And if I refused, would I not be able to go? Could I even refuse this here? Well, if we had been at a level where this boss nearly killed us, I could see a case for refusing...

But this was the *sunken ship*. You could bet I was going!

“I accept.”

“Ohh... Thank you. Please, take these with you...”

The ghost vanished with a flash of light, and several items were added to my inventory. One of the items was called Worn Map, which depicted this event island. The spot marked with an X must have been where the sunken ship was resting.

I was also given an item called Air Bubble. When used, it encased your party members in air and allowed you to stay underwater for a short amount of time. With all this, we would be ready to head towards the sunken ship.

“Oh, looks like this place is a safety zone now.”

The graveyard had turned into a safety zone. Now we could rest here, but I wasn't sure I felt so great about sleeping overnight in a graveyard. Though since I was nearing my time limit, and there was no teleportation point around, I didn't have much of a choice.

“Tomorrow, we'll take on the sunken ship and the North Fishing Village. Good night, guys.”

“Mm-mmm.”

*The fifth day of the event.*

“I'm awake and...yup, still in a graveyard.”

The ghost town was now gone, and in its place had appeared a graveyard.

Obviously, I'd wake up in the graveyard, since I'd spent the night here. This was the worst— Actually, it wasn't so bad.

"I didn't notice last night, but this place is actually kind of nice and refreshing."

The crumbling Western-style tombstones had their own aesthetic charm, and pretty white clover bloomed all around us. Also, we were on a small hill facing the ocean, so a pleasant sea breeze blew towards us. Sharing breakfast with my monsters here wasn't half bad either. Though, it was still a graveyard.

"Okay, according to the map, north of here is the North Fishing Village, and right by that is a small cape."

"Mm."

"The sunken ship should be just past that cape."

Olto and I inspected the map together and placed a mark where the sunken ship was. I was pretty sure we could just go there now, but it was a sunken ship—it was at the bottom of the ocean. I wasn't sure if we could easily return if we went down there using the Air Bubble. In that case, maybe it was best we went to the fishing village first. I wanted to get some things taken care of.

The North Fishing Village was really close to the graveyard. Last night was too dark to see and the skeletons had been in our way, so we hadn't been able to advance very far. I was surprised how close it was.

"Let's see, what do I want to check out in this village...? Oh right, the legendary angler and the minigame."

*Should I do the minigame first? It might take some time, after all.* First, I had to go to the florist that was inside the village. After a short walk, I came to a pink shop that really stood out. Its roof and walls were all painted pink. It looked totally out of place in a fishing village. *At least try to match what the other buildings look like?*

I peeked inside to find flowers of all different colors for sale.

"Oh, right. I should go home first and switch up my party members," I said, remembering to do so after catching sight of the stone pillar teleportation point

that was next to the florist shop. It was better to have party members who were best suited for this minigame.

I placed an Amber in the stone monument by the entrance of the village to unlock the teleportation point. I picked my event home as the destination, activating the teleportation process.

“We’re home!”

“...!”

“Aye!”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Hm!”

“Hwah!”

*I warned them not to last time, and they still threw themselves at me!*

Everyone was clinging tightly to me.

They must’ve been lonely, huh? In that case, it was really cute, so I ended up playing with them for a while. I had no choice, okay?! As if anyone could resist those teary eyes staring up at them!

After playing together until everyone was satisfied, I switched up the party members and set out once again. I brought with me Olto, Sakura, Rick, Fau, Eine, and Himka. In addition to the members I thought would do best in the minigame, I also chose Himka, since I had left him behind for so long. Then, we teleported back to the North Fishing Village.

“Excuse me.”

“Oh! A customer! Welcome!”

Inside the flower shop, a red-haired girl around ten years old was tending the store. She welcomed us in with a cheery voice.

She’d had both elbows propped on the counter and had been sulkily squeezing her cheeks in her hands, but now her face was filled with a bright smile. Her freckled nose and thick braids sticking out on either side of her head gave off a cheeky impression.

No matter how you looked at it, she looked like an unfortunate shop assistant who had been nabbed by her parents on her way to go play so she could mind the store for them. She must have been absolutely bored stiff until finally we customers came in, freeing her from monotony. This girl's backstory was so well-developed that I could pick up on it instantly, making her feel realistic. LJO was just that good.

"I heard there was something special going on here?"

"Oh. You're here for gramps..."

When I asked about the minigame, the little girl looked visibly disappointed.

"Oh, no, I mean—"

"Gramps! Customer!"

*Let me explain!* But the little girl had already opened the doors to an inner room and left. I had no choice but to follow.

"Welcome. Are you here for a bookmark?"

"Y-Yes. That's right."

The girl was nowhere to be seen. Instead, I heard the voice of an old man. His face looked familiar. He looked just like the old men from the fossil shop and the fish print minigame. He must have been the third of the minigame old men.

"Okay then, could you first find a four-leaf clover in this field? The more you find, the better bookmark I can make you."

The goal of this minigame was to find four-leaf clovers in the field behind the shop. The more clovers you found, the higher score you'd receive. That was why I had brought along the monsters I felt would be best at finding four-leaf clovers.

"All right! Let's do this, guys!"

"Mm-mm!"

Olto and the others excitedly scattered in the field.

*All right, I should search too,* I thought as I stooped down. But just as soon as I did, Sakura held something out to me.

“...♪”

“Huh? Already?”

Amazingly, the clover Sakura had in her grasp had four leaves.

“Wow, you found one! Great job, Sakura.”

Sakura proudly raised the four-leaf clover she found above her head. She looked so cute, I couldn't stop myself from patting her head.

“...♪”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Growl growl!”

Seeing how I praised Sakura, it was like everyone else's motivation switch got flipped. They all started searching for four-leaf clovers with even more enthusiastic expressions.

“Chirp chirp!”

“Aye!”

“Hm-hmmm!”

Fau and Rick had a hard time plucking the clovers even after finding them. Himka, who wasn't so great at finding the clovers, was helping them out with that part. Dividing up the work was a good idea. I could expect us to come out with a pretty good result.

It had been figured out that having Farming, Gather, and Plant Knowledge skills made things more efficient for this minigame. In fact, I encountered a four-leaf clover within a few steps. When I got close to it, I could see the clover shining.

But I found that a little odd. I had heard that the clovers would shine dimly, but this clover was emitting a bright, white light that seemed impossible to overlook. It went beyond shiny—it was radiant.

“Oh, maybe it's because of Botany?”

I could see this being an effect of Botany, which was the advanced skill of Plant Knowledge.

“Ooh, now I’m sure we’ll get a high score!”

Now thoroughly psyched, I searched for the clovers. Within the thirty-minute time limit, our party had found 218 four-leaf clovers. We broke the previous record, which was 214 clovers, though we received the same prize. Once you found one hundred clovers, you received the same prize no matter how many more you found after that.

My prize was an item called Four-Leaf Clover Bookmark. When used, it significantly increased the chances of rare item drops for thirty minutes.

The effect changed depending on your score, from a slight increase for ten minutes, a slight increase for thirty minutes, a minor increase, a moderate increase, to a major increase. I wanted to play a few more times, but apparently I couldn’t retry while I was already carrying a bookmark. Too bad.

But our true goal hadn’t been to win this item anyway. After the minigame ended, the old man came to talk to me.

“Oho. Young man, you have a fossil and an Authentic Fish Print set, don’t you?”

*Aha, it’s begun.*

As I predicted, the elderly florist gave us various information. He told me about the Prehistoric Island in the northeast ocean, and about how the way there was obstructed by a giant jellyfish, with the way past it being unknown. At one point, a group of pirates from the southern main island had tried to do something about the jellyfish but ended up being eliminated by the creature.

Most of what he told me was stuff I already knew about. This felt like the minimum preparations I had to do before going to the Prehistoric Island if I had proceeded through the event the right way. I really had chosen the chaotic path, huh?

He did tell me something I didn’t know, though.

“This is a story passed down from the previous generation, but in the center of that prehistoric island, there’s said to be a giant flower that occasionally blooms.”

“A giant flower... Are you referring to the titan arum?”

“Sorry, son, but I’m not sure what sort of flower it is. I’ve only heard tales of it.”

The old man said the story that had been passed down said that just looking at this giant flower, which bloomed once every several decades, would bring you happiness.

“You have to traverse a difficult road to get to that flower. According to what I’ve been told, there’s a carnivorous dinosaur with a big sail on its back who has a fondness for ocean fish.”

A sail on its back? Did he mean the Spino? And it had a fondness for ocean fish... This had to be information about how to beat the dinosaur. The trick was probably to distract it with fish.

“Oh, that’s right! I’ll tell you something that may be encouraging.”

“What is it?”

“There’s an auction held every day at the Bazaar. Sometimes, they have items related to that island up for auction. Among those is an Ancient Map and whatnot.”

That was right, I *had* heard that they held auctions at night at the Bazaar. I had thought it was a place where players could exchange items with each other, but I guessed NPCs auctioned items there too. And among those items were ones that were useful for strategy.

The old man wasn’t finished talking either. He dropped his smile and spoke with a weirdly serious expression that showed no emotion. He seemed to make some jerky movement for a second that made it look like he froze, but I had to have imagined that, right? It was probably just part of his performance to create a serious atmosphere.

“You’ll need to be careful even after you arrive at the flower. There’s a being who’s targeting that flower.”

“Someone’s targeting it?”

“A demon. As soon as the giant flower blooms, it comes for it. That flower

produces a smell that the fiend hates more than anything. To protect the flower, you must defeat the fiend...but it may be too difficult for a human to handle.”

“A demon...”

“One theory is that a rainbow stone that can be obtained on the Prehistoric Island could weaken the demon’s power.”

“A rainbow stone... Is that the Ammolite?”

“Well, I’m not too sure myself... I’ve only heard tales of it.”

I could only think of it being a reference to the Ammolite, though. Should I spread this information around? The demon probably appeared on the last day of the event, and it would most likely be a raid fight. If it was, if other people didn’t prepare for the fight too, we’d have a rough time. Writing about it on the forums seemed like the quickest way to do it, but that was a hard ask for me. I was better off going to the Quick-Eared Cats like usual.

“I should do that after I get more information on the legendary angler and the sunken ship. I might find out how to get to the Prehistoric Island too.”

If the Cats could also spread the information on how to sail to the Prehistoric Island, then even more players would be able to get their hands on Ammolite.

Anyway, this conversation was probably about done now.

We went back inside the flower shop, where the young girl had at some point returned to her post.

“Thanks for showing us the way earlier,” I said.

“No problem! That’s my job! Hey, take a look around the shop!”

At the little girl’s recommendation, I did some browsing. Meanwhile, the girl looked after my monsters.

“You’re all so cute!”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Aye-aye!”

“Aha ha ha! That tickles!”



*Good. Everyone seems to be having fun.* The store sold cut flowers like hydrangeas and sunflowers. Among them was a flower I hadn't registered yet, a passionflower. But I couldn't add it to my encyclopedia even after I appraised it.

"Hmm. Well, it's not that expensive. I'll buy it. Hey, could I buy one of these passionflowers?"

"Sure thing!"

As I expected, I was able to add the passionflower to my encyclopedia after taking out and appraising the one I had just purchased.

"All right, next up is the legendary angler."

"Hey! You wanna meet my granny too, mister?"

"Your granny?"

"Yeah. You wanna meet the legendary angler, right? That's my granny!"

Wow, so the legendary angler was connected to this shop too? And she was a woman!

"Where can I meet her?"

"You're nice, so I'll let you in on a secret! I think granny is on the rocks at the northern outskirts of the village!"

"Got it, thanks. I'll go check it out."

"Okey dokey!"

Would the event not have progressed if I hadn't bought a flower? I might not have bought it on purpose, but good job, me! I headed north, just like the girl told me to do. She said it was a rocky area, but this place was much more hazardous than I had imagined. The rocks were enormous, and we had to use Olto's earth magic to climb them. If the little girl hadn't told me to come here, I probably wouldn't have even thought of trying to search the area.

Once I got up onto the rocks, I saw a small-framed person wearing an ash-gray overcoat. They were sitting on the edge of a long, narrow rock, and had a fishing line cast out at sea. The ambience was perfect.

I walked up to them, deliberately making noise so I didn't cause any alarm,

and the person casually looked over their shoulder.

“Who are you, and why’re you all the way out here?”

*Whoa, the legendary angler’s a super intimidating old lady!* Her eyes pierced right through me. Even though I’d done nothing wrong, the moment she fixed her glare on me, I almost automatically wanted to offer a profuse apology.

“Ah, um, I’m a traveler. I heard the legendary angler would be here.”

“Where’d you hear that?”

“From the old man from the South Fishing Village who likes collecting fish prints.”

“Ah, so that guy sent you.” Once I brought up the fish print grandpa as an explanation, the old woman’s expression softened a little. “Suppose that means I should hear you out. So, what do you want to ask me?”

Was she friends with the old man? Anyway, I was glad she agreed to hear me out.

“I’d like to know how to catch the giant fish that’s on the Prehistoric Island.”

“Oho? Have you been to the Prehistoric Island?”

“Yes. I even went to the lake where the giant fish is, but I saw the mosasaurus and gave up on fishing there.”

“I see, I see. It’s true, fishing there is dangerous. You still want to catch it despite that?”

“Yes!”

“Hmm... Very well. In that case, you need to lay some groundwork. A bit south of this village, there’s a big, rocky mountain. There, you’ll be able to mine Amber, though it’s rare. First, mine that Amber and bring it back here.”

Amber, huh? I already had some, but did it have to be the ones mined from that rocky mountain?

“Oh, you brought me some Amber?”

Ah, so I could hand over Amber mined from anywhere. The event continued immediately. I was glad I could shortcut what was clearly a fetch quest so easily.

A window popped up asking me to choose an Amber to give her, so I chose the lowest quality one I had for now. I was a little nervous, but there appeared to be no problem with a low-quality Amber.

“Very good. Now we can continue with the prep work.”

The old woman nodded her head as she explained the purpose for the Amber.

“You can use this Amber here to make bait. The big fish loves Amber, but that giant brute of a water dinosaur doesn’t like the smell of it. The time limit changes depending on the quality of the Amber you use, but at the very least, you can fish for five minutes while keeping the Event Mosa at bay.”

“Only five minutes...?”

“If you want bait that lasts longer, you’ll have to use better Amber,” said the old woman, handing me some sort of small sack. It was an item called Amber Bait Mix.

“That’s an item made from water and the giant dragonfly that inhabits the Prehistoric Island. You can mix that with Amber to make the bait.”

“Oh, wow! Thank you!”

“Mm-hmm. Do your best out there.”

“I will!”

The giant dragonfly she mentioned must have been the Meganeura. If so, even I should be able to make the mix. As a test, I crushed up an item I got from a Meganeura, called Meganeura Specimen, and mixed it with water. Once I did, I was able to make the Amber Bait Mix with no problem. This way, I’d be able to replenish my stock pretty easily. The next thing to think about was the quality.

I returned to the village and ran some simple tests in a corner of the main square and figured out that the water from the pond at the Prehistoric Island was the most compatible. It brought the quality up pretty high. I combined it with some crushed Amber, and my bait was complete.

“So this is Amber Bait, huh? Let’s make a bunch before we go to the Prehistoric Island.”

But before that, I figured I ought to check out the sunken ship, though all I

had to go off of was that it was near the cape.

“Maybe I should ask around the village. Might find out something new.”

With that thought, I went around gathering information on the sunken boat, and I found out something very interesting. Apparently, although it was said to be near the cape, it wasn't actually close enough to be reachable from the shore. The mark on my map made it look like the boat was right next to the cape, but it was actually pretty far from it. I was told that I should go by boat if I wanted to make it to where the X mark was. In that case, I had no choice but to bring Reflet and Perca with me. The two of them had awakened to the joy of boat tugging, after all. I knew they'd sulk if they found out I went without them. On that note, I made a quick stop back home.

“We're home!”

“Humm!”

“Honk hooonk!”

“Yes, yes, hello.”

Now that I knew they'd come flying at me, I could react in time. I caught my monsters as they ran over to me and ruffled their heads. After that, they gave me some room.

“Grooowl!”

“Wait, Bear Bear—”

“Growl!”

“Hrnk!”

I could deal with someone who was as light as Reflet crashing into me, but there was no way I'd be able to catch Bear Bear charging at full speed. I fell backwards like a tackled football player.

“Squeak.”

“Thanks, Drimo.”

I was really glad Drimo didn't come charging at me. In fact, he even helped me back on my feet. *You're so mature, Drimo!*

“Now then, what’s this sunken ship going to be like?”

It was actually pretty tough deciding on my party. First off, I definitely needed our aquatic pair, Reflet and Perca.

“Honk honk!”

“Hum!”

“Okay, and now for the one I know for sure I can’t take with me...”

“Hm!”

The one raising his hand and volunteering himself was none other than my city boy Himka. The sunken ship was underwater, dirty, and who knew what sorts of creatures we’d find crawling around there. For Himka, that was the worst possible scenario.

“Right. Himka, you stay home.”

“Hm-hm!”

“Also, I think Eine should stay behind this time too.”

“Tr-Tra-la?”

“Hey, don’t look so shocked! You’re making me feel guilty!”

But I really had no choice. A place like a sunken ship would be a cramped space, so I didn’t think she’d be able to make full use of her flying ability.

“Now for the remaining—”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Aye!”

As I was contemplating, my monsters started forming a circle for some reason. Why? Were they getting bored?

Nope, that wasn’t it.

“Mmm, mmm, mm!”

At Olto’s shout, everyone simultaneously stuck out their right hand. As I watched them, all I could think of was that it looked like they were playing rock-paper-scissors. When I took a closer look, I realized that was exactly what they

were doing. Not only Olto and Sakura, but even Drimo and Rick were also doing a good job at it. How clever of them.

But Bear Bear was a mystery. They stuck out their potato-shaped plush hand, with no way to know what it represented. Was that supposed to be rock, maybe? If it was, then Bear Bear and Olto were the winners. The two of them alone had played rock, while everyone else played scissors. Apparently, though, I was mistaken.

“Mm-mm!”

“Grooowl!”

Everyone groaned with frustration and started up another round. So it was a draw. That must’ve meant Bear Bear had played paper.

“Yup, I’m lost.”

Regardless, my monsters seemed to understand each other. After several more draws, they finally reached a conclusion.

“Mm-mmm!”

Olto clutched his head in his hands and looked up at the ceiling like he was crying out, “Oh my god!” He always hammed up everything he did, huh?

“Squeak.”

Drimo was consoling Olto, but he looked strangely sorrowful doing it. That’s right—this time around, Olto and Drimo would be staying home.

“Aw, come on. I’ll bring you next time! Don’t look so hopeless.”

“Mm...?”

“I promise.”

“Mm.”

“What?”

Olto quietly extended a hand out to me. Then, he gently wrapped his pinky finger around my own.

“Oh, all right, all right. Pinky promise.”

“Mm-mmm, mm-mmm.”

I was scared to think what would happen if I broke this promise. *I'll make sure not to forget.* After all that was over and our party was decided, we got on a boat and set out on the water. Our objective was, of course, the sunken ship.

“Hummm!”

“Honk hooonk!”

As usual, our spirited underwater duo was pulling the boat along, bringing us to the vicinity of where the sunken ship was supposedly resting. The cape was still well within view from there.

“Should be around here... Reflet, Perca, could you take a look underwater?”

“Hum!”

“Honk!”

Reflet and Perca responded with a salute, then dived triumphantly underwater. The rest of us also peered below the surface as we floated on the waves. The water was considerably deep, so I couldn't see all the way to the bottom. Beyond the expansive dark blue water was a profound darkness.

The ocean, which was supposed to be a fun, beautiful place, suddenly seemed terrifying. Even though I knew this was a game, I was overwhelmed by this sensation that I was about to be sucked to the bottom of the ocean. And that wasn't all. A sudden flash of irrational paranoia convinced me that a tentacle or some other unknown monstrous beast would slither up from the depths of water at any moment and try to pull me in.

“Chirp?”

“Oh, no, it's nothing.”

Here was LJO at it again. Not only did it recreate the beauty of the sea, but even its ominous, frightening aspects too!

After the underwater duo returned, I asked what they found, but it seemed they hadn't been able to locate the sunken ship. We tried changing locations to search from several times, but in the end, we still couldn't find it.

“Hmm, should we check out the cape?”

“Aye!”

“There might be some hint there.”

“Growl!”

Fau and Bear Bear were fully on board, maybe because they had grown tired of searching from the boat.

The people in the fishing village referred to the cape near the sunken ship as Cape of the Dead. The origin of that name was...

“Rrraaagh!”

“Aaahhh! Zombie!”

“Grooowl!”

“Th-Thanks, Bear Bear.”

“Growl!”

...these ambushing Undead monsters. They crawled up the sides of the cliff and sometimes even burst out of the ground. Undead monsters popped up out of nowhere one after the other, going for a surprise attack every time.

*Click-clack-click-clack!*

“Again?!”

“Growl grooowl!”

Even though they were weak enough to be taken down instantly, this was still bad for my heart. The devs were definitely pulling out all the stops to freak us players out. What was this, a test of courage?

“Good thing it’s daytime right now... This would be way too scary at night.”

“Growl!”

“You saying you’ll protect me? Thanks, buddy.”

“Growl.”

“Aye!”



“You’ll protect me too, Fau? All right, I’m counting on you.”

“Aye!”

I poked Fau, who was pulling on my hair, and she laughed happily. We continued moving forwards, letting out the occasional scream, before soon arriving at the cape’s point. The ocean extended in every direction, creating an overwhelming feeling of openness. Both above and below me was a stretch of blue.

“Aah, this feels great!”

“...♪”

Sakura gently held down her hair, which fluttered in the wind as she gazed out at the horizon. Man, this was all so picture-perfect.

“Anyhow, guess nothing’s gonna happen here?”

“Aye?”

“Chirp?”

“I thought an event would trigger once we got here... Guys, help me look around.”

“Growl growl!”

“Hum!”

And so, our party got to work investigating the cape. However, the point was only about five meters wide, so it didn’t take us long. There were no secretly buried tombstones, and no event-related ghosts showed up.

“Hmm...? Maybe there’s something on the cliff? Or maybe we have to go down it?”

I peeked down from the cliff and saw that at the bottom of the cape was what looked like a rocky shore. It seemed like we could get down there. If Undead monsters could climb up, then maybe that meant players could also climb down.

“Chirp?”

“Well, I was thinking since there’s nothing up here, maybe there’s something

down on the cliff. Rick, Fau, could you take a look?”

“Aye!”

“Chirp!”

Never mind Fau, watching Rick sprint down the cliff sent me into a cold sweat. I knew he’d be fine, being a squirrel and all, but I was worried that he’d fall.

Five whole minutes passed after they went down the cliff, and I unsurprisingly found nothing during that time. Just when I had given up on looking around and started taking in the full view of the scenery, Fau piped up.

“Aye-aye!”

She came flying into me, quite literally, and then tugged on my robe. Based on her reaction, they must have found something. With Fau still tugging, I stuck out only my head and peered down, but I couldn’t see anything. Fau kept yanking harder, as if telling me to look closer.

“Wait, wait! I’ll fall if you keep pulling me!”

“Aye-aye!”

“Lower? Th-That spot where Rick is?”

“Aye!”

When I took a better look, I saw Rick waving at me around halfway down the cliff. There was a spot that looked a bit like a ledge, with a bunch of vegetation growing.

“Rick! What’s down there?”

“Chirp chiiirp!”

“Whoa, really?”

Hearing my shout, Rick had pulled back the vines to show me what was there. To my shock, there was a large hole behind the vines. We probably hadn’t been able to see it from the boat since the vines and rocks had been in the way. I never would have thought there’d be a cavern in a spot like that.

“All right, let’s go down. Sakura, would you do the honors?”

“...♪”

I tied Sakura's vine to a nearby rock and used it as a safety line to scale down the cape's cliffside. As I got closer, I could see that the cavern was pretty big. The entrance was about three meters wide, so the inside was probably even wider. I pushed aside the plants and peeked in.

“Hmm, does this go downwards? Rick, take the lead, please! This is an important mission, you hear!”

“Chirp!”

After giving me a clean salute, Rick rushed into the cave.

“There's no hurry, Rick. Careful now, careful.”

“Chirp.”

We walked through the cavern slowly, following Rick.

“We're going in a spiral.”

The cavern's interior was damp and slick, making it hard to walk. I was sliding around like I was on an ice rink. *Rick is having no problem just dashing around like that, huh?* Thankfully, no monsters appeared. If we had to fight here, I'd be unable to move and would be limited to shooting off spells from one spot. We couldn't do any mining or gathering either.

“I'm pretty sure we've descended quite a lot...”

“Chirp chirp!”

“What is it, Rick?!”

“Chiiirp!”

I heard Rick, who was a little farther ahead than the rest of us, let out a high-pitched shriek. I ran for him in a panic. All right, well, since I couldn't run or else I'd slip, I was actually half running in a stooped position while supporting myself by holding on to the wall.

I thought a monster had finally made an appearance, but I was wrong.

“A dead end? Or no, do we have to go underwater now to keep going?”

“Chirp.”

Rick was pointing ahead at a large puddle of water that was a whole two meters in diameter. Was this a dead end? I stuck my head into the puddle to take a look, and I found that it connected to a way ahead. The path clearly continued on from here.

“Phew! Talk about scary. I have no clue what could be beyond this.”

Breathing wouldn't be a problem since we had an Air Bubble, but...

“Let's have Reflet and Perca do some recon for now. You two, can you check out what's up ahead?”

“Hum!”

“Honk honk!”

The rest of us watched as the pair jumped ecstatically into the puddle of water. We sat down to take a break while we waited. There weren't any mining nodes around here, so we didn't have anything else to do. This spot was a bit more open at least, so we had room to spread out.

“Chirp.”

“Aye.”

“Growl.”

“Surprised you can fall asleep here...”

Rick and Fau curled up on my lap to take a nap. Bear Bear had plopped themselves down beside me and rested their head on my shoulder. They looked like some old geezer who'd fallen asleep on a train. Either that, or we looked like a couple in a movie theater. Sakura was on my other side sitting cutely while she did some woodworking.

“ ... ”

Her focused gaze reminded me of a distinguished Buddhist sculptor. It was rare to see that sort of expression on her. Though what she was carving was actually a set of wooden spoons with my monsters at the end of the handles. *Seems like Sakura's added a new product to her line.*

After a ten-minute wait, our aquatic duo returned in a state of excitement.

“Hum-hummm!”

“Honk hooonk!”

After surfacing from the water, they came running spiritedly to my side.

“Wait, you’re drenched! No hugging!”

“Hummm!”

“Honk honk!”

“D-Don’t shake yourselves dry so close to me!”

I tried to avoid the shaking and splashing. And I wasn’t the only one suffering from this—the monsters next to me were too.

“Aye-aye!”

“Hum...”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Honk...”

“...”

Sakura graciously stood up for Reflet and Perca as they were scolded by the tiny twosome, though I kind of hoped that amount of backlash would at least make them reflect on their actions. On another note—*Rick*. *You think you have a right to get mad? Have you forgotten what happened at the prehistoric pond?*

“So, was there anything there?”

“Hum!”

“Honk honk!”

Hearing my question, the two of them enthusiastically ran up to me, then started jumping up and down in front of me and pointing incessantly at the puddle.

“Whoa, you two sure are excited. Sounds like you must’ve found something great, huh? Reflet, Perca, what’d you find over there?”

“Hum? Hum-humm!”

“Honk honk!”

Completely geeking out, the two of them told me about what lay ahead. It took a while with the gestures, but I more or less understood. Once they had gotten out of a cavern that branched off in several directions, they’d arrived at the sunken ship. So this really had been the right way to go.

“Okay then, lead the way!”

“Hum!”

“Honk!”

Following Perca and Reflet, the rest of us dived into the underwater passage. I activated the Air Bubble, enclosing everyone’s head in a pocket of air. It looked sort of like we were wearing a transparent goldfish bowl on our heads, I guess? Anyway, the Bubble repelled the water from around our faces, so we could breathe and speak.

“Oho, it’s so pretty.”

“...♪”

We found ourselves in an underwater limestone cavern. The water was so clear that swimming felt like I was flying in midair. And the fact that there was air around my face made me feel that even more so. Also, lack of light wasn’t a problem here. There was a mysterious pale light illuminating our surroundings, although I wasn’t sure where it was coming from.

As we paddled through the water, the water glimmered faintly in response to our movements. When I looked a little more closely, I could see small creatures floating in the water. I appraised the creatures, which then got added to my encyclopedia.

“Sea sparkle?”

Real sea sparkle was smaller and each individual one shone a little more dimly, but this was a game, after all. I decided to go ahead and take out a container then and there, and I was able to collect sea sparkle water. I bet this would look nice at night if I put it in a small fishbowl.

Thanks to those sea sparkles, I was able to clearly see my surroundings. Numerous pale stalagmites protruded out not just from the ceiling but also the floor of the cave, making it look like we were inside the mouth of some giant creature. But it wasn't scary—the combination of the stalagmites and the sea sparkle just made it all look mysterious and fantastical. There was no fear of us getting lost, thanks to Reflet and Perca, so I just enjoyed our little underwater stroll.

“Oh, I see light shining through up ahead. Is that the exit?”

“Hum!”

“Whoa! You don't have to pull so hard!”

“Honk honk!”

“...♪”

It actually didn't seem like the end of the cave—rather, it looked like something was past there. Reflet and Perca pulled us fervidly along by the hand, and we went zooming through the cavern. The view of the underwater cavern as I sped past it was beautiful in its own way, but what I saw next was an even more impressive sight, which took my breath away.

“Honk honk!”

“Humm!”

“Wh-Whoa, just look at that...”

Lying on the dark ocean floor was a massive wooden ship, like the kind that would appear in a story about pirates set in the Caribbean, or some other work in a similar genre. It wasn't exactly toppling over, but it looked like it was slanting about thirty degrees.

It wasn't engulfed in pitch darkness either. Were things set up to allow the tiniest bit of sunlight to reach here? What was before me was a world in twilight.

The ship was absolutely covered in coral, illustrating that it had been many moons since it had sunk.

“It's official. We found the sunken ship!”

“Honk!”

“Hum!”

With Perca and Reflet still leading me by the hand, I drew near the sunken wooden ship.

“Now that’s one heck of a hole.”

I went around to the deck of the ship, but the entrance was blocked up by coral and unusable. I couldn’t destroy it either, maybe because it was classified as an object. I took a look around the rest of the ship too, but it seemed like the hole on its side was the only way to get in.

“All right, let’s go in from there!”

“Honk honk!”

“Hum-hum!”

The underwater duo took the lead and we infiltrated the sunken ship. And to my utter surprise, there was air inside. Some mysterious power prevented the water from reaching inside. I stuck my hand out the hole and felt water against it. But when I pulled my hand back inside the ship, it was instantly dry again.

“This should make it easier to fight.”

“Growl!”

“I’m counting on you, Bear Bear. We might run into—”

“Rrraaaaaagh!”

“Eeek!”

“G-Growl!”

I knew it! One of those stupid zombies suddenly popped out from the ceiling. So the test of courage continued here too, huh?

Since the zombie was upside down and couldn’t really attack us, Bear Bear easily took it out. These zombies might’ve looked dumb, but if they kept taking us by surprise like this, I wasn’t sure my heart could take it. *I’m not gonna get forcibly logged out for having irregular vital signs, am I?*



“L-Let’s go, everyone.”

“...!”

“Growl!”

“Oh, Bear Bear, you take the front. Sakura, you protect me, okay?”

“...!”

*Man, look at those thumbs-ups. So dependable!*

And so, our shipwreck exploration began, but things had already gotten off to an extreme start.

“Rrraaagh!”

“Aaagh!”

“Rrr-rraaagh!”

“Eeep!”

The zombies were being even more of a menace than they’d been at the Cape of the Dead. They materialized suddenly around corners or grabbed our ankles from under the floor. How could I *not* scream? In fact, I stopped even being alarmed by the ones that burst through walls. Though, I had to say, the real scary part came just after this.

“Ugh... What the heck is this?”

There had been a presumably event-related ghost that kept groaning, “You traitoor!” before dropping a key. I used that key to unlock a door, which opened to a scene of a terrible tragedy. There was a giant ax impaled into a bed, and the room was filled with scattered pillow feathers and bloodstains. Collapsed in the middle of the room was a man’s skeleton. It was the ultrarealistic, gory scene of a murder.

This probably would have looked a little more mild if I had been using a filter for Undead monsters. I almost automatically put the filter on, but doing that felt like losing. *Losing to whom? To the devs, duh!*

In the end, I swallowed my fear and explored the blood-spattered room.

“Chirp?”

“Aye?”

“H-How can you two just pull back the covers like that?!”

“...?”

“Growl?”

“And you guys, are you seriously picking up the skeleton...?”

Did my monsters have no concept of gore? They were looking around like this was a regular house. But actually, I was also feeling a sense of excitement myself. Just walking around inside this sunken ship with my monsters filled me with a strange sort of exhilaration, like I had stepped into a kids’ adventure movie. From excitement to horror. From mystery solving to treasure hunting. My feelings were all over the place. This ship was like a mixture of splatter horror, mystery-suspense, and adventure. It was a complete spread of all the types of movies cinemas usually played over summer break.

“...!”

“Oh, is this a diary? Good job, Sakura!” I said, taking a book that Sakura had found inside a chest.

The outside of it was covered in some sticky red substance and it had the look of a cursed item. I opened it to find what seemed to be a diary. I couldn’t make out the writing inside at all, but a translation also appeared above the page, so I was able to read that with no problem.

Inside was an account of the heinous act of the traitor, who killed his comrades aboard the ship. Apparently there was one idiot on the ship who decided it’d be more merciful to kill everyone if the alternative was getting shipwrecked by a jellyfish. Then, after that guy was killed by the ship captain, he became a ghost and continued to attack the people on the ship.

“Let’s see, ‘I found a way to defeat the traitor. Will that bring peace back to this ship?’”

That was what was written, and when I turned the page—

“Ugh! Just like what you’d see in a classic ghost story...”

The page was stained bright and unreadable. Clearly, the owner of the diary

had been killed in the middle of writing.

After we were done with that room, we ran all over the ship, knocking the weak but persistent zombies, skeletons, and ghosts out of our way as we did. At some point, I started to get used to things and stopped being frightened at all. I doubted even a real-life haunted house would scare me now.

“Okay, so now we should probably take this cross and go to the captain’s cabin, right?”

In the quarters of the only female shipmate, the ship’s doctor, we found a silver rosary inside of a box. I guessed this was some sort of key item. Judging by the fact that all the other rooms were a mess but the doctor’s cabin alone was clean meant this rosary definitely had some sort of effect.

Then, in the captain’s quarters, we fought against the traitor’s ghost, which ended up being surprisingly strong. It had resistance to physical damage and used invisible attacks like telekinesis. But after we dealt it a certain amount of damage, the spirit of the doctor appeared from the rosary and unleashed a purifying beam, extinguishing the ghost. Could a ghost really purify another ghost...?

Immediately after, the captain’s ghost thanked me and jumped straight to giving me my reward. He then embraced the beautiful doctor, who I guess was his lover or something, and then they ascended to heaven.

“It ended with a love story...?”

This really was some Hollywood movie-type event, huh? Once everything was over, we were automatically teleported back to the Cape of the Dead.

“Ahhh, the sun feels so nice.”

“...♪”

Sakura and I stretched, loosening up our bodies, then I checked out what reward I’d received for clearing the sunken ship.

“I got five thousand evets, and Amber. And a Pirate Flag?”

I took out the item that was simply labeled Pirate Flag, and what do you know, it really was a flag. It was a sizable flag about as wide as a bedsheet, and

it had a white background with a black skull drawn on it.

Was this the flag the ghost on the reef had mentioned? I was pretty sure it said something about the giant jellyfish chasing this flag. In that case, this item must be for luring the giant jellyfish that hung out by the ocean current. Meaning it was an item to help players get over the current.

“Not that we need this...”

Could I sell it to someone?

“But first, maybe we should rest... I’m exhausted.”

“...♪”

The tip of the cape was a safety zone free of both fog and monsters. But while I had plopped myself down, my monsters were bouncing off the walls.

“Humm.”

“Honk honk!”

“You guys sure are energetic. Was the sunken ship fun for you?”

“Hum!”

“Honk!”

Even though it had been filled with gore and horror for me, for my monsters, it had been more like a fun attraction. Their excitement from that still hadn’t cooled off, so they were running around playfully.

“Chirp?”

“What’s up, Rick?”

Our break was suddenly interrupted. Rick, who’d been sleeping on my left shoulder, got up and chirped in alarm. His ears were twitching left and right, listening for the sounds around us.

“Chirp!”

Rick turned his gaze towards the entrance of the cape. I followed his lead and looked over there too, where I saw several figures running towards us. Since there was some fog in that direction, I couldn’t clearly make out their forms.

“U-Undead monsters?”

I’d thought this was a safety zone, but could I have been mistaken? I anxiously waited, listening to the sound of their approaching footsteps. However, it didn’t take long before we all completely dropped our guards.

“Hey, wait, wait! I’m gonna fall! Filma, you’re going too fast!”

“Don’t grab onto my waist, Kurumi! Eek!”

“Heh heh... You two are having fun.”

“This isn’t fun! Rikyu, help meee!”

“Another zombie! Please, Kurumi! I mean it!”

“Skeletons are fine, but rotting corpses are gross!”

“Heh heh... I’ll blow them all up...”

“Absolutely not!” two of the three familiar voices cried together.

They drew closer to us as they kept up their comedic back-and-forth. There was no doubt—the three girls were Kurumi, Filma, and Rikyu. I waited about ten or so seconds before I saw their familiar faces emerge from the fog.

“Wait, whaaat? It’s Silver-Haired!”

“Huh? It is!”

“Heh heh...a Silver-Haired encounter.”

There was Kurumi, the short Human-Cow hybrid with a red afro and cow horns, with her attention-grabbing giant hammer slung on her back. There was the serious-type Nereid with short, blue hair and finlike ears, aka Filma. And last but not least, the magenta-haired, kimono-clad pyromaniac with her characteristic eccentric laugh—Rikyu. The trio seemed to be as chummy as ever.

“Are you here for the sunken ship?”

“Huh? So you’re here for that too, Silver-Haired?”

“Yeah. Did you three find that reef too?”

“Ah! Wait just one second!”

“What? What’s up?”

When I asked about what they’d been up to, Kurumi cut me off, looking harried. Then, she started talking towards empty space.

“W-We ran into a friend, so we’re going to stop the stream here! We’ll restart in ten minutes! Sorry, guys!”

*Stream? Were they live streaming?*

I had never heard of them doing something like that before, though. Had they started this recently? I was wracking my brain trying to remember, when Kurumi explained everything to me. She told me that players could earn a few evets the higher they ranked in streams they recorded during the event, so the three of them started live streaming in hopes of making it into the top videos. Rikyu wasn’t a big fan of the idea, but apparently she’d given in to Kurumi’s begging. They had made it so my monsters and I were pixelated and our voices were muted, which was a relief.

“Evets, huh? Interesting.”

“Why’re you acting like this has nothing to do with you?! You’re in first place right now!”

“I am? Oh, the Brachio fight!”

Now that she mentioned it, I *did* stream that. I had totally forgotten about that.

“Yeah, that. I don’t think we can beat your video, but we’ll make a decent amount if we can at least rank high. We’re doing our best.”

They were counting on placing high in the rankings by streaming the sunken ship, since information about it still wasn’t widely available. That must have been why they’d been so flustered to see I was already here.

“D-Did you already stream it? Did you?”

“Huh? No, I didn’t.”

My stream of the Brachio had been an accident in the first place.

“Oh, good. I thought we’d have to stop streaming as soon as we started...”

The girls had apparently started streaming from here, the Cape of the Dead. Their plan was to talk about the entire path they took at the end of the stream. They'd really thought things through.

"Ahhh! Reflet and Perca!"

"Hum?"

"Honk?"

*Whoa.* There was quite a reaction from Filma, lover of all sea creatures. Reflet's and Perca's eyes were moving back and forth in bewilderment. But then, after remembering that they had played with Filma before, they quickly went to hug her with smiles on their faces. Even Rikyu, who secretly also loved cute things, fussed over my two monsters. Meanwhile, Kurumi and I exchanged some information.

"Have you been to the Prehistoric Island yet?"

"Oh, we did, of course. With Filma with us, the underwater route was a piece of cake."

"Oh yeah, that does seem like it'd be easy for you guys."

Speaking of, I had Reflet and Perca, so I probably could have gone that way too. But I'd just gone straight for the brute force method instead.

"We almost died to the Brachio, but we managed to assemble a raid and got through it."

"What'd you say? A raid?"

The Brachio was a raid boss? But my party was able to beat it on our own... I really doubted a single party could take down a raid boss, no matter how many miracles we had working for us.

"It looks like it's the type of boss whose difficulty scales depending on how many people it's up against. So you can even fight it as a raid boss."

"Ah, I see."

So it was set up so players could even beat it solo.

"We probably would've been annihilated if we hadn't had KTK and Siegfried

on our side. Oh yeah, you know how Perca and Eine latched onto the Brachio's head? KTK did the same thing."

"She did that herself? Dang, KTK's as awesome as ever."

Were there no limits to what that top Thief player could do? Frontline players really were a cut above everyone else!

"We had some other great players with us too. The only one missing was you, Silver-Haired!"

"Ha ha ha. I appreciate you saying that, but I really don't think a casual gamer like me would've done much in an awesome fight like that."

"What d'you mean? I think you'd fit in fine?"

"Nah, no way."

"Well, whatever you say. Anyway—"

We moved on to exchanging more information, and Kurumi gave me some crazy valuable intel. First was information for my still-unfinished encyclopedia.

"There's a golden goat on that rocky mountain?"

"Yup. You can also find this weird plant called *Welwitschia mirabilis* there."

Surprisingly enough, Kurumi was referring to the rocky mountain where the legendary angler had told me I could find Amber. Since I already had Amber, I ended up shortcutting that whole process, but apparently that mountain was also home to some rare flora and fauna for the encyclopedia.

*Oof, that was close.* If she hadn't told me about this, I would have completely missed those entries.

The biggest bomb drop of info was about the dinosaurs. There was actually a small chance that you'd run into a unique form of the dinosaurs on the Prehistoric Island, which, if defeated, dropped a special item.

"An exchange ticket for a Dinosaur Enclosure Set?"

"Yep. It's a household object."

At the end of the event, if you had that exchange ticket, you could use it to obtain a Dinosaur Enclosure Set as a reward. I already had an item called the



event exchange ticket, so maybe I could use that for the enclosure?

However, there was also a possibility that I couldn't. If I wanted to make absolutely sure I'd get a dinosaur, then my only choice was to hunt for a unique dinosaur and get my hands on one of those Dinosaur Enclosure Set exchange tickets.

In return for what Kurumi told me, I told her about the information I had on the demon. She was shocked and seemed to think that was much better information than hers, but if anything, my information was something I wanted to spread around.

"So we need Ammolite for the demon..."

"That's what it seems like. What do you think?"

"Isn't this bad? I think you might be the only one who knows about this, Silver-Haired."

"That's for sure... Heh heh."

"Yeah. If this doesn't get spread around more, the last day is going to be rough."

I had a eureka moment—what if the girls were to talk about all this on their live stream? A lot more people would become aware of it, and there was a chance it'd increase their viewer count.

This could serve as a thank-you for her telling me about the Dinosaur Enclosure. When I shared my idea, the girls said they'd be getting too much out of it, but I managed to convince them that their spreading the information around balanced things out enough.

"Hmm... If you really say so, then we'll stream it, okay?"

"That'd be great! Thanks a bunch."

*Nice, nice. Now we should be able to get ready in time for the final day's event!*

Kurumi exhaled loudly. "You're on a whole nother level, dude."

"Heh heh, Silver MVP."

“Huh? Did you guys say something?”

“Nope. Anyway, I’m gonna start streaming now. You ready?”

“O-Oh, yeah. Bring it on!”

The girls didn’t feel right about taking credit for information they didn’t get on their own, so we decided I would make a brief appearance. But man, was I feeling nervous!

“Aaand we’re back! Hiya!”

Kurumi waved a hand in front of the camera floating in front of her face. I hadn’t seen it before, but she changed some settings so that it was now visible while streaming.

“Guess what! We ran into someone really amazing, and he’s going to grace us with a guest appearance!”

“Hi there. I’m Yuto the Tamer.”

“In fact, he has something he wants to share with everyone. Why don’t we hear what he has to say right now?”

“Right, so here’s the thing—”

From then on, I tried my best to give my talk. Because of my nervousness, I ended up blabbing about more than I intended to. I had only planned to talk for about three minutes, but I actually spoke for closer to ten.

“Phew... I think that’s about all I had to say?”

“Silver-Haired, great job!”

“Man, I was so nervous!”

“More importantly, are you really okay with having shared all that stuff?”

“Well, I can’t exactly take it back now. Besides, the more I share, the more viewers you get, which means the info about the demon will circulate more.”

I had started out by talking about the demon and the Ammolite, but I let slip a few other things too.

I mean, that was the first time I had been on a live stream on purpose. And

Kurumi was a really good listener, so I just sort of got carried away. When I started talking about how the Event Spino was fond of ocean fish, I ended up speaking in detail about the legendary fish too, for some reason.

Before I realized it, not only had I given out the information on the demon and the old men who ran the minigames in each village, but about where to obtain the Ammolite. And then, for reasons unknown even to myself, I talked about how to get a sea otter, and the surefire way to get a winning fish.

Once Filma heard about the sea otter, she nearly burst into a run, and Rikyu had to put her in a full nelson. A sea creature lover like Filma wasn't going to let something like that go unheard.

*Oh well.* Spreading around the information about the demon was the most important thing, so if their stream did more numbers thanks to all that other information I shared, that was fine by me.

“We’ve already got an *insane* number of views! Thank you!”

“Heh heh... Much obliged.”

“Thank you for the information about the sea otter! I’m going to do my best to get one!”

“Don’t you mean thanks for the information on the demon?” I asked.

“Heh heh... There’s no stopping Filma.”

“Yup! No stopping me!”

Had Filma and Rikyu switched up their comedic roles? The power of the sea was not to be underestimated.

Afterwards, our groups parted ways, and I returned to the North Fishing Village. From here, I would teleport to the Prehistoric Island. Originally, I had been planning to sell my information to Alyssa, but now I’d divulged everything on that live stream. I didn’t have any other information I could sell.

In that case, now I could go straight to finding a unique dinosaur!

“We need to hurry over to the Prehistoric Island! Stat!”

Interrupting that thought was the familiar sound of an announcement.

*Ding-dong.*

*“This is an urgent message from the development team.”*

*“Say what now?”*

I opened up the message I received. It was a notice saying they would be conducting emergency maintenance in a few minutes. According to the message, they would be fixing some bug they'd found in the ongoing event. There was no evidence that the bug had resulted in anyone gaining an unfair advantage, but they couldn't ignore it, hence the emergency maintenance.

Once the event reopened, players would resume in the spot they were in at the start of maintenance, and if a player had been in the middle of battle, the enemies they'd been fighting against would start with a slight stunned effect. No boss fights could be started from here on, and if a player was currently in a boss fight, they would be transported out of the event once that fight was over.

Also, by way of apology, everyone would receive one thousand evets, a small Terrarium, and a small perfume bottle. In addition to that, players would be allowed to bring in three more items from outside the event.

*“Maintenance will be finished in two in-game hours... Hmm, this sucks. I wanted to get a move on now.”*

However, time in the event itself wouldn't progress, so I guess it wasn't actually that much of a problem for me. It was a tragedy for people gaming on a strict time table, though. But there wasn't much to be done about that. Emergency maintenance was part of the package with online games. I'd had similar things happen in other games I'd played before.

*“More importantly, I can bring in items from outside the event? Now I can bring in *those!*”*

In truth, I still hadn't used the items I received to commemorate the second-wave players joining the game. Among them was an incense to attract unique monsters. I didn't want to waste it, so I still hadn't used it, but its expiration date was approaching. At this rate, I'd get stuck using it to lure some random monster. The moment I was forcibly booted from the event, I checked my items.

“I can bring in three more items, right? Okay then—”

“Ya-ya!”

“Mrooow!”

“Arf arf!”

No sooner had I sat on the veranda and opened my inventory than I felt something thud against my back. When I turned around, I saw a smiling Mamori clinging to me. On either side of her were the calico cat Dango, and the mame shiba Nuts.

“You wanna play?”

“Ya-yaaa!”

“Mrow!”

“Arf arf!”

Since time in the event was sped up, it had been five days for me since I’d last seen them. But for my mascots, I had only been gone since that morning...

“Booo!”

“Kapa-pa!”

“Y-You guys too?”

“Fluff-fluff!”

“Tiep!”

“Wait, wait! I’m kinda busy right now! I’ll play once I’m done, okay?”

“Sneeh!”

“Pom!”

Jeez, all my monsters, mascots, and yokai that I’d left waiting at home were all gathered together here. The only one who hadn’t come to greet me was the Hanami Vandal, who was probably off drinking somewhere.

“Uh, let’s see...”

*Stare.*

“Ah, found the incense! Now I need...”

*Stare.*

This was impossible. At some point I had become surrounded by the stay-home crew, peered at me from all directions with eyes that were saying, “Are you done yeeet?” The pressure was too great. My stomach hurt.

“...I-I’ll just grab this and this.”

I couldn’t take it anymore, so I quickly chose my last couple items, one of them being the skill ticket I received along with the unique monster-attracting incense. I had also forgotten to use this, and it had been left sitting in my inventory.

This item would allow me to choose a skill I wanted to learn from a list. I decided to bring it into the event and put some careful thought into what I would choose while there. The other item I decided to bring was a rare item drop ticket. This item guaranteed I’d get a rare drop if I used it before a battle.

“I’ll go with these.”

“Ya!”

“Hey! I haven’t closed my inventory yet! Don’t come running at me!”

“Mrow!”

“Aroof!”

“Aaah! I’m getting buried!”

“Sneeeh!”

“Poko-pom!”

Ultimately, I ended up playing with everyone until I returned to the event. Playing Red Light, Green Light was more fun than I thought it’d be, but didn’t the mascots who could fly have a bit of an unfair advantage?

On another note, I still couldn’t carry over the Terrariums from the event, so I couldn’t try setting them up in my home. Bummer.

## **Management’s POV**

“Hey! Maintenance is starting in ten minutes. Log out and go wake those bums in the nap room! We only have two hours!”

“Yes, Chief!”

“Team One, you work on adjusting the demon’s stats!”

“Let’s see, right now, we’ve lowered its initial values across the board...”

“Raise its HP! Lower everything else! That’s the plan! We should account for more second-wave players participating than we anticipated! Also, we can assume that almost every player has information about strategy items! At this rate, the demon will be KO’d instantly! Oh, and don’t forget to lower the effectiveness of the Ammolite too!”

“We had estimated that players would collect about one hundred of those... Now it may be well over ten times that number.”

“And Team Two, you handle the system side of things! Pay extra careful attention to the boss’s movements!”

“This was originally content we were going to use for an event that wasn’t at quadruple speed. I’m glad we noticed before implementation.”

“Yeah. The occasional freezing NPC is fine, but it’d be a nightmare if a boss did that during a fight.”

“Oh, but doesn’t this mean we have to adjust *everything* sooner or later?”

“Are you talking about that bill they’re trying to pass?”

“I mean, it’s kind of like what that one scholar said about the discrepancy between your mental and physical age, and what it does to you, and so on and so forth.”

“The hell are you talking about?!”

“Isn’t it enough to know that there’s a limit to how much time in VR can be sped up?”

“The data is still inconclusive, but there’s a possibility that in twenty years, it’ll be common for people to be physically thirty years old but mentally over forty. It doesn’t just affect gamers, but also people like us who use sped-up VR time in

their work. And they're even planning to use something similar for cram schools."

"Ah, that's how you got to that thing about discrepancy between mental and physical ages."

"In fact, once they do find out if it has a negative effect, it'll be too late for hundreds, thousands of people. I heard they observed some abnormal behavior with lab rats."

"Huh? Isn't that really bad?"

"That's why that bill will probably be passed. If sped-up time becomes illegal, then we'll have to overhaul our whole system."

"Ugh, you may be right."

"Also, if we can't work in slowed-down time..."

"Yes."

"Our crunch times are just going to get even worse! Overtime forever! Kami's going to tell me she's moving back hooome! I can already feel my daughter's cold stare!"

"...Hang in there..."

"I will!"

"You two! What's with the chitchat?!"

"D-Deputy Chief! Good to see you!"

"Have you finished giving your orders?"

"Y-Yeah."

"I see. In that case, Chief, I'd like to direct your attention to this. It's urgent."

"What's this?"

"This is an analysis on whether the demon's stats need even further adjusting, considering there is a possibility of more players than predicted beating the Mosa and the Spino."

"Huh? Why?"



“Silver-Haired’s stream, of course. He completely exposed the information about the Amber Bait being the key to defeating the Mosa, as well as the information about ocean fish being the key for the Spino.”

“What? Really? I didn’t watch it that far. Once I saw the demon part, I panicked and went to call others.”

“Regardless, we cannot let things stay as is.”

“...No kidding.”

“Also, I believe we need to make some adjustments to the reward for completing the encyclopedia.”

“Does it seem like a lot of players will complete that too?”

“The most difficult fish to find becomes not so difficult as long as a player has the Amber Bait.”

“I see, that’s true... Why... Why did he have to drop that huge bomb right before maintenance?!”

“Isn’t this great?”

“Huh? What is?”

“You like drinking while reading over that player’s log to see what he’s done, don’t you? Now you can drink enough to get absolutely hammered.”

“...Don’t glare at me like that! This isn’t my fault!”

“You’re in charge of that player, Chief. So it’s your fault.”

“Whaaat?!”

## **Quick-Eared Cats’ POV**

“Submaster, the preparations are comple—”

“Waaaaaaaah!”

“Wh-What’s wrong?!”

“Nnngh! I’m just frustrated that I was actually feeling relieved...”

“But it is definitely true this helped us a lot. If he had brought all that information to us...”

“We probably would have had barely enough to pay him.”

“Barely enough? I think it’d have been impossible...”

“I’d have paid him.”

“You really hate to lose...”

“Anyway! We can’t just sit here twiddling our thumbs! We need to hurry over to the Prehistoric Island!”

“What about the sunken ship?”

“We’ll leave that to Carlo and the others. Highwood and I will go verify the Spino and Amber Bait information.”

“We’ve figured out a lot of the Spino’s patterns, after all. If you can distract it with the fish, then you should be able to take it down pretty easily.”

“Do we have the ocean fish ready?”

“Yes. We stocked up on some right after the maintenance finished. We have plenty of everts now since we didn’t have to pay Silver-Haired.”

“For the Amber Bait, we figured out we could make that even outside of the event, so that’s been handled.”

“We sell them as soon as they’re made. The dragonfly hunting squad requested more members...”

“Roger that. I’ll send Maple and her team. Should we prioritize the Mosa over the Spino? No one’s beaten the Mosa yet, but the Amber Bait might change things.”

“Well, if the Event Mosa hates Amber Bait, then maybe it’s possible to herd it to some random spot.”

“That’s exactly right. Also, we need to get a hold of that Ammolite Yuto mentioned on the stream. That’s probably best left to Lewin, right?”

“In any case, we only have two days left, but we’ve got a lot to get done. Silver-Haired really did it again.”

“We’re okay on evets now, but we ended up being up to our ears in work!”

## **The Three Girls’ POV**

“Whoa!”

“What is it, Kurumi?”

“Our stream’s numbers just keep going up and up! And they keep rising! We might even make it to the top three with this.”

“Heh heh... Mainly thanks to Silver-Haired.”

“Th-That’s not true! Our own appeal had an impact too!”

“Appeal?”

“Wh-What’s with that look?! Some people in this world have eccentric tastes!”

“Y-You just called yourself an eccentric taste...”

“They can look but they can’t touch... Heh heh.”

“Anyway! It’s not all because of Silver-Haired! His contribution was about ninety-five percent!”

“Isn’t that the same thing as saying it was mainly thanks to him?”

“Five percent was from our own efforts! There’s a big difference between zero and five!”

“Kurumi. You’re killing me here. Can we move on?”

“Okay...”

“But you know, Silver-Haired really is amazing. We should give him something in return later, don’t you think?”

“Yeah, good idea. Like what?”

“Heh heh... Rikyu’s Special Hyper Deluxe.”

“Vetoed! He’ll blow himself up with that if he doesn’t have flame resistance!”

“Okay then, this. Heh heh, the explosion with this one is really something.”

“We can’t give him that either! That disintegrates everything! And wait, didn’t I tell you to get rid of that?! You still have it!”

“This doesn’t count. It’s part of my collection. Heh.”

“A-Anyway, let’s think of something good to give him.”

“Yeah, let’s.”

“Heh heh... Okay, how about this—”

“No way—”

“All right already! Rikyu’s gonna suggest a bomb. Kurumi, if you respond to every single one, we’ll never get anywhere.”

## Chapter Two: Taking Down One Dinosaur Boss after Another!

There was an announcement informing players that the emergency maintenance had ended, so I went back into the event. Time really hadn't moved at all. It was like things had restarted exactly from the second we had left the event.

"All right! Now that that little hiccup is over, let's get ourselves back on track to find a unique dinosaur! Oh wait, before that, I should rearrange my party."

"Chirp chirp!"

"Huh?"

I was about to walk to the teleportation point when I felt something tugging on the back of my robe.

"Chirp!"

"What's up?"

"Chirp."

Rick had called for me to stop and was pointed outside of the village. The only thing I could think of being in that direction was—

"Oh, are you telling me not to forget about the rocky mountain?"

"Chirp."

Speaking of, I *did* need to finish filling out my encyclopedia.

"Thanks, Rick. I forgot about that."

"Chirp!"

Rick smugly puffed out his chest. *Aww, he's so cute when he's being cheeky!*

While I was taking screenshots of Rick, I planned out my next moves. If we went to the Prehistoric Island, we'd end up spending a lot of time there. Not

only did I need to hunt a unique dinosaur, but I also needed to catch that legendary fish. Considering that, I felt like I had to go to the rocky mountain first.

“Okay, first up is filling out my encyclopedia at the rocky mountain, *then* the Prehistoric Island.”

“Chirp chirp!”

We headed for the rocky mountain, where, sure enough, we were able to find several new varieties of creatures. The place was swarming with rare plants and animals, like the golden goat I’d heard about, rolling tumbleweeds, a plant called *Welwitschia mirabilis* that looked on the verge of withering away, a tarantula, and a girdled lizard. I was really lucky Kurumi had told me about this place.

“I filled out a lot of my encyclopedia, but...”

I had filled out the entirety of the animal and insect sections, but I was missing one spot under both plant and aquatic sections. The empty space under the plants column was the titan arum. The empty space under the aquatic column had to be the mysterious fish living in the Event Mosa’s lake. After I got those two, I’d be done.

“Awww yeah! That’s what I’m talking about!”

“...!”

“Aye-aye!”

Carried away by my own runaway excitement, I threw my hands up in the air, and Sakura and Fau copied me. They sure were cute, but it was embarrassing to think that I had just done that same exact pose.

“Let’s go back to base real quick.”

“...♪”

“Aye!”

Then, thirty minutes later, we teleported not to the interior of the Prehistoric Island, but to the beach. The interior didn’t have dinosaurs, and our goal right now was to find a unique one!

“Okay team, we’re looking for a unique specimen. The fight ahead might get tough, so I’m counting on you two, Olto and Drimo.”

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak!”

Like I had promised, I brought Olto and Drimo with me. Our party was composed of Olto, Drimo, Eine, Himka, Reflet, and Sakura—a mainly humanoid monster team.

Well, things just sort of ended up this way when I added our healer Reflet and our all-rounder Sakura to the group that had stayed back last time. Unlike the main island, this place was a fierce battleground. Even I put some thought into things occasionally.

“Ah! Yuto!”

“Huh? Sawyer?”

A familiar voice called out to me from the entrance of the prehistoric forest—it was Sawyer. And behind him was the lewd blacksmith, Sukegawa; the macho farmer, Tagosack; the cook that fought with a frying pan, Fuka; and the burly, apple-loving farmer, Tsugarun.

“I caught your stream.”

“Oh, is that why you came here?”

“Yes. I thought I’d try to get my hands on an Ammolite.”

“Gotcha. So you know how to beat the boss?”

That was the issue, after all. The Ammolite was probably obtainable before beating the boss, but the chances of finding it were low. If someone really wanted to get one, they’d have to make it to the interior of the island.

“Yes, I do. The verification team and the Quick-Eared Cats teamed up to look into it.”

Considering this event had a time limit, being slow would lead to failing the event. There were individual rankings, but those wouldn’t matter if the event as a whole was considered a fail. So, as Sawyer explained, a lot of members of the

verification team and the Quick-Eared Cats had worked in cooperation to figure out how to defeat the Brachio.

“The Brachio? I think there’s another boss, though...”

Why were they deliberately going for the strongest one?

“There’s some information circulating about that one too, but yeah, they went for the Brachio. There was a big hint on how to beat it in your video, after all.”

Apparently, luring the Event Tyranno to the mountain and having it clash with the Event Brachio had become an established method. Furthermore, the mystery with the experience points had become clarified. The game would calculate some numerical value like contribution points that was based on your dealt and sustained damage, which in turn affected the EXP you received. So even if a party made up of second-wave players leached off a strong party, they wouldn’t be able to gain much from it.

That explained things. Maybe that was why my party’s level ups had been a little weird. I had thought it was odd how Olto and everyone else had gained enough EXP to go up four levels, but Perca had only gone up six levels—which was low considering where he had started. What probably happened was that, even though it seemed like he’d played a big role, he hadn’t actually dealt that much damage. Thus, his contribution was valued to be low. It had probably been difficult for Perca, who wasn’t a tank or a healer and didn’t have any support skills, to earn contribution points.

Sawyer and his party were planning on teaming up with people they knew in the verification team to take down the Brachio.

“I see. Well, good luck!”

“Thank you!”

After I cheered him on, I decided to ask about something that had caught my eye.

“Sawyer. That book you’ve got there, is that...”

Instead of holding a weapon like a staff, Sawyer was holding a book with a



striking reddish-black cover. It was thick, and looked like it'd hurt if you got hit with it. Though it probably wasn't meant to be used as a blunt weapon.

"You noticed? Get this, I finally made a spellbook!"

"I knew it!"

Finally, he had successfully completed the spellbook he'd been wanting.

"Congrats, man!"

Sawyer held the opened spellbook in his right hand. The look really suited him!

"Whoa, check you out!"

"Actually, this is all thanks to you, Yuto."

"Huh? Why me?"

It wasn't like I did anything... So I thought, but Sawyer informed me that in order to make a spellbook, you needed the Spellbook skill as a prerequisite. And one of the conditions to unlock that skill was to be in possession of a bookmark.

"It's all thanks to that bookmark you gave me. Without that, I don't think I would have noticed."

Around the start of the game, I'd given Sawyer a bookmark without giving it much thought. Apparently, that bookmark had served him well. Though I was sure a booklover like Sawyer would have figured it out eventually anyway... Oh well, being thanked was a nice feeling, so I just laughed vaguely in response.

"So, what can this spellbook do?"

"Its abilities are actually similar to a staff's, though the spellbook doesn't have as much attack power and it can get destroyed if I use it for defense. But in exchange, I can register several spells to it and fire them off without having to chant."

"Wait, isn't that a little OP?"

"No, not really."

First off, it had a cooldown time and so he couldn't cast the spells consecutively. The cooldown time changed depending on the rank of the spells.

Moreover, the spells were weaker in power—about fifty percent of the user’s ability.

“Also, the book’s durability deteriorates the more I use it, so I can’t go crazy with it.”

Despite all that, Sawyer looked happy—after all, he finally had the spellbook he’d dreamed of having.

“Actually, I’m looking to get some Dinosaur Hide. If I get some boss-level Dinosaur Hide, it’d do wonders to enhance my book.”

There were a lot of materials required to make a spellbook: a Magic Stone, Hide, Paper, Ink, and a Bookmark. Those were the minimum requirements. The Hide was used to make the cover, and the material’s rank affected the book’s durability, intelligence, and sanity stats.

“Hide, huh? Can you use something like this?”

“What? Is this...from a dinosaur?”

“Yup. I’d like to use the really rare drops for myself, but I’ve got a bunch of these Dinosaur Great Hides.” Since I had taken the boss down solo, I’d gotten to take all the loot for myself. I still had several more of these great hides. “Oh wait, can you not use them right away?”

“No, I can’t, but if you’re willing to give it to me, I’ll happily accept!”

“Then here, take it.”

“Wait, I can’t just... Okay then, I’ll give you this in return.”

“Oh, what’s this?”

“It’s a Revive Potion. It’s just recently been developed.”

At last, a revival item had made its appearance in this game! Other games had these sort of items implemented from the start, but not LJO. Apparently now they’d been developed.

“Say what? Heck no, I can’t accept this! It’s way too good of an item!” I insisted. Wouldn’t something like this be super valuable right now?

“It’s nothing. I have a recipe, so I can make them myself.”

“R-Really? Okay then, don’t mind if I do.”

I had just given him some surplus hide I had, and I got a super valuable item in return... Well, I was expecting to run into some tough battles up ahead, so I took the potion gladly. Just call me the Straw Millionaire, I guess.

Sawyer was called back by his party members, so I stepped foot into my next destination—the prehistoric forest.

After walking for a bit, I took out the incense I had brought in following maintenance. I wondered if I should go in a little deeper, but if the unique dinosaur we encountered was a Tyranno, I knew we’d die. We could probably handle something like a unique Pachycephalo, though.

“But hmm... Should I really use it here?”

I still didn’t know the details of the Dinosaur Enclosure Set. It was probably a household object, but how was I supposed to procure the dinosaurs to put in there? What if the unique monster I defeated was the one that went in there?

“A Stego or a Tricera would be rarer than a Pachycephalo...”

I was definitely scared of a Tyranno showing up, but it also wasn’t the type of enemy to be encountered so easily. In that case, maybe it was fine to aim for a Stego or a Tricera?

“That settles it! Let’s go a little farther in!”

“Mm-mm!”

I also finally had a good handle on the setup of the forest. Thanks to what I read on the message boards, that is.

The Prehistoric Island was broadly divided into five areas. First was the area that spanned from the beach to the outskirts of the forest, which was a shared map for all players.

Then there was the depths of the prehistoric forest. This area functioned like a dungeon, in that there was a separate instance prepared per party. Earlier, I’d thought it interesting that the place seemed so empty, but in fact we had actually just been the only players there.

Next was the outer perimeter of the plateau. Just like the beach, this was an

area shared among all players, likely for ease of forming parties to challenge the bosses. Players could create a raid party of up to fifty people.

Then, after that was the area that awaited players once their preparations were through—the plateau with the bosses' territories. Each party played on their own instance, with their own individually prepared boss.

Lastly was the summit of the plateau. Here, again, was a shared area for players. Though I felt like if tens of thousands of players were to flood that area, space would get pretty tight... Nah, it probably expanded in size based on the number of people there, just like with the beach and the plateau's perimeter.

Thus, if I wanted any dinosaur besides a Pachycephalo, I had to tread deeper into the forest.

“Around here should be good. I'm going to use the incense, so get ready to fight!”

“Hm!”

“Hum!”

Everyone readied themselves by circling around me. We didn't know where the dinosaur would emerge from, after all. I burned the incense, and ten seconds later, my worst fear came true. A Tyranno—

Just kidding. A regular old unique Event Pachycephalo showed up. Its head was bigger than the normal Pachycephalo's, and its scales were tinged with blue, so I knew right away it was unique. It was too bad it wasn't a Stego or a Tricera, but I was just happy it wasn't a Tyranno. You might be thinking that if I was going to feel relieved by that, I shouldn't have picked a fight this far into the forest, but sometimes, a gamer had to do what a gamer had to do.

“Olto! You focus on the unique dinosaur! Sakura, paralyze the other dinosaurs!”

“Mm-mm!”

“...!”

“Himka, you take on its henchmen! Drimo, attack as you see fit! But save your Dragon Blood Awakening for later!”

“Hm!”

“Squeak!”

“Eine, Reflet, you two stay by my side and support everyone else!”

“Hum!”

“Tra-la-la!”

I left the healing to Reflet and attacked the surrounding dinosaurs first, dealing them damage with an AoE spell. Forming this well-balanced party had proved effective—we had no trouble ensuring our victory.

“Nice! We got a Dinosaur Enclosure Set exchange ticket!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“That’s our primary goal completed! Let’s head towards our second goal—the Mosa’s lake!”

We were off to a good start with defeating a unique dinosaur. We marched triumphantly through the prehistoric forest. However, we soon had to come to a stop.

“Are you serious...?”

“Squeak...”

A little farther ahead was an Event Stego, its coloring clearly different from the regular Stegos, which were brown and had spots of green. This one, in contrast, was red. Its entire body was bright red, with spots of orange. It was a super vivid color combo.

“It’s a unique specimen...”

*I wasted my incense!*

Nah, just kidding. This wasn’t a waste.

“Think we can take it?”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Tra-la!”

*They’re so motivated.* The Stego wasn’t going to attack us until we attacked it,

so first, I decided to get everyone in formation.

“Drimo, you’ll make the first strike with Dragon Blood Awakening.”

“Squeak!”

This first attack would be the key. If possible, I wanted to start off by hitting its weak point, but...where would that be? Its head? Tail? Belly? Somewhere else?

“Hmm... No clue.”

Man, if only I had a skill that let me see vital points. Oh, wait. I actually might. I had a skill ticket on me right this moment, so maybe now was a good time to use it. I activated the skill ticket and checked over the list. Then, I found a skill called Weakness Detection, a skill that had a chance of showing you an enemy’s weak point.

The success rate decreased the bigger the gap between your level and the target’s level. My skill was also only at level 1 right now, so the chances of it working here were exceedingly slim.

“Well, can’t know till we try. I’ll test it out. Everyone, this might trigger the battle to start. Don’t let your guards down, okay? Drimo, if the enemy rushes for us, attack it with Dragon Blood Awakening!”

“Squeak!”

“All right, Weakness Detection!”

Yup, it failed. I couldn’t see anything. But there was one piece of good news.

“Using Weakness Detection isn’t a hostile action? So is it similar to Appraise?”

Now was my chance to use Weakness Detection as much as I wanted to. I scanned for the unique Stego’s weak point forty times. Around the time when my skill level increased to four, the skill finally worked.

“Oh, cool! So that’s how it looks!”

At the same time a black marker appeared above the base of the dino’s tail, and the area that was its weak point was dyed in black. That had to be its vital area.

“Drimo! It’s at the base of its tail! Use Dragon Blood Awakening, then Fortify and Tailwind combo! Then bring it home with Pierce!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Brooooooaaaar!”

“Wh-Whoa! Nice one, Drimo!”

Drimo, now in his dragon form, launched a tremendous one-hit attack, taking out half of the unique Stego’s HP. *We can win this!*

“Guys! All-out attack, now!”

“...!”

Despite losing half its HP to Drimo’s critical hit, the dinosaur held out strong.

It seemed to be some spec that raised its defense when its HP decreased. Gradually, the attacks we dealt it started to deal less damage. Even more annoying was its ability to summon extra help. Although there weren’t many of them, the Stego periodically called in Pachycephalos, which kept messing up our formation. By the way, how was it fair to summon a Pachycephalo right behind me? How many times was I going to get knocked back by their stupid headbutts?!

However, the stronger this enemy became, the more damage Himka’s Counterattacker skill dealt. Not only did the Stego’s defense increase, but its attack power did as well.

“Broooooaar!”

“Hm-hmm!”

Even at this very moment, the Stego was getting repelled backwards. We were able to stop it from attacking consecutively since it was staggering around, which was also a big help. By putting himself in the line of fire of the Stego’s attacks, Himka was able to bring the dinosaur’s HP down to ten percent.

“Just a little more!”

“...!”

“Mm-mm!”

We were reaching the ends of our rope too, but the Stego was already on its last legs. It wouldn't be long now. Well, that was also precisely the reason for its act of desperation.

“Broooooaaaarrr!”

“Agh! What the hell?!”

The plates on the unique Stego's back started glowing red one after another, starting from the back. It looked like how the plates on a certain iconic kaiju's back glowed before it shot out its heat ray from its mouth. Then, once the light reached the Stego's head, it opened its jaws wide to reveal its brightly glowing red mouth. Clearly, it was going to do *just that*.

“B-Beams are against the rules!”

*What is this, Zoyds?! Dinosaurs and monsters are totally different beasts! Dinosaurs should fight like dinosaurs! Where's your pride as a dinosaur?!*

“Mm-mm!”

“O-Olto!”

While I was frantically scurrying away to evade the beam, Olto faced off against the Stego. He assumed an imposing stance in front of the dinosaur, his knees bent. He looked very much like a young knight thrusting his lance out at a monster. Then, the Stego emitted another massive beam from its mouth—

“Mm-mmm!”

“A-Awesome, Olto!”

Olto blocked the beam. He stuck out his hoe with all his strength, and the beam rebounded off it like it was a shield. Our surroundings were bathed in a bright white as countless particles of light scattered around like fireworks. It looked like we were in an arc welding workshop.

“Mm-mmm...”

“Broooooaar...”

Olto was slowly being pushed back, but he managed to hold out. Then, after a few seconds, the Stego was the first to reach its limit. Its beam started getting



thinner and thinner until it finally disappeared. Olto had also suffered a lot of damage, but the enemy had it worse.

“Br...oar...”

Smoke started to rise from its body and it stopped moving. Come on, this thing wasn't actually a machine on the inside, was it?

“Guys! Attack all together!”

“...!”

“Squeak squeak!”

My water spell sent the Stego stumbling, and Sakura's whip struck against the dinosaur relentlessly. Drimo rounded things off with a direct hit to the Stego's head with his pickax, depleting the rest of its HP.

“Broar...”

“We won... We really underestimated this guy.”

If it hadn't been for Drimo's initial attack, we would've found ourselves in a pretty tight spot.

“I guess I have two Dinosaur Enclosure exchange tickets now, huh? Well, that just means I get to have more dinosaurs, so I'll take that as a win.”

The items I got from the fight were about the same as the drops from regular dinosaurs. No machine parts, so I guess it really was a flesh-and-blood dinosaur. The item named Dinosaur Horn was a new one for me, though. But Stegos didn't have horns, so why'd I get one?

“Okay, we completed that goal, so let's get out of here. We still have to fish.”

“Hum!”

“H-Hey! What's with the pulling? You want to fish that badly?”

“Hum-hum!”

Reflet perked up the instant she heard the word “fish” and she started tugging on my robe. She sure was energetic even after fighting that hard battle.

After that, we made it out of the dense forest, pulled along by Reflet, and made it to the base of the plateau.

“Lots of people around, huh?”

“Tra-la! Tra-la-la!”

“Wh-What is it, Eine?”

Eine, who was riding on my shoulders, was pointing and shouting at something far away. When I looked, I saw a familiar face. It was Kokuten the salaryman, and his party. It looked like he was forming a raid party to take on a boss. He was surrounded by a bunch of people I didn't know, so I felt uncomfortable going up to talk to him. *I'll just wish for his success.*

“Humm!”

Reflet couldn't wait another second to start fishing anyway. I tried to settle her down while we made our way to the lake with the Mosa, where there was already a large crowd of players fishing.

“Wow, look at that. When did this place become a fishing hole?”

“Hum!”

“Let's hurry up and get that mystery fish.”

Before that, though, I had to prep the bait. I made it using the Meganeura Specimen and some low-quality Amber. The bait wouldn't keep the Mosa away for that long, so I made a big batch.

“You guys wanna fish too?”

“Mm-mm!”

“Tra-la!”

Everyone was ready and willing—okay, everyone except Himka. *All right, I'll prepare some bait for everyone to use.*

“Now begins our mystery fish hunt!”

“...♪”

“Hum-humm!”

We all sat along the bank of the lake and cast out our lines. The atmosphere was nice and chill, but realistically, we couldn't let ourselves get too relaxed.

"I don't want to face that Event Mosa, so I hope we catch this fish sooner than later."

This place was, after all, that monster's dwelling place.

"Hmm."

"Y'know, I haven't seen the Mosa at all, come to think of it..."

Was it on the opposite shore of the lake? Well, if it wasn't going to bother us here, then all the better. While I thought about that, I spaced out a bit, staring at the lake, when I caught sight of a strange scene. A large swarm of players had gathered on the opposite shore. They were pretty far away, so I couldn't really tell what they were doing. But I could see that they were holding long poles—fishing poles.

Why were they fishing in such a large group? However, only about twenty of them were actually fishing, while the others were just standing behind them. They weren't chatting or anything, just staring at the lake, making no unnecessary movements. Were they some sort of fishing tour group? Or was there some other reason for this?

I watched them for a while, when suddenly they sprang into a flurry of action. I could see some magic special effects, so they must have been chanting spells. Then, without warning, everyone turned towards the lake and started attacking. Not only with spells and arrows, but there were even some people throwing rocks.

"Whoa, what a show. But what are they doing?"

Wait, I actually just caught a glimpse of its back. The Event Mosa's. The players had started attacking it.

"So they're fighting the Mosa, huh?"

"I get the sense you haven't been reading the forums, have you?"

"Huh?"

"Heya. Been a while."

I turned around, and there behind me was a flashy young man with bluish-purple hair. The painted stars under his eyes were still going strong.

“Sakkyun!”

“Sup, dude?”

It was Sakkyun, a top Summoner who didn't let his class stop him from being proficient in melee moves too. He winked and gave me a casual salute. This guy never changed. In fact, his armor had become even more sparkly, only adding to his overall effect.

“Are you here to fish too, Sakkyun?” I asked.

“Nah, I'm with that group over there.”

“Oh, really?”

“Yeah, well, we saw you over here, so I came over as a representative to say hi.”

“A representative...to say hi to me?”

“Yup. It's thanks to you that there's hope of hunting the Mosa in the first place.”

“Ah, you mean because of the live stream.”

“That's right.”

Apparently, that group was using Amber Bait to hunt the Event Mosa. Their plan was simple. First, they would fish normally. Then, once the Mosa approached, they'd launch some long-distance attacks and then dump the Amber Bait into the water.

Their idea was to establish a pattern of: normal fishing → Mosa approaches → long-distance attack → chase the Mosa away with Amber Bait → go back to normal fishing again. If they could actually beat the Mosa that way, it should be fairly easy. So easy that it made me wonder if it was actually possible.

“Wanna join us, Silver-Haired? Interested in going on a hunt?”

“I'm good, I want to catch the mystery fish.”

“Ah, I gotcha. All right. If you change your mind, you're always welcome to

join us.”

Sakkyun made his offer and then left. Even though I was the source of the information, I just didn’t feel right about joining right in the middle of the good part without having participated in any of the preparation.

Besides, I doubted that Mosa could actually be taken down with regular attacks. Something had to happen at some point. It’d pull out some tsunami attack, or it’d sweep everyone away with its tail. I was afraid of getting dragged into all that. And well, frankly, with them drawing the Mosa towards the opposite side of the lake, that meant it would be easier for us to fish.

“Let’s try to reel in this fish while the time is ripe.”

“Mm-mm!”

“Hum!”

Several minutes passed. The Mosa hunting that was taking place across from me was still going on. At some point, I stopped counting how many times they had attacked it. The Mosa must have had a lot of HP.

“Hum! Hum-humm!”

“Hm-hm!”

“Huh? What’s— Ack! I got a bite! And it’s *strong!*”

While I was watching the Mosa hunt go down, I had apparently gotten a bite on my line. I noticed thanks to the noise Reflet and Himka were making. Something was pulling on my fishing line with a ridiculous amount of force. This amount of strength probably wasn’t coming from an ammonite. It was at least a coelacanth, or even—

“All right! I got you now!”

“...!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Thanks, Sakura! You too, Olto!”

In order to prevent me from getting dragged into the water like last time, Sakura tied me to a nearby tree with a vine. Olto used his earth magic to lift the

ground under my feet. It was only about the height of a curb, but standing on it made it easier for me to stand firm.

“Tra-la!”

“Squeak squeak!”

Eine and Drimo were already waiting impatiently, nets at the ready. I guess they were telling me to leave scooping up the fish to them.

“Hrrrrgh!”

“Traaa-la! Traaa-la!”

My struggle with the mystery fish continued as Eine cheered me on. I might’ve heard some tremendous, rumbling explosion and a roar that sounded like *Grooooooaaargh!* in the distance, but I was ignoring everything else right now!

“Hrrraaaaaah!”

“Squeak!”

I could see its shadow now. Just a little more and it’d surface from the water. The fish was so huge, even the usual cool guy Drimo was bouncing up and down with excitement. This one hundred percent had to be the fish I was looking for.

“Just a little more—”

“Grooooooaaarrgh!”

“Huh?”

However, right before my eyes, something unbelievable occurred. A pair of enormous alligator-like jaws swiftly swallowed up the enigmatic fish that had supposedly been at the end of my line, heartily chomping down on it.

“Groooagh!”

“Whaaaaat?!”

It was the Event Mosa. *Huh? But why? Weren’t they fighting it on the other shore? What happened?*

“Hey! My fiiiish!”

“Groooooaargh!”

*My mystery fish! It got eaten by the Event Mosaaaaa!*

And my problems didn't end there.

“Oh crap! It's gonna take my fishing rod!”

If the Mosa had bitten down on the fish on my fishing line, then that meant it had my fish hook in its mouth right now.

“Sh-Should I let go...?”

If the Mosa were to move away from the shore, I'd get dragged in. *No thank you!* However, on the off chance the Mosa opened its mouth, I could possibly retrieve the fish... *What should I do?!*

“Groooar...!”

“Huh? It's not actually pulling that hard...?”

While I was deliberating, the Mosa's movements started to grow sluggish. It was staying in one place and its entire body was trembling, like it was having convulsions. What the heck was going on? I braced myself as I looked on in confusion, when the Event Mosa suddenly moved. At the same time, my body was violently pulled upwards.

“Whooooa?!”

“...!”

“Mm-mm!”

To my shock, the Mosa had leaped out of the water. And it was coming right in our direction. We didn't get crushed or anything, though. The Mosa's jumping power was so tremendous that it passed right over our heads and fell behind us. That meant I was pulled diagonally backwards, the back of my head whacking against the ground. This would have been really bad if I was in the real world. I was even taking damage here.

“Urgh... What the hell was that about?!”

“Grooargh...”

Despite my confusion, I managed to stand up. The Event Mosa's giant form

was right in front of me. It was lying face up and groaning in pain. Was this what happened when it ate the giant lake fish?

“That’s what you get for going for a whopper! It’s too big!”

“Mmm.”

“But this is the perfect opportunity to attack it... Wh-What should we do?”

While I stood there weighing my options, Drimo and Sakura were already in motion.

“Squeak squeak!”

“...!”

*Huh? Hey, I didn’t say to attack!* Did my dragging the Event Mosa onto land commence a battle or something?

Before I could stop them, Drimo bust out his pickax and Sakura her tree magic. They were much more effective than I’d thought, so maybe the Mosa’s weak point was its belly. It was white and soft-looking, after all. I tried using Weakness Detection, but it didn’t work, of course. I used it several more times, until finally I saw that sure enough, its belly was its weak point.

While all that was going on, the players that had been on the opposite shore had arrived.

“Silver-Haired! You good?”

“Sakkyun! Sorry! My monsters ended up attacking it!”

“Oh, no problem! We’re the ones who’re sorry. Looks like once its HP gets under thirty percent, its behavior changes...”

So that was why it had shown up next to me all of a sudden?

“But anyway, Silver-Haired, way to go! How’d you get this thing on land? Didya use some secret move?”

“Ah, I’ll tell you later. Shouldn’t you attack it now?”

“Oh yeah, good idea!”

And so, the other players started an all-out attack. Its belly really was weak—



the Event Mosa's HP was dropping at a drastic rate. However, the Mosa wasn't just going to sit there and take damage like that forever. In total, probably about a minute had passed since I'd brought it on land. It remained on land as Sakkyun's group's target for about ten seconds, before it used its back muscles to propel itself up and back on its stomach. Then, it even emitted something like electricity from its entire body. *Oh great, another dinosaur with special powers for some reason!*

That attack had a lot of firepower behind it, and took out several players. Moreover, it had a Paralysis effect, so almost half of the rest were rendered unable to fight. It looked like gathering around the Mosa had backfired.

*This is bad! If this keeps going, the entire vanguard is going to fall!*

However, despite my worry, the Event Mosa didn't go for the collapsed players.

"Grrrrr..."

"Whuh? Me?"

I saw the Event Mosa's golden reptilian eyes glaring right at me. *But wait, I don't think I did anything to draw its hate...*

"It's probably 'cause you reeled it in, Silver-Haired! Dude's pissed!"

"Oh! That makes sense!"

"Did you do anything else to aggro it?"

"No, I mean my monsters did attack it a little, but not me! I just searched for its weak point with Weakness Detection!"

"That's gotta be what did it! If you use that skill on an active monster, it draws a crazy amount of hate! Not as much as attacking it, but they say it's as bad as using a buff skill!"

"You're kidding!"

I *had* thought I'd been oddly targeted during the fight against the unique Stego too, but I didn't think it was because of Weakness Detection! This skill was too much of a double-edged sword for a solo Tamer!

“Silver-Haired! Get behind me!”

Sakkyun jumped in front to protect me. Then, he summoned his golem and turtle, creating a wall. *Whoa! These two are so huge and sturdy-looking. Now I feel safe!*

The Event Mosa then unleashed a charge attack. It whipped its body side to side, moving shockingly quick. But thankfully, Sakkyun did what he did best.

“Come out! Tama!”

“Roaaaaaar!”

“Aaaall right! Take thiiiiis!”

The Event Mosa’s head pushed back the turtle and golem, losing some momentum in the process. Then, Sakkyun summoned his secret weapon, his White Tiger, which weakened the Mosa’s momentum even more. The White Tiger was smaller, but its front paw attack visibly slowed down the Mosa. Sakkyun himself delivered the final, direct blow. He swung his brightly shining right fist like a hook, socking the Event Mosa in the side of its face as hard as he could.

“Gryaaaaaah!”

“S-Sakkyun, that was awesome!”

*Man, a frontline player’s combat ability never fails to impress!* The Mosa swerved off its trajectory and crashed into a nearby tree. Its snout smacked hard against the tree, and it stopped moving, likely stunned. Everyone joined in for the final, all-out attack, and we managed to take out the rest of the Event Mosa’s HP.

“Jeez... I’m wiped... I was just fishing, and somehow I ended up fighting against a boss.”

“Ha haaa! That’s such a Silver-Haired move!”

*Uh...what did he mean by that?*

In the midst of all that, we heard an announcement.

*Ding-dong!*

*“One of the bosses of the Prehistoric Island, the Event Mosa, has been defeated. Accordingly, one portion of the ocean current has weakened.”*

*“The number of contribution points you have earned in the battle against the Event Mosa has placed you in the top ten players. As a result, you will be granted a special reward. Furthermore, you will also be granted a reward for placing in the top one hundred players.”*

Even though the Spino had already been defeated several times, this was the first time for the Mosa. Apparently the same announcement had played for the Spino, so the ocean current should be sufficiently weaker by now. Players could probably come over on a regular boat at this point.

“A special reward? So it’s something different from the regular reward? I wonder what I’ll get?”

Even though I hadn’t been a part of the fight from the very beginning, I was going to receive a reward like I was a regular participant.

But the announcement had mentioned contribution points and such, so did that mean not everyone would get a reward? No wait, there had been about fifty people attacking the boss, so maybe everyone got something this time? At least, everyone should be in the top one hundred rankings. For fights that had more people involved, some would get left out of that.

Now that I thought about it, the fact that the Mosa was always in the lake meant that it could be possible for a large group of people—like nearly a thousand, for instance—to attack it at once. If each one of those players got a reward, it could throw off the game’s balance.

The contribution points must have been put in place as a way to prevent so many people from forcing their way to the top. These contribution points should prevent people from leeching off others by attacking only once so that they were considered a participant of a fight.

“The special reward is...an event exchange ticket!”

*Now I have two!* But how did I get in the top ten when I had joined in halfway through the fight? Maybe it was because I had been the one to catch it... I really messed things up for Sakkyun and the others, huh?

“Let’s see, looks like most of what I got is meat.”

I also received a Water Dinosaur’s Scale and Fang. These would fetch a hefty price if I were to sell them.

They’d also probably be useful for crafting equipment. And it’d probably be really effective to combine them with other dinosaur materials. Although, they all seemed really heavy... A weakling like me couldn’t ignore something like weight. Well, I’d think about that after the event was over.

Our party also received a good amount of experience points. All my participating monsters had gained at least one level.

“Oh? Olto, you learned a new skill?”

“Mm!”

Olto had reached level forty, so he learned the skill Adept Mining. It was a welcome skill that added a bonus to his and other party members’ mining actions. This would really help out with mining Ammolite. That was about all I had to check on.

But still, all I had been doing was fishing, so how’d I get dragged into participating in a boss fight? I mean, don’t get me wrong, I was happy about the rewards I got.

“Sakkyun, sorry for swiping the rewards.”

“No, no, no! What’re you saying?! You’re the one who brought that big guy on land. You’re more like the MVP of this fight! How’d you reel that thing in?”

“Oh! That’s right! The fish!”

The Event Mosa ate it right before I was about to reel it in! I needed to catch it again!

“Guys! The Mosa ate the fish we almost caught, so we need to keep it up a little longer!”

“Hum!”

“Tra-la!”

Looking plenty motivated, Reflet and Eine quickly took up their fishing poles

and started heading for the lake.

“The Mosa’s not there now, so this is the perfect chance! Let’s catch the fish before the boss respawns!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak squeak!”

*I’ll get you this time for sure, big guy!*

But first, Sakkyun and I exchanged a little more information.

“Y’know, I’d love to ask how you caught the Event Mosa, but...you probably can’t tell me, can you?”

“Nah, I don’t mind.”

“Huh? No joke?”

“I mean, it was because of all of us working together that we defeated the Event Mosa, right? It wouldn’t sit right with me to keep it a secret.”

If I did that, I *really* would be taking all the good stuff for myself. And I wanted to know how they had cornered the Event Mosa too.

From what Sakkyun told me, once the Mosa dropped below thirty percent HP, its behavior pattern changed. Sakkyun and his team assumed that it had probably withdrawn to some far-removed area to recover its HP. And it did that by eating fish—apparently even in the middle of a battle, it ate the fish swimming in the lake to recover its HP.

“So *that’s* why it came all the way over to my side.”

“Yup. So, it ended up swimming away to you just at the right time when you were about to reel in that giant fish.”

“But the Mosa didn’t even recover. I reeled it in instead.”

“Maybe the effect differs based on the fish... When it ate a coelacanth, it recovered a lot of HP. But that other fish eats the Amber Bait, which the Mosa hates, right? So, what happens when the Mosa eats that fish?”

“Good point...”

The Mosa hated the Amber Bait so much that just having it nearby was enough to make it run away. So ingesting even just a little bit of it was probably why it took damage and jumped ashore in pain.

“But trying to set things up so there are people around to reel in that giant fish right when the Event Mosa is in its crisis mode sounds too difficult,” I noted.

“Yeah, well, there’s probably another way to do it, yeah? Like splitting your group into an attacking team and a fishing team?”

“But then the people on the fishing team who aren’t able to reel in the Event Mosa wouldn’t gain a lot of contribution points, would they?”

“Oh yeah, that’s true.”

“Right?”

“Hmm...”

“Hrm...”

Well, there was no use worrying over that now, so we’d leave the thinking to the verification team. Both Sakkyun and I, non-thinking-type players that we were, agreed on that point simultaneously and decided not to analyze things any further.

“Anyway, I’m going to get back to fishing for that mystery fish.”

“Good luck. I’ll be going to mine some Ammolite.”

“Ooh, good luck to you too.”

The reason Sakkyun and the other players had been trying to take down the Event Mosa was because they had received information that there was a high chance of mining Ammolite from the mining nodes behind the waterfall.

“I didn’t know about that.”

“An NPC at the Bazaar told me. You gotta become their friend first, though. At least, that’s just sorta the vibe I got.”

It sounded like Sakkyun just coincidentally became friends with that NPC—no surprise for a charismatic party guy like him. He was outgoing even with NPCs.

“Maybe I’ll try going there to mine too later. Though first I want to catch that

fish.”

“If it’s a big one, let me see it!”

“Sure.”

“All right, see you!”

“...!”

“Hmm!”

Sakura and Himka saw Sakkyun off with the casual salute that had become their custom now. Sakura surprisingly looked natural doing it.

Then, thirty minutes after the fight against the Mosa ended...

“All right! It’s here, it’s here! It’s finally here!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Squeak squeeeeak!”

I cried out excitedly as I felt a strong pull on my fishing pole. I had gotten another bite from the mystery fish.

“Everyone! Give me a hand!”

“Tra-la-la! Tra-la-laaa!”

“Hmmm!”

Eine and Himka cheered me on as I wound the reel.

“Just a little more! Grab the net!”

“...!”

“Tra-la!”

At times it seemed like I’d lose to the fish’s pulling, but still I fought with everything I had. What eventually surfaced from the water was a strange, colossal fish, one that anyone in the world wouldn’t have thought twice about calling bizarre.

“Wh-Whoa, it’s freaky! It looks so weird!”

“H-Hmm...”

“Yeah. This time, I understand your squeamishness, Himka.”

The fish I had reeled in was a six-meter-long giant fish with a proportionally huge head. Seriously, it was thirty percent head. Its mouth was filled with massive, intimidating fangs. They were thicker and sharper than a shark’s; it looked like it had a giant bear trap fitted in its mouth.

The fish’s name was dunkleosteus. There was no mistaking it—this was the mystery fish.

“A net’s useless! We’ve gotta pull it up together!”

“Squeak!”

“Mm-mm!”

With the strong duo doing most of the work, we spun the reel and brought the strange-looking fish up onto the shore. I was nervous it might attack us, but it only put up a little bit of struggle, though we all got drenched thanks to all its thrashing.

“It *does* look creepy, but the more I look at it, it’s actually kind of cool! Now to put this in a Terrarium...”

*“This creature is incompatible with Terrariums.”*

*Say it isn’t so! Look, I know it’s even bigger than my biggest Terrarium, but still! I did all that work to catch it!*

Ultimately, after a certain amount of time, the monster fish turned into an item.

“Prehistoric White Fish Meat again, huh... Oh wait, there’s more.”

Twenty pieces of the same Prehistoric White Fish Meat I had gotten from the coelacanth had been added to my inventory. And that wasn’t all.

“Prehistoric Amber Fish Meat?”

I took it out, and sure enough, they were amber-colored fish fillets. They didn’t look poisonous, but were they edible? I had four of them, so I decided I’d try cooking some later. I was apprehensive about eating it raw, so maybe



sautéing them would be a good idea.

“Let’s see what else... Amber?! And its quality is super high!”

I had a nine-star Amber, my first one of such high-quality. I took it out to look at it. It was huge. The eight-star Ambers were about the size of my palm, but this one was even bigger, about the size of a magazine.

Inside of it was some sort of plant that looked like a fern. The exceptional thing about it was that the plant was shining. I had gotten several Ambers with plants inside them before, but this was the first time I had seen one glowing.

Name: Amber (Miracle Herb)

Rarity: 4 / Quality: 9 ★

Effect: Ingredient. For decoration.

“Miracle herb...? It *is* pretty and shiny.”

It looked like it could be used as an ingredient, but it also seemed like a nice item to decorate a room with. Also, I had gotten a few other items from the dunkleosteus.

“An Extra Large Aquarium exchange ticket!”

Another exchange ticket. I would be able to exchange this for a giant fish tank at the end of the event. It was probably meant to be used to house a bunch of the fish that showed up in this event.

“So does this mean I can get a monster fish to keep in an Aquarium after the event? Well, I can’t do anything about not being able to put it in a Terrarium, so I’ll consider it enough that I could at least add it to my encyclopedia.”

Now all I needed to do was register the titan arum, and my encyclopedia would be finished.

“The titan arum is probably going to bloom tomorrow. What should we do before then?”

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak!”

While I was thinking about that, Olto and Drimo came over to me to propose some sort of idea. Olto was miming swinging his hoe, and Drimo his pickax.

“Mm-mm?”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Mm-mmm!”

After Olto acted out discovering something, Drimo pretended to hold something above his head. Then, seeing Drimo holding that something above his head, Olto started celebrating.

“What’s with the charades? Are you two acting out mining some precious ore?”

“Squeak,” Drimo responded with a calm nod.

Basically, they were asking to go mining. I didn’t mind stocking up on Ammolites and Ambers, and Olto had just learned his Adept Mining skill. It wasn’t a half-bad idea.

“Okay then, let’s check out the path behind the waterfall and mine some Ammolite!”

“Mm!”

It wasn’t that hard getting behind the waterfall. Now that the Event Mosa wasn’t around, we were able to use the almost nonexistent footing at the base of the cliff to get under the waterfall.

“Climbing shouldn’t be too bad either.”

“...!”

“Mm!”

Sakura’s vines and Olto’s footholds would also make climbing go even more safely. Utilizing those, we climbed up the cliff behind the waterfall, mining and gathering as we ascended. What was interesting were the fish that occasionally flowed down the waterfall. If I timed it right, I could catch them. Reflet had a natural knack for it, and was able to catch ten fish all on her own. Meanwhile,

Himka didn't seem to like this place very much—probably because we were so close to the water.

“Humm!”

“Hm...!”

“Caught another fish, Reflet? Nice! But try not to splash water around too much. Himka doesn't like it.”

“Tra-la-la!”

“Hey, Eine! It's fine if you want to play in the water, but don't get too crazy!”

Eine had discovered the fun of plunging full force into the waterfall and breaking through on the other side. She just couldn't contain her excitement seeing the beautiful rainbow that was created by the scattering droplets of water. And yeah, okay, I knew her excitement was my fault in the first place for saying, “That's so cool! This game even recreates rainbows!”

“H-Hmm!”

“Himka! Are you okay?!”

“H-Hm...”

Himka tried to avoid the water Eine was splashing around and missed his footing on the cliff. If not for Sakura's vine, he would have fallen.

“Reflet, Eine, both of you need to behave yourselves more!”

“Humm?”

“Tra-la-la?”

*They're so cute when they tilt their heads! But they didn't take in a word I said, did they?!*

And so, we slowly continued up the cliff behind the waterfall as we mined, with Himka's screams as our background music. Since I'd gotten the items I wanted—Ammolite and Amber—I was very satisfied. Just like I'd heard, there was a high chance of mining Ammolite and high-quality Amber back here. Then, we arrived at a familiar place at the top. Just as I'd expected, the cliff behind the waterfall led up to the summit of the plateau.

“Since we’re here, let’s check on how the titan arum is doing.”

“...♪”

Sakura responded to my suggestion with a smile and a nod. I guess a plant spirit like herself liked the idea of seeing a rare flower. We headed for the central pond, where we again ran into another large crowd of players fishing. They must have been fishing for a coelacanth. As for the titan arum, it still hadn’t bloomed. It really must have been set to bloom on the last day, which was tomorrow.

“What to do next...?”

*Should we fish, mine, or relax on the beach?* As I was thinking it over, I heard the ringing of an incoming friend call. It was from Kurumi.

“Hello? What’s up?”

“Here’s the thing. We’re about to go fight a boss, and we thought maybe you’d want to come with us. So, how about it?”

“Huh? A boss? You mean the Brachio? It’s true I did beat it once, but that was honestly just good luck. I can’t pull that off again.”

It was very normal to ask for help from players with experience beating a specific boss, but that didn’t apply to me and my party. Like I’d told Kurumi, it really had just been good luck. The fact that I’d fulfilled the condition of leading the Tyranno to the boss, and the progression fight that came after that, could only be called a miracle. However, I had been completely mistaken in assuming Kurumi’s party even wanted my help.

“No, we’re not going for the Brachio,” Kurumi said. “We want to fight the Spino.”

“The Spino?”

“Yeah! We’ve done our research, and we’re all prepared too! I think we can nail this one.”

“What? Then, you don’t really need to invite me, do you?”

“Look, you helped us out with our live stream, didn’t you? We really profited too much from that. So we thought we could pay you back by beating the Event

Spino together. We'll take care of all the prep work, so all you need to do is join in on the fight!"

*They really don't need my help!* Well, of course not. Kurumi's group was overwhelmingly stronger than mine in terms of combat ability.

"Hey! Kurumi! Think about your phrasing! You're making it sound like we don't need Silver-Haired's help!"

"Wait, what? I am?"

I heard Filma's panicked voice coming from behind Kurumi. True, depending on how you took her words, it was possible to interpret her nuance as "Just take the rewards, and don't get in our way." Though in my case, I knew Kurumi wasn't that type of person, so I wasn't going to get mad over it.

"Sorry, Silver-Haired! Eh-hem. As thanks for making an appearance on our live stream, we would like to take care of preparing all the necessary items for the battle against the Spino."

"Ha ha, it's okay, Filma. I get it."

"We'd also be super grateful to have your help!" Kurumi said. "For this fight, we need more tanks and support than attackers. You've got both covered with your monsters, right?"

"Yeah, I do."

"If you're not into it, we can ask another friend, but Rikyu wouldn't like that. Like I said before, we'll take care of preparing all the necessary items and whatnot."

"If you need items, I can get some together too."

"No, don't worry about it. We already finished taking care of it anyway."

Was it really okay to leave everything to them? Even though they said this was thanks for the live stream, all I had done was talk about information I wanted to circulate.

"I learned a lot of info from you three too, so I figured we all got something out of it..."

It was thanks to what Kurumi shared with me that I was able to fill out more of my encyclopedia, so I'd considered us square. But apparently the girls didn't see it that way.

"Oh, hush! We totally got more out of this! We can't just ignore that!"

"O-Oh, really?"

"Really! If anyone else gets wind of this story, we could be accused of exploiting you! So think of this as you helping us!"

Wasn't that a bit of an overstatement? Well, she was probably exaggerating things to make it easier for me to accept their invite to fight the Spino.

"So, what do you say?"

"I've got time, so I'm game."

I actually felt really bad about this. Oh well. They were being so insistent, I figured I might as well take advantage of their kindness.

"Yay! It's decided, then!"

Ten minutes later, I met up with the three girls in front of the slope that led to the Event Spino's territory.

"Yoo-hoo! Been a minute!"

"I'm sorry for how Kurumi's request came across earlier."

"Heh heh... Leave blowing up the Spino to me."

The three girls were the same as ever, but I couldn't ignore Rikyu's unsettling mutter.

"You're blowing it up?"

"Yeah. We'll brief you on the plan."

"Thanks."

Combat with the Event Spino had apparently been well studied. Unlike the Event Mosa, which had been defeated for the first time just a little ago, the number of times the Spino had been defeated was now in the triple digits. The information on it was abundant, and people had also devised safe ways to

defeat it. That method included using fire-based bombs. Once the Spino took over a certain amount of fire damage, which was its weakness, it staggered away in retreat.

By activating bombs and continuously dealing fire damage, then one could easily stop its movements. Also, according to the latest developments, if you used the Spino's favorite saltwater fish, then distracting it was easy.

"We've got Rikyu with us, so our bombs are powerful and plentiful! Though we'll be using land mines this time around. We stocked up on a bunch of saltwater fish too, so until its HP is down to thirty percent, it'd be a one-sided fight."

"Whoa..."

The plan was to use a bunch of Rikyu's bombs? This was shaping up to be a real spectacle of a fight. We had to be careful not to blow ourselves up.

"But can you really get that many bombs together?"

"I've already set up a system for mass production using items from the event... Heh heh."

"I-I'm not surprised."

Rikyu had apparently worked something out with the new items she was able to bring into the event. Instead of materials, she had brought in a special tool that could make modifications to materials.

"So, Silver-Haired, your and monsters' role in all of this comes after the Spino's HP drops to thirty percent! Word is that the fish-diversion tactic doesn't work after that, so we have to fight it directly."

"We don't have enough tanks in our party, and we also don't have any buffers, so we'd like to ask your help with that," added Filma.

"Oh yeah, Kurumi told me that earlier, so I switched up my party a little."

I had switched out Sakura for Fau so that we'd have two buffers including Eine.

"Also, here," I said.

“Huh? What’s this?”

“Sashimi. It’ll raise your HP recovery rate, and give a buff on defense, so let’s eat.”

“You sure?”

“I just can’t feel right about leaving everything to you three. Not that this is much, though.”

“That’s not true! Food with buffs applied is still really valuable!” Filma insisted.

“And we get to eat your cooking.”

“Heh heh... Yum.”

After we briefly talked over the strategy while eating our sashimi, we went up the slope to the Event Spino’s clearing. Peering in from the entrance, we saw the Event Spino curled up sleeping in the middle of the large, round clearing, using its tail as a pillow.

“Looks like it didn’t get any easier to fight while it’s in here, huh?”

“Mmm.”

Countless small waterfalls flowed down from the enclosing cliff walls, turning about eighty percent of the clearing into a swamp. There were also reeds growing everywhere, making the footing situation absolutely terrible.

“Great positioning!” cheered Kurumi. “With it over there, we can buy plenty of time to set up the mines.”

“All right, then we’re good to go with the first plan?” I said.

“Yup.”

“And Silver-Haired, if you don’t mind,” said Filma.

“Right! Himka, good luck out there.”

“Hm!”

Himka responded by thrusting his fist in the air, showing off his determination.



“Heh heh... Looking forward to working with you.”

“Hm!”

This time around, Himka would be doing something separately from the rest of us. During our earlier briefing session, Himka had shown an interest in the bombs, so it was decided that he be Rikyu’s assistant. Of course, we had made sure to confirm ahead of time that he could set up mines without issue. Even without any bomb skills, as long as his dexterity was high enough, he’d have no problem.

“Okay! Let’s do this! Yeaah!”

“Yeaah... Heh heh.”

“Yeaah!”

With Kurumi taking the lead, we rushed into the clearing. When we did, the Event Spino immediately responded.

“Grrr... Groooooaaaah!”

The sleeping Spino arose and roared to the heavens. But since we knew this would happen, we ran through the march without even flinching.

“Heh, see you later.”

“Yeah! And see you soon, Himka!”

“Hmm!”

Rikyu and Himka separated from us and ran along the wall. Over there was where the sole circular patch of dry land was. Our job was to distract the Spino until those two were done setting up the mines there. Not that we were going to fight it, though.

“Okay, here I go!”

Kurumi pulled a plump, tasty-looking Begini Skipjack Tuna from her inventory. The next second, the Spino’s gaze locked right on the tuna.

“Hi-yaaaaaah!”

Kurumi grabbed hold of the tuna’s tail, spun it around a few times, and then threw it as hard as she could. The tuna zoomed through the air, passed over the

Spino, and landed behind it.

“Grooaaar!”

“Nice! Success!”

The Spino followed the fish’s trajectory with its eyes, then turned on the spot and chased after it, running at full speed. I had heard about this, but I couldn’t believe the Spino was actually this fast. Skipjack tuna must have been its favorite saltwater fish, since it seemed the dinosaur didn’t even register our presence. In truth, as long as you didn’t draw too much aggro, the Spino prioritized the fish over players.

“Okay, time to run to where Rikyu and Himka are!”

“G-Got it!”

“Mm-mmm!”

We hurriedly retreated to the spot where they had set up the bombs and waited there for several seconds.

“Groooooaar!”

Now that it was done eating the skipjack tuna, the Spino came running over to us at a mad dash. It was really fast. If we messed up on throwing the tuna and it landed in some weird spot, then the Spino might catch up to us. We had to stay vigilant.

Then, as it was making a beeline for us, it stepped down hard on a mine.

*KA-BOOOOOOM!*

“Gryaaaaaaoorgh!”

As the flames rushed up from under its feet, the Spino lost balance and started staggering greatly. It didn’t fall over, but it stumbled backwards about ten meters as it growled.

“All right! Get ready for the next one!”

“Heh heh... Leave it to us.”

Kurumi took out another skipjack tuna and lobbed it. The Spino chased after it as if it had completely forgotten about us. In the meantime, Rikyu and Himka

started setting up another mine, but this time it looked like they had no chance of finishing in time. The Spino already gobbled up the tuna and was looking over at us again.

Then, in came Filma, who threw another skipjack tuna, soaring it through the air. We watched as the Spino chased after the tuna again, still not having learned its lesson.

“Setup complete... Heh heh.”

“Hm!”

Rikyu and Himka had finished setting up the mine and high-fived each other. Well, Rikyu was stooping down a little to meet Himka’s height, so the five wasn’t very high at all.

We repeated the process several times. By setting up the mines while the Spino was distracted by the fish, we managed to damage the boss a little bit at a time. The Spino recovered some HP when it ate the tuna, but that also had the effect of lowering its hate towards us. It never ignored its appetite in favor of attacking us. Also, since Rikyu and Himka were taking turns placing the mines, they were able to disperse the hate they drew by a good amount too.

If all it took was preparing a bunch of skipjack tuna and land mines, this really could be a cinch. But of course, there was no way it was going to be that easy. Once the Spino’s HP dropped down to thirty percent, as per our information, its behavior changed.

“Groooaaaaar!”

“It’s not retreating! It’s in a rage! The fight starts now!”

“Right!”

“Heh heh... We’re counting on you, Silver-Haired.”

“A-All right! Everyone, let’s do this!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak squeak!”

This was where the real fight began.

Kurumi would be our main tank, with Olto, Drimo, and Himka acting as her support. That was so they could switch in if Kurumi ended up in a crisis.

“Eine! Fau! Focus on raising everyone’s defense! Reflet, you heal the vanguard!”

“Tra-la!”

“Aye-aye!”

“Humm!”

Our job was to support the front line. Filma and Rikyu would be taking care of dealing damage. Their firepower was leagues above our own, after all.

“Silver-Haired, don’t push yourself!”

“Heh heh... If you die here, we won’t have returned your favor.”

“Got it. I’m just going to be supporting from the back anyway, so I’ll be fine.”

“Heh heh... Did you just jinx yourself?”

“D-Don’t say that!”

Someone with Rikyu’s aura saying that really made it seem like it would happen!

Anyway, the now-enraged Spino was incredibly strong. Though that was to be expected. Our earlier land mine free-for-all had gone so well, I had started getting a little complacent.

The Spino had a range of colorful attacks, from biting, clawing, attacking with its tail, and shooting water out of its mouth. I really thought I was going to die several times!

“Gryaooooor!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Olto! Hang in there! Take thiiiis!”

“Squeak squeeeak!”

My monsters took a lot of damage each time the Spino attacked. After Kurumi took five or six hits, Olto, Drimo, and Himka took turns taking two hits each

while Kurumi recovered. With the tanks taking turns continuously defending against the attacks in that way, they were just barely able to maintain the front line.

“Tra-laaa-laaa!”

“La-di-daaa!♪”

Eine’s and Fau’s buffs were also doing a great job. Without the two of them raising our defense, the tanks would have taken more damage and probably wouldn’t have been able to recover in time. Still, Reflet wasn’t able to keep up with healing everyone all by herself, so I was also exclusively focused on healing the front line. However, after some time, that rotation started to break down.

“Gryaaooooor!”

“Gah!”

The Spino pulled out a new move. It hit Kurumi with water-covered claws, knocking her back. It seemed like the Spino had become even more enraged after its HP dropped below twenty percent. I started healing her in a hurry, but I couldn’t keep up. Also, the dinosaur started attacking at an even faster frequency. It looked like its defense had lowered in response, but we didn’t have enough leeway to even take advantage of that.

Drimo and Olto were on the verge of death, so I switched them out for Sakura and Bear Bear, just barely keeping up the vanguard. Nevertheless, Rikyu and Filma were somehow managing to take down the dinosaur’s HP little by little with their attacks. The fact that no one was giving up was what was saving us.

Once the Event Spino dropped under ten percent HP, its behavior changed once again. It started targeting Himka, who had dealt it all that damage with the mines.

“Gra-graaaaor!”

“Hmmm!”

“Himka! Fall back!”

Despite my telling Himka to retreat, the Spino was tenacious. And incredibly fast. To my surprise, it started moving around at a super high speed by

swimming in the water of the swamp. It chased after Himka as he ran away, its giant dorsal fin cutting through the surface of the water.

Himka ran like crazy, but the Event Spino hit him square in the back with its water bullet attack. Himka pitched forwards and fell into the marsh.

“Hm...”

“O-Oh no!”

Having targeted his weakness, the dinosaur managed to bring Himka to near death in one hit. It seemed to have stunned him too, as he couldn't even stand up.

“R-Right! Return, Himka! Come out, Rick!”

In a panic, I called Himka back and summoned Rick in his place. Himka vanished from right before the Spino's eyes, and Rick appeared before mine.

“Graaargh?”

With its target having disappeared, the Spino stopped moving. Apparently AI could also get confused.

“Reflet's out of MP too... I guess we have no choice but to focus on attacking now. Return, Reflet! Come out, Perca!”

“Honk hooonk!”

“All right! I'm not giving up either!”

“Same here!”

“Heh heh... I'll be the decoy.”

Just as she declared, Rikyu became the Spino's next target. She had also built up aggro from damaging it with mines. But in Himka's case, his Counterattacker skill also had a Provoke effect, so he had drawn even more of the dinosaur's hate. That must have been why he'd been targeted before Rikyu.

“Bear Bear, Sakura, guard Rikyu! Rick and Perca, attack! Don't hold anything back!”

“Growl growl!”

“...!”

Then, five minutes after our brawl with the Spino began...

“Now!”

“Ahhhhhh! Razing Crusher!”

“Graaa...”

Kurumi used a spectacular technique where she swung down her giant hammer, which transformed to five times its size, and smashed it against the Spino’s snout. That turned out to be the fatal blow. The Spino’s giant form broke up into polygons and then disappeared. It seemed like my tree magic helped keep it restrained a bit, so I hadn’t entirely leech off the girls throughout this encounter.

“Phew. We managed to beat it...”

There had been one point when the Spino started spewing out water bullets randomly, and I got hit with one. That had really been a close one. I had really started to panic that Rikyu’s jinx comment was becoming a reality.

“We did it! We did it, Silver-Haired!”

“Heh heh... Well done.”

“Perca, you did great too!”

“Honk hoonk!”

Filma lifted Perca high up in the air in praise. Both were having fun, so it was a win-win scenario.

“Fau, Eine, great job on keeping up the support the entire time.”

“Tra-la!”

“Aye-aye!”

While I was praising Eine and Fau, Bear Bear and Rick came up to me with looks on their faces that were clearly saying, “Didn’t we do a good job too?”

“You two, great job not panicking even though I summoned you in the middle of the fight!”

“Growl!”

“Chirp!”

Rick was celebrating on top of Bear Bear’s head. *Rick. You’re just using Bear Bear to taxi you around because you don’t want to get wet from the swamp, aren’t you?*

“And of course, you too, Sakura.”

“...♪”

But after all was said and done, we had now defeated all of the dinosaur bosses.

“Okay then, should we check the rewards we got?”

*I wonder if I got any cool items from the Spino?*

*Ding-dong.*

“Huh?”

*“You have defeated all of the event bosses. For that, you will be awarded the title ‘Dinosaur Subduer.’”*

“Oh, I got a title,” I muttered.

“You what?!” Kurumi and Filma both cried out in surprise, apparently having heard me. Even Rikyu had a shocked expression on her face. But I doubted I was the only player who had defeated all three bosses, so other people must have received this title too. The Mosa had been a bottleneck, but the method for defeating that one had been more or less figured out now too.

The announcements didn’t end there, though.

*“You have defeated all the event bosses with a small group of players. Furthermore, you have ranked highly in the number of contribution points earned in each event boss battle. For that, you will be granted the title ‘Dinosaur Vanquisher.’”*

*“You have fought against the event bosses for more than a certain threshold of time. Furthermore, you have witnessed a specified number of special actions of the event bosses. For that, you will be granted the title ‘Dinosaur Observer.’”*



*Wait, for real? I got two more titles! How'd this happen?!* I panicked internally.

“What is it, Silver-Haired? Your face looks creepy.”

*Whoops.* Apparently I'd been so surprised, even my handsome avatar looked ugly.

“Oh, well, I got another title.”

“Wuh? So you got two titles?”

“No, three.”

“Hwaaah?”

“I got three titles at once.”

“WHAAAAAAT?!”

This time, even Rikyu joined in on the scream. I really caught sight of something rare. But man, this was a shock even to me, and I was used to titles at this point. It was only natural they'd be too.

“Wh-Wh-What's the meaning of this?!” cried Filma.

“Wait, what? Are titles not actually that hard to get?”

“Heh heh... Silver-Haired moment.”

I went ahead and showed the girls the titles I'd received.

“I see... So you didn't get them just for beating the bosses.”

“This ‘small group of players’ part, does that mean you can't do a team fight?”

“Heh heh... I wonder what ‘special actions’ are?”

The “special actions” probably referred to moves you couldn't see just fighting the dinosaur normally. But even after thinking about it, I didn't really understand. I didn't have enough information on the bosses to have a guess as to what moves were special.

The only special action I had an idea for was for the Spino. Maybe it was referred to when it chased the skipjack tuna, or when it stepped on a mine and retreated. All its other moves could be witnessed in a normal fight. The girls had

done a lot of research about how to defeat the Spino, so they were confident about that. As for the Mosa and Brachio, that was anyone's guess.

"But if we just have to beat the bosses with a small group of people, that should be doable for us."

"Yeah."

The announcement did mention ranking highly in contribution points, but the girls would probably be fine if they didn't take on the Brachio and the Spino as a raid boss. Apparently, the contribution points announcement played in the case of raid bosses. Since we didn't hear that this time, that probably meant it wasn't necessary to make an announcement, as we were all in the top rankings of contribution points. After all, I did get a title.

I was sure dozens of people had participated in the fight against the Mosa, but was that really considered a "small group"? Well, everyone who could fit around the lake could participate, so maybe its limit was set differently than the Brachio and the Spino.

"Heh heh... At the very least, we can crush all three."

"You're right about that!"

I decided I'd give them some of my extra Amber Bait if they were going for the Mosa, since I wasn't using it anymore.

"By the way, did your titles come with any effects?" Kurumi asked me.

"At the end of the event, I'll get events and event exchange tickets. Also, I get a damage bonus against dinosaurs during the event."

That damage bonus didn't really mean much at this point, though, did it? I mean, it was looking like the last boss would be a demon, and now that I had already beaten all of the boss dinosaurs, I wouldn't have many opportunities to fight against them again. There were probably other players who were going hunting for dinosaur materials before the event ended, so maybe it was useful for that. It would make things go more smoothly.

"Honk?"

"Oops, sorry. I kept you guys waiting."

We'd gotten so into our discussion about titles that I had completely stopped checking on my rewards. My monsters were looking bored.

"Let's go ahead and check out the rest of what we got."

"Sounds good."

"I was so surprised, I totally forgot."

"Heh heh... That was a shocker."

First, our drops.

"Nothing for beating it for the first time, just regular boss drops."

Sharp Dinosaur Claws, Dinosaur Great Scale, and Dinosaur Meat. The Spiny Dinosaur's Sail Membrane and Sail Bone must've been the rare drops.

"Awesome! With this much dinosaur material, we'll be able to craft loads of stuff! And we got a lot of evets too!"

"Nothing that could be used as bomb ingredients... Shame."

"I bet I can use this Sail Bone for my armor! I want more!"

Filma required equipment that wouldn't be too heavy or have issues performance-wise underwater. She probably wanted materials from dinosaurs that had high affinity with water, like the Spino and the Mosa, more than anything.

The girls looked super happy while they were checking their drops.

"Looks like my monsters leveled up too."

I meanwhile had other things to check on besides item drops—my monster's stats. Everyone had leveled up. Perca went up by three levels, Eine by two, and everyone else by one. Sakura had reached level 40, so she learned a new skill called Green Hand. It was a skill that applied a slight bonus to all tasks related to plants, so you could say it was the perfect skill for Sakura. It probably boosted not only farmwork but also plant harvesting, woodworking, and tree magic. The bonus applied wasn't anything great, but it wasn't a bad skill by any means.

"You got a new skill too, Eine. Dyeing?"

"Tra-la-la!"

It was a skill that would let her change the color of a fabric by dyeing it. The dyes used and the way the color was applied could even grant some special effects.

“I’d figured you might learn skills related to clothing, but it looks like you’re learning skills geared for fabric making, huh?”

She couldn’t quite make textiles whole cloth yet, but I was collecting silk from the Silkworm Box, so maybe Eine would be doing some large-scale crafting work before long too.

“Perca, you learned Skate at level 20?”

Skate was a skill that would allow him to glide with perfect balance not just on ice, but on any smooth surface. Not that I could specifically think of any surface that could be slid on that wasn’t ice. In a sense, it was a very penguin-like skill.

“Okay, last is Rick. Oh right, Multidirectional Maneuvering is a versatile skill squirrels learn at level 40.”

In exchange, he lost the skill Jump, which probably just got integrated into the more advanced Multi-Directional Maneuvering skill. Next, Incisor Attack evolved into Super Incisor Attack. This one just got more powerful.

And that wasn’t all.

“Nice, Rick! You can evolve now!”

“Chirp!”

At level 40, Rick could evolve again. Squirrels really did evolve fast! He was the first one among all my monsters to reach their second evolution phase.

“What should I choose...?”

“Chirp?”

Rick climbed onto my shoulder and peered at the screen with me. According to Amimin’s page, there would be three evolution routes for Wood Grain Squirrels.

“Lesser Carbuncle, Gardener Squirrel, Forest Squirrel, Tree Spirit Squirrel, and Sequoia Squirrel? Huh? There are five!”

The first three were as I was expecting. The Lesser Carbuncle was the standard route for squirrels. They were a little bigger in size and their fur was brown. Also, a gemstone showed up on their forehead, the color of which depended on what race the squirrel was prior to evolving. Wood Grain Squirrels got a green gemstone and could use tree magic.

The Gardener Squirrel came with Arboriculture and could do some crafting. That wouldn't be a bad option for my party. Our farms would become even more enriched. Also, if Rick evolved into a Gardener Squirrel, he'd turn into a bipedal, overall-wearing half-animal, half-human-type monster. Sort of like Drimo. That would definitely be cute.

Next was my personal favorite, the Forest Squirrel, which was a monster specialized for woodsy areas. They came with increased combat ability, and even demonstrated attack power on par with mainline attackers. Their bodies were a little bigger, and their fur was a dark brown color. I also read that they were even fluffier. That alone would make it worth it for me. I mean, I really wanted to experience the fluffiness people were raving about on the forums!

But there were also the fourth and fifth options, the Tree Spirit Squirrel and the Sequoia Squirrel. This was my first time seeing those two. Both also had some pretty interesting abilities. First, the Tree Spirit Squirrel.

“He'd get Mental Magic and Forest Sorcery as new skills? Though, Forest Sorest— *Ahem*. Forest Sorcery's kind of a tongue twister!”

I looked up Mental Magic on the online boards, and apparently it was a pretty rare magical technique. At that point in time, few players had even acquired it. The conditions to unlock it were still unknown and currently being investigated.

There were three main types of Mental Magic, the first being one that inflicted abnormal mental status effects like terror and cowardice on an enemy. There was even a technique to increase an enemy's aggro towards you. There was also a spell that was the exact opposite, which protected party members from abnormal mental status effects. It raised the mental resistance of your comrades, and could even heal status abnormalities. Lastly was a spell for the purpose of communicating with people who couldn't understand you. Evidently telepathy and mind reading techniques existed. Though apparently that could

only be used with certain NPCs.

“Mental Magic sounds interesting, doesn’t it?”

For a hit-and-run attacker like Rick, this sort of skill would have various uses. Also, I’d be thankful to have more methods of healing status effects.

“Okay, now Forest Sorcery—there’s no information about that one even on the forums.”

I checked Forest Sorcery’s details on the screen, but it didn’t explain much. Even when I appraised it. The description was nonsense to me.

Forest Sorcery: Sorcery specialized in trees.

At least the skill description mentioned sorcery, which was a skill where the user performed a lengthy ritual to cast a stronger-than-average spell, or to use spells that had long-term effects. It was used more often in home bases or farms rather than on the field to increase its effectiveness.

“What exactly does ‘sorcery specialized in trees’ mean? Does it accelerate their growth? I mean, if that’s it, then I’m sure it’d be useful for us...”

I was stumped on what to do. But the fact that there was no information on it meant it had to be just that rare. Since such a unique chance to obtain it was presented to me, didn’t that mean I should take it?

“Well, first let me check out what Sequoia Squirrel is.”

This was another evolution route I hadn’t heard of.

“Its skills look about the same as a Tree Spirit Squirrel, huh? Oh wait, there’s one more thing.”

The extra skill was called Deep Green Heart. It said it allowed the user to understand a plant’s feelings, but...it didn’t go into detail about its effects. A lot of rare skills adopted this form of vague descriptions, though, so I could probably expect a lot more from it. I kept reading through the evolution’s description and saw that skill wasn’t the only difference.

“Hmm? There’s some weird entry here.”

The words “Evolution Requirements” were included in the description, which I’d never seen before. I touched it, and it showed me the requirements for evolving into a Sequoia Squirrel.

“Needs to have a Tamed Monster’s Heart. Also, needs to have the item Acorn of the World Tree?”

I had gotten that item by chance at an earlier auction. I couldn’t plant it on the farm, and since I didn’t want to waste it by using it as an item, I’d just left it sitting in my inventory.

“So is this a special route you can’t evolve to unless you have this acorn?”

In that case, maybe it was super strong... We were talking about the *World Tree* here, after all!

“Rick, I was originally thinking of choosing Forest Squirrel, but what do you think about Sequoia Squirrel?”

“Chirp!”

No complaints there, it seemed. He gave me a thumbs-up. *If he’s cool with it, then let’s go with the rare evolution.*

“Okay then, Rick, you’re going to be a Sequoia Squirrel!”

I selected “Yes” to using the Acorn of the World Tree.

“Chirp chirp!”

Rick was enveloped in an intense bright light as the small acorn flew out of my inventory, automatically applied.

I’d seen this play out so many times, but watching a monster evolve was exciting every time. Both squirrel and acorn transformed into a bright light, combined, and then—

“Chiiirp!”

“Whoa! Your fur changed color! But you don’t look much different besides that.”

Rick’s fur color had changed back to his original gray. Actually, it was probably more like silver—a subdued tone that was somewhere between a silver and

gray. The pattern on his back had also returned to its original diamond shape from his Gray Squirrel days, only now instead of white, the diamond was a soft green. Maybe I'd even call it an emerald green. Also, he now had a beautiful, shiny gemstone stuck to his forehead, diamond in shape and emerald in color. He still looked like a squirrel, but he had a very strong fantasy vibe.

"You're still about the same size as you were as a Wood Grain Squirrel."

"Chirp."

"I guess that's about all that's new about your appearance? Or wait, are you fluffier?"

"Chirp?"

"Y-You are! What's going on here?!"

He'd already been soft and fluffy, but his current coat went even beyond that!

"Now you're fluffy-wuffy! No, that doesn't even cut it! This goes beyond fluffy! You're the Lord of Fluffiness!"

I was taking in my fill of Rick's new fluffiness when, before I knew it, the three girls were standing in front of me. *Oops*. I only pulled myself together once I got a look at their faces. They were looking at me like they were worried about me.

They were the exact same eyes I saw on coworkers who were looking at a superior on a business trip who drank too much and picked a fight with the hostess. Even though I vowed to myself at the time that I'd never be like that, here I was being so obsessive over fluffy fur that I'd nearly become just like that superior.

"Uh, sorry."

"I-It's okay! I get the same way when I'm playing with animals!" said Filma.

"Y-Yeah, that's right. I also get how you feel," Kurumi followed up.

"Same."

*Please don't sympathize with me! Having (presumably) high schoolers do that just deals unnecessary damage! It just calls attention to my terrible behavior!*

"Ha ha ha... Should we get a move on?"



“Wait, Silver-Haired! We’re not done here! We can gather a lot of Medicinal Herbs in this marsh!”

“O-Oh, that’s right.”

I had totally forgotten. For the fight against the demon that was to come, the more potions we had, the better. I wanted to gather as many Medicinal Herbs as I could here.

“Okay, everyone. I know we just finished a battle, but we’ve got another job to do. Let’s keep going!”

“...!”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Tra-la!”

## Chapter Three: Beginning of the Final Day

“Oh, there she is. Alyssa!”

“Huh? Yuto? Wh-What’s up? Make another big discovery, did you?”

After I beat the Event Spino with Kurumi, Filma, and Rikyu, I paid a visit to Alyssa. There were several pieces of information I wanted to buy. Also, I had some of my own to sell as well. Actually, the three girls had suggested that I sell the information about my titles as soon as possible. Since it had also been thanks to their help that I had been able to defeat the Spino, I told them I’d give them a portion of what I was paid for the information, but they refused, saying it was enough that I had shared with them how to get the titles. Instead, I gave them Amber Bait and some extra Meganeura I had. I wanted them to do well against the Mosa.

Anyway, had I caught Alyssa at a bad time? She gave me a weird look the moment she saw me.

“I’d like to buy some information first.”

“...Phew. Okay. Let’s talk over here.”

We moved to a private room in the café to discuss what I wanted to know.

“So, what sort of information are you looking to buy?”

“First, I want info about squirrels’ evolution routes.”

“Ah, gotcha. Is your squirrel about to evolve soon?”

I didn’t have Rick with me right now. Before coming here, I stopped by my room and dropped everyone off there. The Spino had been a tough fight, so I wanted to let them rest.

“The Wood Grain Squirrel has three possible evolutions. Lesser Carbuncle, Gardener Squirrel, and Forest Squirrel. Right?”

“What? So you already know.”

“Okay, now I want you to look at this.”

“...Wait a sec.”

“Okay?”

I was about to show Alyssa my stats window, but for some reason, she was looking away from it. Then, she started doing some weird breathing exercises.

“Hee-hee-hooo, hee-hee-hooo.”

*What’s with this Lamaze technique?*

“Ah, I meant to take deep breaths!”

“A-Are you okay?”

Oh wait, maybe she was just joking around? Should I have laughed? It looked so true to life, I couldn’t help but get worried there.

“Yep. I managed to calm myself down. So? What do you want me to look at?”

“Rick’s stats after evolving.”

“So basically, he’s already evolved, but to a new race that has no info on it.”

“That’s right.”

“Right. I already knew this would happen at some point! Okay, let me see it!”

Urged on by Alyssa, I displayed Rick’s stats.

“Sequoia Squirrel?”

“Yeah. He evolved from a Wood Grain Squirrel. I used an item called the Acorn of the World Tree.”

“The what now? What’s that?”

“Well, you see...”

I told Alyssa all about how when Rick was able to evolve, I had been presented with two choices I’d never heard of before. Alyssa groaned as she looked through my logs and screenshots. She was entirely engrossed in that for a while, but then she seemed to have realized something.

“Oh, I get it. Yuto, you have the title ‘The Dryad’s Blessing,’ don’t you?”

“I do. Wait, do you think that’s related?”

“To the Tree Spirit Squirrel, yeah. Actually, there’s another player who has a squirrel that evolved into something similar.”

I asked Alyssa to tell me about that too. That player’s squirrel had apparently evolved into an Earth Spirit Squirrel, and it hadn’t originally been a Wood Grain Squirrel.

“And that player had the title ‘The Earth Elemental’s Blessing.’”

“I see. Then, the evolution routes differ based on what elemental you get a title from?”

“Maybe so. Thanks to what you just told me, that possibility seems much higher.”

Alyssa continued on to say the Earth Elemental’s Blessing was a title players could get after clearing the Earth Elementals’ trial, much to my surprise.

“Huh? It’s been cleared?”

“Yeah. Just the Earth Elemental Gate. The other gates are close to being cleared, though, so I think they’ll all be completed once the event’s over with.”

Alyssa said she was also selling information about strategy for the gates, which would be helpful for when I went to challenge them.

“As for the Sequoia Squirrel, I don’t have much to add to what’s displayed here. This is also my first time seeing this type of evolution,” she said.

“You’re serious?”

“Yeah. I know there are items you can use to make your monsters evolve. But this is the first time I’ve seen it be a requirement to be in possession of a certain item.”

I didn’t expect anything less from an auction item! It really was pretty rare, huh? However, now I was going to ask about what I really wanted to know.

“I want to ask you to take a look at these skills. Mental Magic, Forest Sorcery, and Deep Green Heart. I’d like to know information about these.”

“Oh wow, Mental Magic.”

“Does the Earth Spirit Squirrel have different skills?”

“Yeah. That one has Elemental Magic.”

Why was that? Elemental Magic sounded stronger, though. According to Alyssa, it was a fairly rare and strong magic technique that allowed the user to summon compatible elementals to attack with. Mental Magic was also just as rare, apparently. Regarding its abilities, Alyssa could only tell me more or less what I'd read on the forums.

But she was able to tell me where to find the special NPC who you could only communicate with by using Mental Magic, so it was probably a good idea to find them. Normally, it was an event where you had to befriend and get the cooperation of another NPC who could use Mental Magic or Telepathy. Though apparently the NPC event was related to a special evolution of martial arts skills, so that was sort of useless to me.

“What about Forest Sorcery?”

“That one's totally new to me. But the Earth Spirit Squirrel learned Earth Sorcery, so I can at least make an educated guess.”

Earth Sorcery increased the effect of earth-related facilities on your home base. During combat, it raised resistance to earth magic and improved your party members' earth magic abilities.

“Then maybe Forest Sorcery has a similar effect?”

“Probably. Once you find out more, come sell me what you know.”

*I'll have to do some testing.*

“I've never seen Deep Green Heart before either.”

“This too?”

“Come sell what you find out for this one too. Now, any other info you want to buy?”

“I was wondering how to use these?”

Alyssa's question reminded me of something in the back of my mind.

“Ah, the fillets from that giant fish. Those can be eaten, but they can also be

used to catch the Mosa, so you can sell them for a high price.”

So you could bring the Mosa on land by using the Prehistoric Amber Fish Meat instead of the fish itself. Good to know.

“That’s about all I wanted to buy, I think.”

“Hmm. Okay then, do you have anything worth selling?”

“I do.”

“Y-You do? Not just your squirrel info?”

“Yep.”

“O-Of course you do... It hasn’t even been that long since the live stream... A- All right then, what have you got for me?”

“Please take a look at this.”

“S-Sure.”

I heard Alyssa gulping as she peered at my screen, her face grim. *Jeez*. Seeing such a determined expression on her face, as though she was trying to stare into the abyss, made me start to feel nervous. But information about titles always sold high, and this time I had three of them. I was feeling pretty confident.

“Heh heh. What do you think?”

I showed Alyssa only a portion of my log at a time, slowly scrolling down. Not a bad dramatic setup, if I say so myself. Alyssa was glued to the screen. When I showed her the first title I received, Dinosaur Subduer, I saw her shoulders visibly relax. Then, she said bluntly, “Oh, this title.”

“Huh? Have you seen this already?”

“I have. This isn’t the only title information you want to sell, right?”

“So you could tell that too?”

*Even after all that suspense I built up and acting so self-important, she already knew about it! M-My face, it’s burning! You continue to amaze me, LJO! Even my shame feels realistic!*

Now properly embarrassed, I hurried up and showed her the entirety of my log. Then, I gave her the rundown of the information I had, speaking somewhat rapidly.

“So yeah, everyone’s defeating the bosses now, so I guess I’m not the only one getting titles, huh?”

“What?”

“It seems like you already know about these, but I wanted to sell information about Dinosaur Subduer, Dinosaur Vanquisher, and Dinosaur Observer.”

No more getting a big head. I wasn’t going to embarrass myself twice.

Since I had been the first person to unlock the Prehistoric Island, I had thought I’d be among the top group, but now I thought about it, a lot of players had arrived at the island already, and it wasn’t ridiculous to think that there might be players who could defeat all the bosses in one day. There were probably those who had beaten the Brachio and the Spino, and then gone on to be among the first to defeat the Mosa. Considering that, then it also wasn’t far off to imagine those people had already gotten the same titles and then come to Alyssa to sell their information.

Was there ever a time where I’d gotten carried away by something and had it actually go well? No, there wasn’t. In other words, living humbly was what suited me best.

“Alyssa, I’m sorry for being so arroga—”

I started to bow my head, my face red, when Alyssa’s scream cut me off.

“WAAAAAAH!”

“Ahhhh!”

*My ears!*

“I knew this would happen the second I saw youuu! Why, why did I let my guard dooown?!” Alyssa shouted out of nowhere, clutching her head.

“Uh, umm...”

“What’s with that?! Dinosaur Vanquisher?! Dinosaur Observer?! What the

hell are those?! And why didn't you get Savior of the Pirates?!"

"'Savior of the Pirates'?"

"That's the title you get after bringing the pirate flag from the sunken ship to the ghost town's graveyard! It looked like you had just finished the sunken ship when you were doing the live stream, so I thought for sure that's what you were going to show meeeeeeee!"

It sounded like there was a title I had missed getting. I could go back later and get it. But right now, the matter at hand was the information on the titles I *did* have.

"Umm, so what you're saying is, I can sell the information on these two titles?"

"Yes, and I'll pay you handsomely for them!"

In the end, the total payment came to 160,000 evets. I knew more or less all the requirements for getting the Vanquisher title, so that one must have been worth a lot.

Adding up the evets I earned from the boss fights and such, I had well over 300,000 evets. With this amount, I could even buy more Terrariums. I could also stock up on other things too, like perfume.

"I-If I don't sell all this information, my event rank will... I know it goes against policy, but maybe if I raise the price... No, bad Alyssa! No selling your soul to the devil! I just have to sell at a price just high enough to keep us out of the red, like usual... But if I do that, then my rank...!"



# Online Forum [Second-Wave Event] Discussion Thread for the Ongoing Second-Wave Celebration Event, Part 5

Please post information regarding the event.

Info not related to strategy is permitted.

Feel free to ask any and all questions.

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277: Marca

Yaaay. I beat the Mosaaa.

I even ranked in the top ten contribution point earners.

---

278: Mimura

Me too.

Once you get a group together, it's not that hard.

---

279: Murakage

Thanks to that video, the Spino fights are going very smoothly.

However, it was difficult to obtain the skipjack tuna and bomb ingredients, with their inflated prices.

---

280: Baa\_Baa

We tried using saury and failed!

It looks like the Spino doesn't like saury as much as skipjack tuna. We kept drawing a lot of its hate.

---

281: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

The cost of Amber Bait is getting up there too.

It's probably better to make it yourself, even if it's kind of a pain.

---

282: Marca

That live stream bombshell is still wreaking havoc.

---

283: Mimura

And it looks like Silver-Haired is taking center stage yet again XD

---

284: Marca

All the bosses are getting hunted thanks to him.

---

285: Murakage

While for us this was a very fortunate thing to happen, I wonder if this will endanger Silver-Haired's rank?

---

286: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Could be.

The frontline players are grinding the Spino.

One fight gets you 40,000 evets. Even subtracting the 20,000 evets spent on bombs and skipjack tuna, that's still 20,000 net gain.

Meaning ten battles earns you a whopping 200,000.

Though they still have to repair their equipment, so it's probably hard to do it ten times.

---

287: Baa\_Baa

20,000 just to prepare for the fight...?

I'm embarrassed thinking 2,000 evets was a splurge...

---

288: Mimura

Bombs are expensive.

But don't compare yourself to fanatics obsessed with ranking in first.

They're fanatics, after all.

---

289: Baa\_Baa

Right, they're fanatics.

---

290: Marca

But even those maniacs are having trouble grinding the Mosa.

---

291: Mimura

Unlike other bosses, it's hard to defeat it with a single party.

---

292: Baa\_Baa

Oh, really?

I heard it's not that hard if you have Amber Bait, though?

---

293: MurderLicenseBaki

Long respawn time after beating it once.

Constantly other parties waiting for it to respawn, so you can't monopolize it.

Everyone around the perimeter of the lake can join in anyway, so it can be hard for your own party to reap the rewards.

Mosa has a lot of HP, so it takes a lot of time to take down.

Depending on how good the players participating are, it can take more than double the time that other bosses require.

For the reasons above, the Mosa's an unpopular choice for those fanatics aiming for the top.

In fact, trying to beat it while it's underwater takes an insane amount of time.

Big thanks to the person who discovered the way to bring it on land.

---

294: Murakage

It is rumored that Silver-Haired is the one who discovered that.

---

295: MurderLicenseBaki

Really?

There aren't a lot of players sharing info about that first Mosa battle.

It seems like people don't feel like they can leak the info since they didn't have the most significant impact.

---

296: Marca

That's gotta mean Silver-Haired's the MVP, right?

---

297: Mimura

So is that why no one feels like they made the most significant impact?

I get that!

Also, the Defenders are scary.

---

298: Baa\_Baa

Well, it is Silver-Haired.

---

299: Murakage

He's been very active in this event too, it seems.

The Brachio, the Spino, and the Mosa. All three have been made easier to beat thanks to Silver-Haired's live stream.

No, it's because he discovered the Prehistoric Island in the first place.

It is no overstatement to say that the reason for the dinosaurs' peril is all the work of that reputable person.

---

300: MurderLicenseBaki

There's still the demon fight coming up too.

Depending on the effectiveness of the Ammolite, if all the bosses end up defeated because of the information Silver-Haired doled out, then...

---

301: Mimura

Are the devs breathing?

---

302: Marca

You think he might get a handicap put on him?

I mean, considering all that he's been doing, the devs must have an eye on him.

---

303: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

I doubt it.

---

304: Baa\_Baa

Why not?

They could make his monsters weaker or something...

---

305: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

What makes Silver-Haired so amazing isn't his stats or his abilities.

What's impressive is his way of going in unexpected directions and using his ingenuity to discover new things.

---

306: MurderLicenseBaki

Yeah, that's right. Even if they lower his stats, I doubt it would change much.

I know some people say it's Silver-Haired's fault that Tamers get special treatment, but if I had to say, I feel like they're still valued pretty low?

---

307: Baa\_Baa

Really?

I'm in a party with my friends, so I don't think I'd want to be a Tamer, but someone going around alone with a bunch of monsters seems pretty strong, don't you think?

---

308: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

True, there aren't many job classes that can make a party all on their own.

But it's also got its drawbacks.

First, the stats of the player themselves. As a whole, they don't have great growth rates, and their stats are pretty devastating.

Once you throw your points into the skills you need, there are none left for your stats, so it can be called the weakest class on an individual level.

---

309: Murakage

Indeed. Silver-Haired by himself does not give off the impression of being very strong.

---

310: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Next is the monsters' abilities. They're definitely cute and capable, but they fall short when compared to players.

They're on par with players when it comes to their specializations, but it's common for them to have only a beginner player's abilities in everything else.

So in the end, they can't compare to solid parties where the players are dividing up the work.

They *could* fill in the gaps by switching out their monsters, but then they'd need to have ones as good as Amimin's.

---

311: Marca

Well sure, you have a point. The monsters' abilities are neither here nor there.

In Silver-Haired's case, though, even if you took away his monsters and left him all alone, he'd probably still eventually do something unexpected.

---

312: Mimura

If you took away Silver-Haired's monsters, he'd be annihilated!

Well, if the devs want to stop Silver-Haired from dropping one bombshell after another, they need to predict what he might do, and then make it so he can't discover it so easily?

---

313: Murakage

But if they were to do that, then wouldn't the rest of us

have no chance of discovering it...?

---

314: Baa\_Baa

I know I'd be screwed.

---

315: MurderLicenseBaki

Same.

Besides, even if they did predict Silver-Haired's behavior, I feel like Silver-Haired would end up finding out about it anyway.

---

316: Marca

I'd believe it.

---

317: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

'Cause he's Silver-Haired, after all.

---

318: Murakage

When all is said and done, Silver-Haired is impressive just because he is who he is, and no matter what happens, that fact will never change.

---



## [The Master Celebrity] Silver-Haired, Amazing as Always, Part 12

A discussion thread for the most famous of famous players.

We don't want to be deleted from the forums, so no dissing allowed.

Screenshots posted without consent are not permitted.

This thread will be deleted if we're asked to do so.

---

73: Tetsu

Btw, did you change your name?

---

74: Cho

A player named Chusuke joined my party, so it was confusing to have both a Chosuke and a Chusuke.

It was a big mess any time our leader gave out orders.

I got an item to change my name as a reward, so.

---

75: Tundra

Oh yeah, usually that's something you have to pay real money for, right?

---

76: Cho

Yeah. It's pretty cheap, though.

I think it's like 300 yen?

---

77: Takashima

Silver-Haired just dropped something huge again.

---

78: Cho

Didn't we just spend a whole thread talking about that already?

We only just got things settled down enough to do some small talk.

---

79: Takashima

I'm not talking about the girls' live stream.

---

80: Tundra

I feel like we've had this exact same conversation before.

---

81: Tetsu

Yeah, I think you're right.

Was that when he discovered rice? So did something similar happen this time?

---

82: Tomato Mato

Oh heck no. I'm scared.

---

83: Takashima

Well, this is more like a speculated Silver-Haired bombshell.

---

84: Tomato Mato

What do you mean?

---

85: Takashima

I spotted Silver-Haired at the Bazaar → with the Cats' submaster → they went into the café where the Cats do their business dealings → thinking something was up, I staked out the front of the café → after a while, out comes Silver-

Haired, beaming, and the submaster looking the exact opposite → at the submaster's recommendation, I got some super crucial information from the Cats.

Anyone could see that to mean that Silver-Haired sold some info, right?

---

86: Cho

I want to bring up the fact that your actions would've been super sketchy IRL.

---

87: Tetsu

Takashima, more like Taka-SHAME.

---

88: Tundra

Depending on your information, you're guilty.

---

89: Takashima

No, no, no, I'm innocent! I didn't even talk to him!

---

90: Tomato Mato

Well, we're not exactly ones to talk either...

---

91: Cho

You're right. Pot, meet kettle.

---

92: Tetsu

So? Are you going to share what you found out?

Now I gotta know.

---

93: Takashima

Thanks for the blatant topic change.

Okay, it has to do with titles.

---

94: Tundra

OMG, for real?! I mean, again?!

How many titles is that now?

---

95: Tetsu

Also, since you said it was crucial information, does that mean you also know how to acquire it?

---

96: Cho

No way! Is that true?

---

97: Takashima

Now, now, no need to be impatient. Good things come to those who wait, right?

---

98: Tomato Mato

Huh? Are you saying you have something even more crucial?

---

99: Takashima

Here's the surprising part. The Cats are holding a tour to acquire those titles.

Only players who bought information for the titles can join.

You have to pay 3,000 evets in advance to participate. Then, when you successfully get the title, you have to pay another 20,000 evets.

The Cats take care of getting all the necessary items ready on their end, so it doesn't seem like a bad idea to try.

---

100: Cho

I'm outta here! I'm going there right now!

---

101: Tundra

I'm not sure what I'll do.

20,000 seems way too expensive.

---

102: Tetsu

Ugh. My schedule's already packed full!

I still haven't finished my encyclopedia...!

---

103: Tomato Mato

Hmm, what to do, what to do...

I don't know how difficult it'll be...

---

104: Takashima

I already applied, btw.

You'll have the Quick-Eared Cats as your backup on the tour, so I don't think it'll be that dangerous.

But there are a limited number of spots, so it's probably better to apply ASAP.

---

105: Tomato Mato

Limited spots...

I'm heading out!

---

106: Tundra

What? Then, m-me too!

---

107: Tetsu

You're all so Japanese.

---

“Morning, everyone.”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Aye!”

I woke up to find Rick and Fau right next to my pillow, staring at my face as they greeted me. I felt like I’d turned into Gulliver.

Yesterday, after selling my information to Alyssa, I devoted my efforts to mining and gathering. Oh, and don’t worry, I made sure to go get that other new title too. I brought my Pirate Flag to the ghost town graveyard. A bunch of skeletons showed up and tossed me up in the air in celebration, but honestly, it was downright terrifying. It took a while for the sound of their rattling bones to leave my ears.

Another use for the Pirate Flag was to use it to get past the giant jellyfish by the ocean current. But since its role there would be to act as a lure, you’d lose it once you used it. I really had lucked out in getting past the jellyfish already.

The title I obtained, Pirate Savior, was another event title that would reward you events if you possessed it by the end of the event. I had my dinosaur-related titles too, so I should see a bit of a boost to my rankings at the end.

“All right, it’s the last day of the event. The demon should show up today. I wonder what it’ll be like?”

As we ate breakfast in the room, I explained the plan for the day to my monsters.

“Today’s top priority is going to see the titan arum. Let’s add it to the encyclopedia.”

“...♪”

Sakura nodded happily. Of course she would be interested in the plant as a tree nymph.

“First, we’ll go shopping at the Bazaar. I need to check around to make sure there aren’t any items I missed buying. Once we’re done there, we’ll go see the titan arum, then we’ll go mining and dinosaur hunting.”

You see, I had remembered that I still hadn’t beaten the Event Plesio. Kurumi,

Filma, and Rikyu already told me the way to defeat it, so I should be able to manage. The fact that it was in the water was annoying, but the girls said it wasn't actually that strong in battle. It wasn't a boss, but just a strong mob monster, like the Stego. I also planned to go after the other dinosaurs I hadn't taken down yet—the Tricera and the Ptera.

“Okay, let's go make our rounds of the street stalls!”

“Tra-la-la!”

“Honk honk!”

I had explored the city around the Bazaar right at the start of the event, but I expected there to be some changes for the final day. After all, I had heard there was a mechanic that made it so more wares were sold at shops depending on the progression of the event.

As I walked around, I couldn't help but gasp at every little thing.

“Whoa, what? They're selling Extra Large Terrariums at the shops now!”

“They've not only got Meganeuras, but ammonite too!”

“Ah! Amber! Oh, but it's expensive... But this one with a butterfly in it looks so cool!”

“A big Hercules beetle! I want onne!”

There were new things to see everywhere. In fact, I really wished I'd come here earlier. I could get everything I needed here at the Bazaar without having to go through the trouble of teleporting to each village.

“Aye!” *Chew chew chew chew.*

*Crunch crunch crunch crunch.*

“You two sure eat a lot despite your size.”

“Aye!”

“Chirp!”

The tiny duo were sitting on my shoulders, each devouring their respective favorite food. And they weren't alone in doing so. My other monsters were also snacking.

Even though Rick and Fau were small, they ate a lot. I was sure they were eating more than double their own weight. They weren't getting any crumbs on my shoulders, were they?

"Mm-mm!"

"What is it, Olto? Found something?"

"Mmm!"

I had asked Olto and Sakura to tell me if they found any interesting plants or seeds of plants we didn't have on our farm. Now, Olto had run over to me and was tugging on my robe. He must have found something extraordinary.

"Mmm!"

Olto dashed off, and the rest of us quickly ran after him.

"So fast! You're going too fast, Olto!"

"Mm-mmm!"

*He's running full speed ahead! Just what sort of rare item did he find?! My chest is swelling with anticipation!*

"Mm-mmm!"

"Olto."

"Mm?"

"This is just a juice stand, for crying out loud!"

"Mmm!"

*He just found a cart that sold his favorite food!*

I reluctantly bought some juice, which we drank as we walked. As we strolled, I spotted some familiar faces ahead of me. I called out to the two of them, who were standing in front of a stall looking serious.

"U-ko, D-suke, it's been a while."

"Silver-Haired!"

"Good to see you again!"



They were second-wave players I'd met during the prior event, U-ko and D-suke. It looked like they were participating in this event too.

"Good to see you too, little monsters!"

"Growl!"

"Chirp chirp!"

My monsters seemed to remember them too. They raised their hands in greeting.

"You've really been working hard! That video was awesome!"

"I rewatched it over and over again!"

They must've seen the Brachio fight video. *They're looking at me with so much respect! How embarrassing! But I don't mind it. Go ahead, you two, keep the compliments coming!*

"Our other second-wave friends found it very enthralling to watch."

"They all said it was amazing!"

"Another one of your impressive feats!"

"Top players are so cool!"

*Ah, never mind. That was a lie. Too many compliments just make me want to run away! That was only possible through miracles, I tell you! Not by my own merit! It's so embarrassing being praised like that!*

I decided it was time for an impromptu change of topic.

"Right, so...what're you two doing?"

"This!"

"It's a minigame. The top prize is an Ammolite!"

"Whoa! I didn't know there was something like this!"

It was probably meant to act as a boost for the second-wave players. Beating the bosses on the Prehistoric Island to get to where you mine Ammolite was pretty difficult, after all.

The minigame was a darts game. Oh, but it wasn't the type of competitive

sports-type dart game where you added up the points of what you hit, but a spinning roulette type of darts, like the kind where you could win something like either a car or a scrubbing brush. In the middle was the grand prize of the Ammolite, and surrounding it were other various types of prizes. There were event items like Amber and Terrariums but also potions and other practical items. Besides moving really fast, the targets were small.

“Chirp chirp!”

“Are you interested, Rick? Want to try it?”

“Chirp!”

“Growl!”

“Hm-hmm!”

“You all too? Okay then, let’s all take turns.”

My monsters were expressing interest in the darts, so I decided we’d all take a crack at the minigame. Although, Fau would just be cheering us on. Since she couldn’t really throw.

“All right! I’ll go first!”

“Aye-aye!”

With Fau cheering me on, I threw a dart. But this was actually pretty difficult. Weakling as I was, I still should have had a higher dexterity than these second-wave players. But despite that, I couldn’t hit the center. I threw five darts, and all of them missed. I guess this wasn’t something that could be decided with just stats. Olto, Rick, and Bear Bear also only got potion consolation prizes. And that was even with Rick having the Throw skill.

“Mm...”

“Chirp chirp...”

“Groowl...”

The three of them drooped their shoulders dejectedly. Beside them, the one who demonstrated surprising talent at this game was none other than Himka.

“Hm! Hmm!”

“Whoa! That was great!”

*I can't believe it! He got a combo of Amber and ocean fish!*

“Th-That was amazing!”

“Himka! You're so cool!”

“Hmm.”

Like me, Himka also didn't seem to mind D-suke's and U-ko's praise. He was puffing out his chest with an obviously self-satisfied look on his face. Rick and the others looked frustrated, but that only seemed to feed Himka's ego even more. However, his time as reigning champ did not last for very long.

“...!”

“Sakura, that was out of this world!”

“Great job!”

“...♪”

Sakura got the Ammolite. Not only D-suke and U-ko, but the surrounding players who had been watching from the sidelines also showered her with applause. In contrast to the bashfully pleased Sakura, Himka looked a little embarrassed. He must've felt sheepish about how overconfident he'd gotten from just a little praise only a few seconds ago. *I get it! I get it, Himka! I know how you feel! I was feeling the same way just a moment ago too!*

“Hm...”

“Himka, want something to eat?”

“Hm.”

I patted Himka's shoulders, consoling him. He smiled ruefully as he nodded. While the two of us were tending to each other's wounds, Sakura came over to us with the Ammolite in her arms.

“...♪”

“Nice work, Sakura. You did great.”

“...!”

Of course, I praised Sakura for a job well done too. Himka joined me in celebrating with her too. *What a great guy, not sulking at a time like this!*

“Hmmm!”

“...♪”

After that, we parted ways with U-ko and D-suke, then went walking around the Bazaar while I changed up the party. And by that I meant, we continued our snacking tour. Unfortunately, that made us go considerably over our budgeted time. We’d been having so much fun that I hadn’t checked the time at all.

“Next up is teleporting to the plateau and hunting the Pteras, but...”

The question was, who should I bring? Most of the Pteras inhabited the cliffs of the plateau. To fight there, Olto’s footholds would be a necessity. Also, I wanted to bring my monsters that could fight in the air. That would be Fau, Eine, and maybe Perca. He could sort of fly with Penguin Highway, after all. Next, I’d need our healer Reflet, and maybe Rick too. Since he just evolved, I wanted to test out Sequoia Squirrel’s fighting capabilities.

I assembled my party, which consisted of the monsters that would be strong against flying enemies, and teleported to the interior of the Prehistoric Island. But before we fought the Pteras, there was something else we had to do first.

“Dang, there’s a lot of people here!”

“Mmm!”

A large group of players were gathered around the perimeter of the prehistoric pond, likely here for the same reason we were.

“Oh, Silver-Haired!”

“Amelia, your party’s as unbalanced as ever...”

“Tee hee hee. Don’t worry, they can fight!”

From in front of the prehistoric pond, Amelia, a friend and fellow Tamer, called out to me. She was a true lover of cute things, and was an especially big fan of rabbits and gnomes. People called her the Rabbit-Gnome Tamer, and I could understand why, all things considered. Aside from the two rabbits riding her shoulders, the rest of her party was made up of gnomes.

Incidentally, Amelia had changed classes to a Commander Tamer, and she had four gnomes: a Gnome Farmer, Knocker, Gnome Fighter, and Gnome Leader. I shuddered at how unbalanced her party was. She had really indulged in her own preferences too much.

“Are you here for the titan arum too, Silver-Haired?”

“Yeah, I am. Has it bloomed?”

“Not yet. But a countdown appeared showing five hours on the clock, so it’ll probably bloom at the end of that?”

“Ah, I see.”

A screen had appeared in front of the still-closed titan arum, displaying a digital countdown. Meaning, once the flower bloomed, it would start up some type of event. I was sure that was when the demon would make its assault.

“So I guess that means we have to finish up anything else we want to do before then?” I mused.

“Yeah, seems like it. I’m about to go Ptera hunting. I’m light on materials, and I want to get more to upgrade my gear.”

“You too?”

“You’re doing the same, Silver-Haired?”

“Yeah. I haven’t beaten any Pteras yet, so I wanted to make sure I did at least once.”

“Okay then, why don’t we go together? I hunted them yesterday too, so I can give you some pointers.”

“Really? If you do, I can pay you for the info.”

Advice from a fellow Tamer was a very valuable thing.

“No need.”

“You sure?”

“Yeah! I get to go on an adventure with Olto! I should be paying *you*! Right, Olto?”

“Mm?”

“Awww, you cutie pie!”

As long as Amelia was fine with it, then it was fine with me too. *Maybe I can give her some sashimi in lieu of an information fee?*

And so, Amelia and I headed to the cliff where, together, we made short work of the Pteras.

“Amelia! It’s all you!”

“Okay! Wind Cutter!”

“Ka-kaaaw!”

After we knocked down an Event Ptera to the ground, Amelia delivered the finishing blow, which had quickly become a practiced pattern. This was our tenth one. Pteras were extremely weak anyway. Just based on their stats, they were probably the weakest creatures on this Prehistoric Island. Since they were Pterosaurs, they could fly, but a single hit from even one of my spells made them fall, and once they’d been dragged down to the ground, it was possible to dispatch them without taking any damage.

The reason hunting Pteras was said to be difficult despite that was because you had to fight on the narrow footing of the cliff, which made it hard to attack, and to evade the Pteras’ attacks. Also, if you took a hit and fell down the cliff, you took a lot of fall damage. But for me and Amelia, that wasn’t a problem at all.

Okay, maybe I should say it was all thanks to Amelia. The confidence she displayed when she invited me hadn’t just been for show.

“You know, I wasn’t sure how things would go with four gnomes, but it’s amazing what they can achieve when they work together.”

“They’re great, aren’t they?! Gnomes are just super!”

Amelia’s gnomes cooperated to make a giant foundation for us to stand on. It was a bit less than two hundred square feet. Thanks to that, we were able to fight against the Pteras with plenty of ease.

On the fighting side, Amelia’s rabbits played a huge role. They skipped about

in midair at tremendous speed and readily brought the Pteras falling down with their kicks. The rabbits had no problem making the Pteras land on the foundation, making it easy for us to take them out. *Rabbits are actually powerful fighters, huh? I know I wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of one of those kicks.*

“By the way, Amelia, it looks like your rabbits are running on air?”

“Yep. They use a skill called Footing to temporarily create invisible footholds in midair.”

“Interesting. Invisible footholds, huh?”

By all appearances, the rabbits were running around freely in midair. If that was one of their default skills, I doubted we'd be able to win against a rabbit who appeared in front of us as an enemy... Hopefully, Amelia's rabbits were just special.

“You and little Rick here are amazing too, Silver-Haired. Like when he made those tree nuts go *boooooom!*”

“That was a surprise for me too. It's a new technique.”

“Oh wow, really?”

What Amelia was talking about when she spread out both hands and went “*boooooom!*” was Rick's Nut Bomb skill, though its effect was different from the Nut Bomb moves he'd been using thus far. Up to now, the Blue Acorn bombs had only dealt damage, but now, right after it hit the enemy, it burst and then dealt additional damage over time. Its damage wasn't anything major, but since it doubled as an AoE attack, it was a big power-up. It appeared to be one of Forest Sorcery's effects. I had heard sorcery skills required a long ritual, but it looked like just possessing the skill was enough to have an effect in some instances.

“Chirp chirp!”

“Nice! You did it!”

Even now, one of the Blue Acorns Rick threw landed a direct hit on a Ptera that was flying in the sky, bringing it crashing down. However, it was difficult for

him to control the direction the Ptera fell in the way the rabbits did, so it just fell straight down the cliff.

“Rick, Fau, Eine, bring it home.”

“Chirp!”

“Aye!”

“Tra-la!”

Between Fau’s Fire Summoning and Rick’s Super Incisor Attack, finishing off the Ptera wouldn’t be hard for them. Eine placed Rick on her shoulder, and with Fau, they all flew down to the bottom of the cliff.

Rick really had gotten a lot stronger all at once. I know that I thought this every time, but evolutions really were incredible. When I looked down, I saw tiny little Rick bite the neck of the over two-meter-long Ptera and kill it. That would have been a shocking sight in real life. *Thank god this is a game.*

Then, we hunted five more Pteras.

“Yay! Rare drops!” Amelia cheered.

“Think you got enough materials now?”

“Yep. Thanks for taking the time to keep fighting with me even though you only wanted to take down one.”

“No, thank *you* for helping me get all these materials from the Pteras. They’re light, so even I should be able to make use of them.”

Nonetheless, Amelia’s and my joint fighting wasn’t over yet. In exchange for accompanying her until she got all the rare drops she needed, she was going to help me fight the Plesio and Tricera too. That was great for me, so of course I agreed. Though Amelia probably just wanted to spend as much time as possible with Olto.

“Okay then, should we jump right into searching for a Tricera?”

“Yeah, let’s. It’ll be more efficient if we go for the Tricera before the Plesio.”

“Yeah!”

Amelia’s gnomes did some amazing work en route too. Not only did they



perfectly fulfill their role as tanks against every enemy that came our way, but they used earth magic to restrain our enemies and construct simple enclosures. They demonstrated all the various abilities of their respective evolved forms.

“Event Tricerats aren’t that tough, huh? I didn’t know you could fight them like that.”

“Their charge attacks are powerful, but they’re bad at moving backwards! And my gnomes are just that excellent!”

Amelia’s proud smirk was completely understandable. Her gnomes had enclosed the Tricera around the front and sides with a wall, stopping its movements. Then, by attacking it from behind, they were able to clinch a total victory, entirely unscathed.

Olto could also make walls and such with earth magic, but with the gnomes working together, their speed and the scale of the wall was on another level. By dividing up the work, they could even build a large structure in no time.

Even when enemies swarmed around us, we easily hunted them by using an impromptu enclosure. Not even Stegos and Pachycephalos stood a chance against us. We ran away from Tyrannos, though. Naturally, it was impossible for Amelia’s party to fight against them when they had us deadweights tagging along. She was super nice about it, though, saying she felt uneasy about their fighting power. *Sorry for holding you back.*

“We’re back at the beach.”

“I’ll leave this one in your hands! My party doesn’t do well in water.”

That made sense. Amelia had four earth elementals and two rabbits. Though I wouldn’t be surprised if Amelia’s rabbits could fight even in the water.

“You’ve been doing all the work so far, but you can leave the Plesio to us. I know just how to beat it too!”

“Oooh! Of course you do, Silver-Haired!”

Well, everything I knew, I learned from Kurumi, Filma, and Rikyu! They had even given me the item I needed to beat it.

We arrived at the spot where we were to hunt the Event Plesio, the

Prehistoric Island's beach. Finally, it was our time to be useful.

"All right, let's lure it to the shore!"

"Got it! Ready when you are!"

"Perca, Reflet, you're up!"

"Humm!"

"Honk hooonk!"

The underwater duo, holding some bone-in meat in their hands, dived vigorously into the sea. This was the method for hunting the Plesio that I had learned from Filma. This creature reacted only to meat, not fish. Also, once it targeted us, it would pursue us obstinately. It was possible to lure the Plesio close to shore by taking advantage of that behavior. If our plan went well, then we'd be able to fight it on land.

After waiting for a while on the beach, we saw a large shadow emerge under the water. A part of that shadow was poking out of the water, like a strange lump. The shadow was speeding towards the shore at full throttle, leaving ripples on the surface of the water. Just when the shadow was just about to make it to the shore, two other smaller shadows jumped up onto the beach first.

"Hum-humm!"

"Honk honk hooonk!"

It was Reflet and Perca, who had been spectacularly successful in acting as the bait. They came running to me, smiling for some reason. *Did they have fun playing tag with the shadow?*

Only ten seconds behind them, a giant, dark creature revealed itself where the water was shallow. Now aground in one-meter-deep water, it raised its long neck and was glaring at us. This was definitely the Plesiosaur I had seen when I first found the Prehistoric Island. It had a giant body shaped like a whale's or a Steller sea lion, and a neck and tail like a snake. Its skin appeared smooth, but on closer look, I could see rows of tiny scales.

"Guh-gya!"

At the depth of water it was in, it seemed it could just barely move. It wasn't getting any closer to us, but was trying its hardest to stretch out its neck to attack us. But despite its attempts, it couldn't reach us on the shore.

While it might have seemed like an easy win if we hit it with long-range attacks from our safe zone, apparently it would immediately run away if we did that. That meant we had to get close to it to attack. Unfortunately, despite being in the shallow part of the water, it was still too deep for us. If we fought the Plesio there, we'd be giving it the upper hand.

But thankfully, we were already thoroughly prepared for this!

"We lured it in! Now it's time for *this!*"

I pulled out one of Rikyu's lovingly made bombs. It was a water-type bomb that would explode underwater and produce a giant wave.

"Eine, you got this!"

"Tra-la!"

Eine gave me an adorable tiny-handed salute, then flew away holding the bomb. While she was gaining altitude, the rest of us took on the role of attracting the Plesio's attention so it wouldn't run away.

"Hey! Over here, you long-necked freak!"

"Mm-mmm!"

"Humm!"

"Hoonk!"

My monsters and I camped where the Plesio's neck was just barely out of reach and provoked it mercilessly. Olto was making faces at it, Reflet was pulling down one eyelid and sticking her tongue out, and Perca was spanking his butt. I didn't know if their actions were getting through to the Plesio, but it seemed to know they were taunting it. It was baring its teeth and growling.

"Aye!"

"Guh-gyaaa!"

The one especially getting on the Plesio's nerves was Fau. Having a tiny fairy

flying around in front of its eyes was very distracting for it. She wasn't an evasion tank for nothing.

While we were busy doing our thing, Eine had circled around behind the Plesio.

"Tra-la!"

She activated the bomb and quickly flung it into the water. Immediately after, a five-meter-tall column of water shot up right up behind the Plesio, and along with the roar of the explosion, a giant wave was triggered.

"Guh-gyaaaa!"

Having taken damage from the bomb's aftermath, the Plesio let out a shriek as it was carried by the wave. This was exactly what we wanted to happen. The Plesio's massive body rode the wave and was washed up on the shore.

"Guh-gya!"

The Plesio made a panicked effort to get back in the water. *Oh, you thought you were going to get a turn, did you?*

"Amelia! Let's do this!"

"Okay! Come on, everyone!"

"Mmm!" all of Amelia's gnomes responded in unison.

Since we'd hit it with an attack from behind, the Plesio's hate was directed right at us. It was like it had decided it wanted to eliminate us first before returning to the ocean. But now that it had washed ashore, the Plesio couldn't move the way it wanted to, its movements much more sluggish than they were underwater.

Despite that, it was plenty threatening as it swung its long neck around to attack us. It was so powerful that Olto couldn't keep his footing when he blocked it, and he ended up falling over. But by quickly healing him and plugging the hole in our defense back up, we were able to keep the Plesio in check. Ultimately, we beat it to a pulp, and it let out a pitiful shriek as it reached its end.

"We won! V for victory!"

“You really carried us at the end there, Amelia.”

“Sorry. Bun Bun got a little overeager.”

“Oh, don’t be. It was a huge help.”

And I’d gotten to witness the entertaining scene of a rabbit kicking the Plesio in the face. And truthfully, without Amelia’s gnomes’ defensive wall, we probably would have taken more damage.

“This Plesio hide should make for some good armor,” said Amelia.

“Oh yeah, I was thinking the same.”

It was lightweight and seemed to have some water-repelling quality. *This is some great material. Maybe I can use it to make a robe.*

“So, what now? We’ve got the hang of it now, so should we try fighting it a few more times?”

“Well, I don’t have any more bombs.”

I had only possessed one of the water-based bombs that was the key player in this fight. Without it, we wouldn’t be able to wash the Plesio up on shore.

“Oh, I think my gnomes should be able to cover for that. The important thing is keeping the Plesio from not escaping back into the ocean, right?”

“Well yeah, but how can they do that?”

“Once the Plesio gets into the shallow part, we can bring it up to the shore with water magic, and then my gnomes can use their earth magic to enclose it so it can’t run away. That might work, don’t you think?”

“Oh, good idea.”

It would take some time and effort, but we might be able to make do using that method, even without a bomb.

“All right then, let’s get some more Plesio drops.”

“Yeah! Let’s hunt them to extinction! Genocide!” shouted Amelia.

“Honk hooonk!”

“Aye-aye!”

Perca and Fau pumped their fists in the air just like Amelia did. *Why are they so eager for that?! Don't teach my monsters bad words!*

And so, Amelia continued our Plesio hunting. I even got my third Dinosaur Enclosure exchange ticket from a unique Plesio, so it had been a great use of time. Then, Amelia and I split up and my party went mining and gathering. Once we were done with that, we went back to the pond. The digital display was still counting down. There was still a little more time before the flower bloomed.

"I don't want to just stand around doing nothing, so maybe I'll cook while I'm waiting."

I didn't have any more of the rice I'd brought in with me, but I did have condiments. I decided to try out different recipes with the prehistoric white fish meat. I moved to the edge of the clearing so I wouldn't get in anyone's way, then laid out my cooking set.

"I've got salt and sugar that I bought in the Bazaar, and I still have some soy sauce and miso that I brought in from outside the event."

*Maybe I should make it teriyaki-style, or maybe even cook it in miso.*

"Humm?"

"Having fun watching?"

"Hum!"

"Honk!"

My fish-loving underwater pair were standing on either side of me, peering at the cooking table. Reflet had no problem doing this, but Perca was barely tall enough to see. He was standing on his tiptoes to make his chin rest on the counter.

"Don't push yourself."

"Honk..."

He was *really* trying to force it to work out. Did he really want to watch that badly?

"Humm."

“Honk.”

“Hey, don’t drool all over it!”

*Oh, so they’re just a couple of gluttons.*

My other monsters were sitting on the ground doing something or other. I thought they were playing a pole toppling game, which they sometimes did, but it was something different. They were actually playing tic-tac-toe. *As long as they’re behaving themselves, that’s fine.*

What was surprising were all the other players who had gathered around to attentively watch my monsters’ playing tic-tac-toe. There was a huge crowd. I guess they were all bored too. There were even some people doing some serious postgame analysis.

But you know, I went all the way to the edge of the clearing so I wouldn’t get in anyone’s way, but there were actually a bunch of people over here. Not around me specifically, though. There was an open, empty space around me alone, clear of any people. Maybe they were being considerate of me while I was working? In that case, I’d messed up... I should have just waited patiently. Oh well, I couldn’t take it back now. I’d just have to finish up quick and take down my setup.

I finished cooking right at the perfect time. There were less than ten minutes remaining on the countdown. The titan arum was just about to bloom.

“Hi, Yuto.”

“Oh, you guys came here too, Sawyer?”

The person who had called out to me was Sawyer. Behind him were Sukegawa, Tagosack, Fuka, and Tsugarun. I guess they had been going through the event together after all.

“Well, it’s pretty clear the event will progress here. All the players that can get to this island are gathering here, right?”

“Oh, you think so?”

We chatted while we waited for the countdown to end. Since the last time I saw them, they had defeated all the bosses and were able to obtain titles from

them. But even though they'd gotten Dinosaur Vanquisher, they hadn't been able to get Dinosaur Observer. I had fulfilled the conditions without even knowing them, but maybe it was even harder to get than I thought.

"Tagosack, Tsugarun, have you two been able to get any interesting crops?"

"Nah. I hoped I might be able to grow some rafflesia on my farm, but I couldn't even Propagate it."

"Same. I thought about bringing back a palm tree or something, but it was a bust."

It sounded like the crops in this event were programmed to be unable to be Propagated. If these top two farmers tried and failed, then that was most likely the case.

"Heh heh heh, if I use materials from the Plesio, I think I can make some skin-tight rubber suit innerwear."

"...Uh-huh, okay."

It wasn't like I was completely uninterested, but I didn't want people to think I was the same as him. *Just think of those harsh looks girls give to Sukegawa.*

"Spino material would be good too."

"Take it easy there, man."

*No, seriously.*

"Silver-Haired, do you think you'll be able to finish your encyclopedia?" Fuka asked me.

"Definitely. The last thing I need is the titan arum. What about you?"

"I haven't filled anything in."

"Really?"

"I mean, bugs and stuff are gross."

"Ah, right. I guess it's not for everyone."

Fuka continued by saying that frontline players and others were earning evets the logical way by spending every waking moment completely ignoring the



encyclopedia in favor of combat.

“Still, it seems like a good number of people are trying to finish the encyclopedia. It’s just such an obvious feature that there’s no way we won’t get a reward for completing it.”

“But the front liners are still ignoring it despite that?”

“Completing it would require searching the entire island, right? So I think they just judged it more efficient to earn evets by grinding the Prehistoric Island bosses instead of wasting time filling out the encyclopedia.”

“Makes sense.”

The encyclopedia was probably a relief measure for casual players like me and second-wave players. That way, even people who couldn’t take down the bosses would be able to earn evets. In that case, it was obviously better to earn evets by grinding the bosses, if you were strong enough to be capable of that. After I told Fuka that, she looked conflicted.

“...”

“What’s up?”

“No, it’s nothing. I was just thinking about what exactly the definition of a casual player is.”

While we were chatting, there was some sort of commotion going on among the players in front of us.

“Oh, looks like the countdown is about to end.”

Sure enough, there were twelve seconds left. Some of the more hyped-up players had started counting down.

“Ten!”

“Aye!”

“Chirp!”

My monsters started jumping up and down as they joined in on the countdown. *I guess they think it looks like fun too.*

“Seven!”

“Mmm!”

“Humm!”

More and more people started counting down. Everyone around me had joined in.

“Four!”

“Tra-la!”

“Honk!”

“...!”

Right after the countdown reached zero, the titan arum started to change. The leaves twined around the long stamen-like part of the flower slowly began to open. Then, once it was completely opened, there was a bright flash of light, indicating that it had fully bloomed. Its overall shape looked like a trumpet. To me, it looked like a giant, upside-down Japanese-style parasol. I was more overwhelmed by its strangeness and presence than by its beauty. *Aha, I can see it's called the largest flower in the world for a reason.*

“Oh whoops, I have to appraise it.”

I tried to appraise the fully bloomed titan arum. But for some reason, it didn't work. It wasn't a bug or anything either, since I could freely appraise everything else. The titan arum was the only thing I couldn't target. Other players seemed to be having the same problem. An atmosphere of confusion was spreading around.

Then, someone shouted, “G-Gross! It reeks!”

“Urgh... What the hell is that smell?!”

“Yeech, that stinks!”

“*Hack! Hurk!*”

There really was an off-putting smell. Was this the famous stench of the titan arum? A strange odor like rotting garbage was wafting towards us. I'd known about this smell, so I had prepared myself for it, but the players raising a fuss

must not have. There were even some people having a coughing fit, looking like they were in agony. I had heard that the real-life flower smelled even worse, though, so the devs must have reined it in a little. After all, it wasn't so bad that it was unbearable if you knew it was coming.

"Mmm..."

"Too much for you too, Olto?"

"Mm..."

Olto was pinching his nose with an indescribable expression on his face. He looked exactly like my family dog Fran when she caught a whiff of a clementine, which she hated.

"Hum..."

"Tra-la..."

Reflet's and Eine's moods had soured. They clearly hated the smell too.

"..."

Fau was strumming her lute without singing, something she didn't usually do. The melancholic sounds of her lute strings must have been expressing her current mood. Though that was obvious enough from just looking at her face, which looked over-the-top miserable.

Not everyone was suffering, though.

"Chirp?"

"Hoonk!"

Rick was lightly rubbing his nose as he sniffed the scent a few times. It looked like it was only bothering him a little bit. As for Perca, he didn't seem to understand everyone else's reactions. He was tilting his head, looking so confused I was half expecting a question mark to pop up above him. Maybe this was the difference between humanoid-and animal-type monsters. That wasn't the end of the strange happenings, though.

"Some weird thing appeared."

"Mm."

Way up in the air, about thirty meters above the titan arum, there was a violently vibrating black mass. Was it black mist? A swarm of insects? In any case, there was a wriggling clump of tiny things. And what was that occasional static rushing around us?

While I and the other players kept an eye on the mass, it started getting darker in color. At the same time, the static started rushing around the titan arum too. Then, out from inside of the furiously squirming dark mass, something even darker came out. *Is that the demon?*

Tension ran through everyone who was watching over what was happening. But since a red marker hadn't appeared over it yet, we probably weren't going to be thrown into battle right away. *It looks like it's setting up an event...*

Then, as if piercing through that black something, a bizarre-looking skeleton appeared in the sky. First off, like I mentioned, it was all black. Also, it was just a floating face. But the weirdest thing of all was that it had two faces. There weren't two heads. They weren't even conjoined heads. Both sides of its one head had a face. The part that should have been the back of its head was also a skeletal face. Rather than a demon, it looked like an Undead monster.

*"This stench! This foul steeench!"*

*Whoa, it talked.* I felt like I recognized that voice from somewhere... Right, I knew from where. It belonged to a famous voice actor. They were a legendary voice actor known for their distinctive old man character voice. This time, people started freaking out for an entirely different reason. Everyone must have been amazed by just how much effort the devs had put into this.

*"This stench is unbearable! Oooohhhh!"* the black skeleton groaned. Though come to think of it, how could it even smell if it was a skeleton?

The skeleton's voice was audible as if it were being broadcast directly in my ears, like an announcement. That must have been so no one missed what it was saying. It was unbelievably loud, though. Some players even let out a yelp, shocked by the volume of the skeleton's shout. The skeleton, however, paid not one bit of attention to us. This really was a proper cutscene.

*"Curse this intolerable stench! Come out, you lost, wretched departed soul! Destroy this vile thing!"*

As if summoned by the skeleton's words, a black mist materialized in front of the titan arum, out of which emerged a skeleton. On its head it wore a classic pirate's hat with a skull and crossbones on it, and it was armed with a rusty curved blade. It was the captain of the sunken ship. I was sure about that. Did the demon have necromancy powers or something?

As I watched the scene play out, the black skeleton gave orders to the pirate captain.

*"Phantom! Reap that foul flower!"*

The pirate captain started to move. But no one expected what it did next. The pirate captain swung its curved sword back wide, then flung straight at the black skeleton. Then, with chattering teeth, it stood in front of the titan arum as if protecting it. It definitely seemed like the pirate captain had defied the skeleton...

*"You dare disobey meee?! A mere specter?! So be it, you fool! Watch me destroy this entire island, and you with iiiit!"*

Immediately following the skeleton's roar, a dark light engulfed our surroundings. Then, we suddenly found ourselves standing in a different area than where we'd just been. We must have been teleported to a boss arena. In the middle of a wide-open grassy field stood a five-meter-tall rock, above which the black skull was floating. We players were positioned around the rocky mountain, some distance away from it. There were probably over one hundred meters between us and the rock. Circling the field was a forest overgrown with ferns. Even farther in the distance, I could see the plateau. *Looks like we're still somewhere on the Prehistoric Island.*

*"You traitorous bastard, prepare to be crushed!"*

*Click-clack-click-clack!*

When I focused my eyes, I could see the pirate captain skeleton was in front of the rock. The captain raised its sword above its head, and instantly after, a red marker appeared above the demon's head.

*"The boss fight is starting! Everyone! Let's do this!"*

*"Mm-mm!"*

“Chirp chiiirp!”

## Chapter Four: The Demon Bifrons

Everyone around me burst into motion as the boss fight began.

“There’s a chance we might lose if that skeleton pirate dies, so keep an eye on him!”

“Is someone taking command? Hey, all you people from the top clans, you’re up!”

“Let’s go ahead and charge ‘em!”

In the midst of all the commotion, I appraised the black skeleton demon.

“‘Bifrons’...? Isn’t that another one of Solomon’s demons?”

“As sharp as ever! Bifrons is in fact one of the seventy-two demons of Solomon!”

“Oh, Siegfried!”

“Hello. It’s been a while.”

Siegfried appeared on horseback with his usual Prince Charming smile. *He’s always so pleasant, even on a battlefield!*

“*Grrraaagh! I’ll destroy you aaallllll!*” the demon screeched.

“Whoops, it seems the demon’s already taking action. We’ll have to catch up later,” said Siegfried.

“I’m going to head to the back for now. I’d probably just get in the way up here.”

“I think I’ll try attacking and see how it pans out.”

“All right, good luck.”

“Thank you.”

*Ever the cool knight.* I could never be like him.

“All right, let’s go check things out from the back!” I told my monsters.

“Mm-mm!”

If we weren't going to be of any help in the fight anyway, then we could at least withdraw to the rear and wait for everyone else to act.

*“Raaaagh! You traitorous fools! I'll send you all to hell! Rise, rise, lost souls!”*

At Bifrons's shout, a host of skeletons emerged around the rocky mountain. They were all an inky black, just like Bifrons. The skeleton army that now surrounded the mountain easily numbered over one thousand troops.

Of course, their numbers weren't close to rivaling the number of players we had, but still, there were too many to ignore. Also, our enemy had the ability to summon the dead. It was entirely possible that even if we reduced their numbers, the demon would just summon more. There was even the possibility that they would spawn infinitely.

“Well, I got nothing,” I admitted. “I don't think I'll be much help with strategy... For this fight, let's focus on defending!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Hum!”

As far as strategy went, either the top players or at least the top brass of the more prominent clans would come up with something in due time. All a casual, solo player had to do was not get in their way.

“Should we start by chipping away at the skeletons with some long-range attacks?”

“Aye!”

“Chirp chirp!”

And with that, we joined the players around us and started attacking. The black skeletons proved tankier than I thought, though. Maybe they were individually strong since there were fewer of them than us. We rained attack after attack on them, but they didn't go down easily.

Also, since we currently lacked a clear chain of command, even the mere fact that we were all attacking sporadically and randomly at the enemies was a problem. It was obvious to me since I was watching from the back line, but as a



whole, we were wasting too much of our efforts. Though it wasn't like I could just barge in and take charge, though. No one would follow me. All I could do here was hold out until an opportunity presented itself.

*Click-clack-click-clack-click-clack!*

“Mm-mmm!”

“Get! Outta! Here!”

“Chirp!”

One skeleton came over and fought us up close. Sure enough, it really was strong. There was only one of them, though, so of course we managed to take it out. But then I saw Bifrons immediately summon more black skeletons and send them our way. There were even more this time. Was it going to keep summoning increasingly larger numbers of them? If it did, things weren't going to pan out well if we kept fighting them like this without any sort of plan...

After we fought against the black skeletons for a while, the players around us started to switch things up. They must have decided to try something, even if they were fighting in broken-up groups. People were naturally joining up with acquaintances to split up roles and fight. And my party wasn't excluded from that either.

“Olto! Are you okay?!”

“Sweet Reflet! Are you hurt?!”

“Aww, Fau! I'll protect you, meow!”

“Please, let us fight with you too.”

With Amelia at the head of the group, surrounded by her gnome troops, several nearby Tamers came over to gather around me. There was the blue-haired Halfing Tamer, Eulenspiegel; the blond Tamer clad in a red robe, MorningStarMeow; and finally, the bear-human hybrid, insect-lover Tamer, KingOysterMushroom. They were all Tamers I ran into occasionally, such as at my cherry blossom viewing party.

“Whoa, your parties are...really something.”

Amelia hadn't changed up her party formation from earlier—she still had her

rabbit-gnome party. But everyone else's party was also pretty intense.

First, Eulenspiegel's party. *Jeez, dude, really?*

"Isn't your party a little unbalanced?"

"Heh heh. No matter, I follow my own path! And no one can stand in my way!"

*Wow, that sounds like the description for Penguin Highway.*

"So that path brought you...here?"

"It sure did!"

Eulen's party was made up of four Undines and one Guardian Dog. His party was *super* unbalanced. Right, *now* I remembered. People were now calling him the Undine Tamer.

I had to hand it to him: that could never be me. Mostly because I wouldn't be able to handle the stares. Also, just like Amelia, he had completed all their evolution routes. Still, their fighting power seemed to leave a lot to be desired... Though of course, they could still really come in clutch as healers.

"MorningStar... Um..."

"Ahhh ha ha ha! Look, this is why Eulen and I are friends!"

"O-Okay! You've made your point! I'm convinced!"

MorningStarMeow's party was also very biased towards his preferences. He had a tree nymph with pale pink hair, a sylph, an undine, and a fairy. Also, a honey bear. Most of his party was filled with cute girl monsters. The tree nymph stood out the most to me.

"This is my first time seeing another tree nymph besides Sakura."

"Her name is Andromeda. I just happened to run across her when she appeared on the map. I got really lucky."

"...♪"

She resembled Sakura, but there were subtle differences. Andromeda's hair color was much lighter than Sakura's, and she was a little shorter. Her mannerisms were a little childish. She was very energetic, so she was probably

similar to Reflet in terms of personality.

Based on what MorningStarMeow told me, her abilities were also slightly different from Sakura's. For starting skills, while Sakura had known Charm and Woodworking, Andromeda knew Toxify and Cooking. I guess that meant there were individuals even among tree nymphs, then.

"Uh, wow, KingOysterMushroom, just, wow."

"Thank you," he responded with his usual serious, unsmiling face. In contrast, however, his party members were ridiculously whimsical.

"A party of bugs..."

KingOysterMushroom's party was comprised entirely of bugs: a rhinoceros beetle, a butterfly, a bee, an ant, and a fairy. Okay, the fairy wasn't a bug, though. They seemed a little all over the place in terms of abilities; at least that meant they probably were not unbalanced.

The monster that grabbed my attention the most was the rhinoceros beetle front liner. It was a monster called Armored Beetle, which was a giant green rhinoceros beetle as large as a human.

"So cool..."

"I know, right?"

"Hey, c'mon! You can introduce your monsters later! We're in the middle of a boss fight here!"

"O-Oh yeah, you're right."

Amelia's reprimand reminded me we were on a battlefield. I had thought I was bad with my party full of cute monsters, but everyone else was worse than me.

"Okay, so what's the plan?"

"Huh? Why're you asking me, Amelia?"

"I mean, that's why we came over here. Aren't you the leader?"

"No way, what're you—"

*Click-clack-click-clack-click-clack!*

*Damn it, skeletons! I can't argue! Just when Amelia's trying to force the annoying role of leader on me!*

"Silver-Haired! Tell us what to do!!!"

"Ahhh! Fine! Tanks, go in the front! The rest attack the skeletons with long-range attacks!"

"What should supports do, meow?"

"Stand by! Eulen, make sure your Undines save their MP. We'll need it for the second half!"

"Roger that!"

*Hasn't HQ come up with a plan yet? Hurry it up!*

And so, we fought for several minutes, but the tide of battle remained unchanged. Since players still weren't fighting cohesively, we couldn't effectively deal with the army of black skeletons. The only reason we weren't suffering heavy damages despite that was because though the black skeletons had high defense, their attacks were comparatively weak. Even getting slashed by one of their swords didn't deal much damage. I figured that was for the second-wave players' sake. But maybe because of that, there wasn't much of a sense of urgency on the battlefield—which was probably the reason players didn't feel the need to band together to fight.

I, along with the other Tamers around me, continued our defensive battle. At first our group had just been Amelia, Eulenspiegel, MorningStarMeow, and KingOysterMushroom, but at some point our numbers grew. Ursula and other solo tamers came gathering in from the perimeters. I was glad our front line was filling in, but this didn't change our continually worsening situation. What should we do?

"Hey, KingOysterMushroom. Something's gotta change here, right?"

I didn't ask KingOysterMushroom for any deep reason. He was just always so calm and composed, and he wore glasses, so he sort of just looked smart to me. But he actually gave me a much better response than I'd been expecting.

"The scout I sent to the place where the representatives of the top clans are

holding a discussion has just returned.”

“You sent a scout? When?”

“I’m sorry for not asking permission.”

“What? Oh, no, you don’t need to ask permission...”

It wasn’t like I was the leader in the first place. *Oh, have they been acknowledging me as the leader this whole time because I gave out orders at the start? Come on, there’s no way.* He was probably just apologizing to everyone for sending out a scout even at the expense of reducing our fighting power.

“A-Anyway, how’s their discussion going?”

“It seems the top clans are just wasting time advocating solely for themselves and have still not reached a consensus. They have even reached breaking points that turn into screaming matches.”

“Damn, really? I thought this game had a friendlier vibe than that...”

I supposed that once someone became a serious, top player or part of a famous party, they would start taking a more hard-line approach to the game, focusing on earning achievements and renown.

“They had all the achievements taken from them in this event, so...I believe they’ve become a bit stubborn about certain—”

*Click-clack-click-clack-click-clack!*

“Whoa?! These bastards, showing up out of nowhere...!”

*Sorry for cutting our conversation short, KingOysterMushroom, but we’ve got company!*

“Mm-mmm!”

“Ph-Phew... Thanks, Olto.”

“Mmm!”

It seemed the event was changing. The black skeletons were starting to appear over a wider area. I freaked out when one popped up right in front of my face. *This does not bode well.*

“Oh, sorry, KingOysterMushroom. You were saying?”

“Ah, it’s nothing important. More importantly, what should we do now? It might be better for us to be proactive on our own.”

“Hmm... Maybe you’re right. You think these black skeletons are spawning infinitely?”

If there were an unlimited number of them, then defending ourselves like this would just put us at a disadvantage. Even if it was going to be hard for us, we needed to shift gears and start attacking.

“It’s possible... There don’t seem to be any less of them, so we can probably assume they’ll just keep coming.”

“Right... So we have to somehow push our way through the skeletons to get to the front and attack the demon? Seems hard.”

“No, I don’t think it’ll be too hard. We have an ace up our sleeves, after all.”

“We do?”

“The Ammolite, of course. Weren’t you the one who told everyone about it?”

*D-Don’t give me that look! I just forgot, okay?!* Actually, his expression didn’t change at all. Was that just my own paranoid delusion? But I did feel like his impassive face gave off an air of exasperation.

“But I don’t really know how to use it. Do we just throw it at the demon?”

“That seems the most likely possibility.”

I took out an Ammolite, but it looked the same as ever. It didn’t have any sort of special event-related effect, and it wasn’t able to be used as an item either.

“It’s already been ten minutes since the battle started. Has no one tried to use an Ammolite yet?”

“Since it’s an expensive item, I think people are hesitant to use it. Considering our distance from the demon, it won’t reach very easily. So, on top of not knowing if it will be effective, the low chance of it making a hit means people find it hard to rise to the challenge.”

“Gotcha... But *someone* has to try. All right! Rick! Eine!”

“Chirp!”

“Tra-la!”

Rick and Eine answered my call immediately, rushing to stand side by side in front of me. Their expressions were totally serious. They must have been feeling the tense atmosphere of the raid boss fight.

“I have a mission for you two! I want you to take this Ammolite and throw it at the demon. Do you have what it takes?”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Tra-la!”

*Excellent salutes. Their resolve is palpable.*

“This mission is crucial. But your safety is even more crucial. Make sure you come back alive, got it?”

“Chirp!”

“Tra-la-la!”

“Mm-hmm, very good. Now then, move out! Special Ops Agent Rick! Special Ops Agent Eine!”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Tra-la-la!”

“...”

*What’s up with him?* I felt like KingOysterMushroom was looking at me with an even more lukewarm gaze than ever.

“Silver-Haired.”

“Yeah?”

“No, never mind. You’re really enjoying the game, aren’t you?”

“Ha ha ha. That’s the only thing I’m confident that I’m second to none in!”

What choice did I have? When Rick and Fau give me such a spirited salute, I can’t help but play along. I completely transformed into a war general.

“Well then, General, let us hope for a successful bombing.”

“Yes, let’s.”

*You’re going along with my stupid game of pretending to be a general?  
KingOysterMushroom, you’re a great guy.*

“On a serious note,” I said, “I do hope this gives us a breakthrough.”

“Same here.”

The two of us watched as Rick and Fau charged towards the demon. Rick was swiftly weaving between the black skeletons. Despite carrying an Ammolite bigger than his head, he moved swiftly, his movements the very definition of agility. At times nimbly sidestepping attacks from the skeletons, and other times using those same skeletons as step stools, he closed in on the rocky mountain that hosted the demon.

Eine had the easier route. There were some archers among the black skeletons, but for someone with Eine’s evasion skills, the occasional arrow here and there was nothing. She flew through the air and approached the demon at a quick pace.

“Chirp chirp!”

“Tra-la-la!”

A few dozen seconds later, Rick had reached the foot of the mountain. He threw the Ammolite up from below, and at the same time, Eine dropped hers from above. Both Ammolites struck the demon at nearly the same time. Then, there was a violent burst of light on the demon’s face.

“*Graaaaaaaggghhhh!*”

The demon unleashed a terrible scream as a light poured out of the Ammolite, bathing the demon. Its face was in pure angui— Actually, I couldn’t tell if it was, given that it was a skeleton, but it definitely seemed to be in pain. But despite all its groaning, its HP didn’t decrease much at all. *Is the Ammolite not actually its weakness?*

However, apparently I was the only one disappointed by this outcome. KingOysterMushroom widened his eyes slightly.



“A special attack item for a boss, indeed. What an outstanding effect.”

“*That was outstanding?*”

“The boss’s HP clearly decreased, didn’t you see? That attack was very strong.”

“Oh, I guess you could see it that way.”

Now that I thought about it, this enemy was a raid boss with a crazy amount of health. Its HP bar had visibly dropped, even if just by one millimeter. That meant the Ammolites had dealt damage on par with a top player’s lethal move. In other words, we could take out a hefty chunk of Bifrons’s HP just by hitting it with Ammolites.

“That’s not all. The black skeletons also stopped moving for a second. It looks like while the demon is afflicted by the Ammolites’ effect, the skeletons freeze up.”

*E-Ever the bespectacled tactician, KingOysterMushroom. You have no trouble looking at the whole picture with a cool head.*

“Other players seemed to have caught on to how to use them too.”

“But it’s pretty difficult getting to the demon to hit it. Though other Tamers and Summoners might be able to do what I did...”

We were blocked by a wall of black skeletons, so most couldn’t get close enough to the demon to be able to fling Ammolites at it. *Should we keep handing Ammolite over to flying monsters and have them drop them like aerial bombs?* While I was thinking things over, there was a bright flash of light in front of us.

“Ack! That’s bright!”

I managed to save myself from the pain by closing my eyes, but I heard screaming from the people around me. *What happened?*

“I-I’m sorry, meow!”

MorningStar had goofed something, it seemed.

I opened my eyes and saw players and monsters near the source of the flash

covering their eyes and yelling. All of Amelia's gnomes were reacting in the same way.

"Ahhhhh!"

"Mm-mmm!"

"My eyes! My eyyyes!"

*They're throwing out references just fine, so I guess they're okay?*

My thought proved to be wrong. I took a better look and saw a darkness hanging around their faces, which indicated they had been inflicted with Blind, a status ailment that turned the afflicted players' vision pitch black for up to a few dozen seconds. They would be able to detect things by sound and with techniques, but fighting would be very difficult. Most of the frontline monsters were in rough shape. I thought about rushing over to help, but surprisingly there was no sight of the black skeletons around them. I could've sworn that just a second ago, there had been as many as ten skeletons fighting against the Tamer Corps' front line...

"Ahh, sorry, meow. I was trying to get one of my monsters to carry an Ammolite when I was attacked by a skeleton, and it slipped out of my hands, meow."

"So in other words, the Ammolite is effective against the black skeletons too?" said KingOysterMushroom.

"Oh! You're right!"

It seemed that MorningStar had mistakenly hit a black skeleton with an Ammolite.

"Looks like we got our breakthrough," I said.

"We certainly did. But that means we'll be using up a lot of Ammolite."

"Does everyone not have that many?"

"I have four."

*Huh? That's it?* Oh right, while I had been mining on this island since day one, it had only been a few days since everyone else found out about their

importance from the video. That would explain things. Incidentally, I had thirty-four Ammolites—all thanks to my steady mining over the course of the event. I hadn't really been thinking about it until now, but it was probably due to the effects of Olto's Luck skill and my Calling Blessing skill as well.

“Okay then, I'll take down the skeletons by throwing Ammolite at them, and then we can make our way straight to the mountain.”

“I think we'll really need the Ammolites for later, though...”

“We can probably make it with just five or six, right?”

Even though there were a lot of skeletons, they were pretty scattered.

“*Just* five or six...? I never expected less from you.”

“Huh? Oh, well, it's just because I spent all my time fishing and mining on the Prehistoric Island.”

Either way, none of it would matter if I couldn't get close enough to the demon to attack it. As long as I made sure to leave a few of the big ones in my inventory to use as decoration, I was fine with using thirty of them. While I was thinking about which of the Ammolites I should keep—aka which ones had more unique designs—I heard KingOysterMushroom let out an uncharacteristic shout.

“Wait!”

“Why— Ahh! They're coming from behind too?!”

I turned around to see skeletons bursting forth from the forest around the perimeter. However, they were a different color from the others. They weren't the black skeletons the demon had been summoning, but regular white skeletons. The other Tamers hastily tried to deal with them, but I stopped them before they could.

“W-Wait a second! They look like pirates! Maybe they're not our enemies!”

The pirate captain was the demon's enemy. So didn't that stand to reason that these pirate skeletons would stand against him as well? Other players who had also gone through the sunken ship event like me were nodding in agreement with my guess. We let them be and observed them for a while, and

finally they came close enough that we could see their markers. They were yellow—the color of NPC markers.

“It doesn’t seem like a case of ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend,’ but maybe if we leave them be, they’ll attack the other skeletons on their own?” I speculated.

“You may be right. Everyone! Don’t lay a hand on the white skeletons unless they attack us first!”

“Yes, sir!” everyone responded in unison.

*Way to go, bespectacled tactician KingOysterMushroom.* Everyone obediently followed his orders without even the slightest opposition.

On another note, at some point, more non-Tamers started joining in with us as well. Maybe it was easier for solo players to fight if they linked up with Tamers.

After a few minutes, the white skeletons had passed us by and started attacking the black skeletons. As soon as they did, the skeletons’ markers changed to ally markers.

“This is great. If they’re our allies, then we can do AoE attacks without having to worry about friendly fire,” KingOysterMushroom commented.

“So, this is our chance, right?”

“Yes. Let’s bombard it.”

*Indeed. If the bespectacled tactician KingOysterMushroom says so, then we can absolutely do it.*

“Let’s go!”

“Yeahhh!”

With me at the central position—yeah, that’s right, I was in the center for some reason—we coordinated with the white skeletons and progressed towards the rocky mountain where the demon was. I had no choice but to be in the front since I was the one throwing the Ammolite, but it made it look like I was leading the group.

“Take this!”

“Chirp chirp!”

Rick and I threw Ammolites at the black skeletons, eliminating them as we went. The Ammolites were tremendously powerful—if the skeletons were obliterated if they so much as touched the light they emitted. The light affected a five-meter radius, so if we pulled it off well, we could even eliminate over ten black skeletons with one throw. *They’re pretty dang blinding, though!*

“We’re almost there!”

“There’s the pirate captain, meow!”

“All right! Let’s help him!”

“Okay, meow!”

At the base of the rocky mountain, we saw the pirate captain single-handedly fighting against the black skeletons. Thankfully the captain was on the side of the mountain we came in from. If it’d been on the other side, we would have had to break up our formation. Even as we approached, the captain made no move to attack. In fact, he started fighting in coordination with our monsters.

“Mm-mmm!”

*Click-clack-click-clack!*

The captain and Olto stood back-to-back and looked at each other like they were saying, “You’re pretty good,” and “You’re not too bad yourself.”

“The captain’s taking a lot of damage, meow!”

“Should we heal it?”

The (presumed) high school boys MorningStar and Eulen were discussing whether to heal the captain, but was that okay to do?

“H-Hey. Can skeletons be healed? I think in some games, they take damage if you heal them.”

“I think it’s fine in LJO. It won’t damage it. Though it won’t work this time.”

KingOysterMushroom was right. Eulen’s Undine tried to heal the pirate captain, but its HP bar didn’t budge at all.

“Maybe a Necromancer can heal it?”

“Hmm, maybe? It’s an event monster, so...”

“Anyway, if we had a Necromancer—”

“You caalled?”

“Gah!”

*Personal space, please! Does he always do that on purpose?! And his Undead monsters are even scarier this time!*

“Ch-Chris. Didn’t know you were here.”

“I made sure to come all the way here so I didn’t miss out on getting a screenshot of the pirate captain!”

“Ah, gotcha.”

Chris, the bunny-eared Necromancer with the girlish appearance, absolutely loved Undead monsters. Of *course* he would be interested in a special skeleton monster.

“By the way, your monsters look different.”

“Good eye! I upgraded them with dinosaur bones and meat!”

When I’d run into Chris earlier in the event, he’d had an Ogre Skeleton and a Ghoul with him, but now he had a modified Ogre Skeleton and a Ghoul Ripper. He also had a Ghost, a Lesser Spartoi, and a Goblin Magician Zombie.

“I’m guessing the Ogre Skeleton’s tusks and the Ghoul Ripper’s claws came from dinosaurs?”

“Their tusks and claws aren’t all that’s different. I increased their strength too, just from using dinosaur meat! They’re much, much stronger than ever!” Chris said, laughing happily. This had been a very fruitful event for him, it seemed.

“Silver-Haired, we’re kind of in the middle of something...”

“Oh, sorry, KingOysterMushroom.”

I’d inadvertently started making small talk. There were more important things to take care of right now.

“Chris, can you heal the pirate captain?”

“Let me try. Necro Heal—! Hmm, no good. I can’t select the captain as a target.”

“I guess the event is prohibiting us from healing the damage it takes.”

That meant it was all the more important to protect the pirate captain. If he fell, it would surely have some negative consequences on the event.

“Please, leave it to me!” Chris said. “I will protect the captain!”

“Y-You will? Okay, we’re counting on you, then.”

“Right! You all too, let’s protect the captain together!” he shouted.

“Yeahhhh!”

All the players Chris called out to roared back in unison. Did they get psyched up from being asked to do something by a cute girl? Wait, the girls were getting just as psyched. Were feminine guys their type? So did that mean the guys also knew Chris wasn’t a girl? W-Well, that was fine, as long as they were going to cooperate.

“Let’s leave the captain to Chris, and the rest of us will attack Bifrons.”

“Sounds good. But how should we attack it? Our opponent is floating above a mountain.”

“Oh, th-that’s true...”

*My plan was just to get closer to it! I didn’t think that far ahead!* Bifrons was floating ten meters above the mountain. Our vanguard wouldn’t be able to attack it all the way up there, would they?

“L-Let’s have whoever can hit it start attacking. From this distance, spells and arrows should be able to reach it, right? And maybe thrown Ammolite would have a chance of reaching too?”

“That sounds like a plan. All right! Rear guard, attack! Front line, throw Ammolites!”

“Yes sir!”

Everyone responded at once to KingOysterMushroom’s command, then

unleashed their attacks at the demon. I saw people using magic spells and arrows, and even slingshots and bolas. I even saw a dozen or so Ammolites fly out.

*“Grrraaaaaaagh!”*

*Nice, it’s working.* I heard Bifrons let out another groan like it did before and the black skeletons stopped moving. The people who weren’t joining in on the long-range attacks started attacking and taking out skeletons.

“Using the Ammolites at the same time might be a waste,” KingOysterMushroom said.

“Yeah, I think so too. Maybe if we keep spacing them out, we can trap the boss.”

“I agree.”

And so, we kept up our attack on the demon Bifrons and the black skeletons while hindering their movements. As the flying tamed monsters went ham pummeling it and our long-range attacks dealt consecutive direct hits, I could see Bifrons’s HP bar steadily decreasing. But it was impossible to assume that everything would go this smoothly until the end. We all knew that.

*“Graaaaaaaah! You’ll pay for this! You’ll all paaaay!”*

When its HP dropped by twenty percent, Bifrons started raging in a powerful, booming voice. As was typical with bosses, it was changing up its behavior.

*Okay, what have you got for us now?* While I was watching Bifrons hanging in midair shouting, something started pouring out from its entire body—well, not exactly, since it was just a head—but anyway, I saw a black mist start to pour out from both sides of its skull. The mist then started to tear apart into sections, then formed four separate masses that descended down the mountain.

*Should we attack?*

While I was trying to decide what to do, giant figures emerged from the black mist.

“Gyaaaaaaaaa!” the figures roared up towards the heavens.

They were grotesque-looking monsters, made up of the same inky-black



bones as the demon. They weren't the same human skeletons we'd been fighting thus far, but the skeletons of dinosaurs. And not just any dinosaurs, but the four dinosaur bosses that had utterly tormented us players.

Devil Tyranno Skeleton, Devil Brachio Skeleton, Devil Spino Skeleton, and Devil Mosa Skeleton. Those were the names displayed on the four beasts that had appeared around the mountain.

"Ugh!"

"Gaaah!"

Amid most of the players who were groaning at the thought of how strong these mini-bosses would be, Chris alone was cheering happily.

"Wow, they're so cool!"

*He's a skeleton lover through and through!* I had to admit I *did* think they were kind of cool too, but right now, I was more focused on the huge problem they presented.

"W-We need to fall back and regroup!"

"Right you are! Everyone, you heard the man! Retreat for now!"

"Yes, sir!"

Everyone had become completely accustomed to the chain of command here. They immediately got moving at KingOysterMushroom's order. Even the pirate captain came with us. At least this made it easier to protect him.

The monster closest to our group was the Devil Tyranno Skeleton. Its inky-black bones emitted a red aura. *Damn it's terrifying!* Honestly, it looked stronger than its flesh-and-blood counterpart.

"Grrrrrr..."

The players were overwhelmed by the dinosaur's staggeringly intimidating air. Even though we all knew it was a game, something *that* powerful was bound to be a little frightening.

"Grrroooooaaaaaar!"

"Mm-mm!"

“Humm!”

My monsters, however, were different. They faced the roaring skeletal Tyranno and shouted back in opposition. And they weren't the only ones—a lot of other tamed monsters were doing the same thing. The tank monsters especially were moving unflinchingly forward, including the Gnome Corps, who were all humming loudly as they went. *Mm, what reliable little guys.*

Everyone else must have felt encouraged by how valiantly the monsters were acting. They calmed down and started moving. The skeleton Tyranno might have been strong, but we had numbers on our side. Our vanguard was also doing a good job defending us well from its attacks, so the rear guard was able to keep firing their attacks without pause. We were able to fight with much more room to breathe than I'd been expecting. We actually took more damage from the ray beam Bifrons was shooting from the sky than from the Tyranno's attacks.

“Grawwwr...”

In no time at all, the skeleton Tyranno's HP was cut down by thirty percent. Then, it did something entirely new. It stepped back a bit, then looked up at the sky like it was gasping in pain. It looked as if it were drawing back in fear.

“Is it staggering from the damage it took?”

“It's intimidated!”

“Now's our chance! Go, go, go!”

I heard the surrounding players speculating on the situation. But they were probably wrong. I had seen this behavior before. It was the Tyranno's charging stance before it whipped out its special attack. I was sure it was getting ready to use that somersault-incisor attack that it used when fighting the Event Brachio, which had taken out a big chunk of that giant dinosaur's HP. I quickly took out an Ammolite and threw it at the skeleton Tyranno. Once I did, other players started doing the same. They must have also known the dinosaur's terrifying killer move.

Multiple flashes of light enveloped the bony Tyranno.

“Groaaah?”

“Whoa! We did it!”

*I knew it!* We stopped its movement for an instant, which canceled its killer attack motion!

“That dealt a decent amount of damage too. What do you think? Should we keep throwing Ammolites at it?”

I had a lot in my possession, but I’d quickly run out if I used them with reckless abandon. *Should I leave the Ammolite-throwing to the other players and just keep fighting normally?* With that thought, I asked KingOysterMushroom for his opinion, but—

“Good point... Our main enemy is the demon. I think we should focus on just canceling the Tyranno’s killer moves, and fight normally otherwise.”

“Right. Okay then, let’s do that. I’ll just get the Ammolites ready for now, and then use them when things get bad.”

“Everyone! This is a directive from Silver-Haired! Don’t use your Ammolites against the Tyranno! Silver-Haired will take care of canceling its killer move!”

“Yes, sir!”

“Uh, what?”

*Hey, I don’t want that heavy responsibility...* I was just asking what I should do, since I figured other people would be throwing them and I didn’t want to do the same thing and be wasteful! That’s it! What was I, the official Ammolite thrower now or something?! I should have made sure KingOysterMushroom and I were on the same page!

Considering bespectacled tactician KingOysterMushroom’s influential power, I could consider his plan to have already made its way to all the other players. The atmosphere really didn’t seem like one where I could say something like, “Um, that’s not actually what I meant...”

“Ugh, guess I’ve gotta do it. Eine, Rick, you two stay by my side just in case, okay?”

“Tra-la!”

“Chirp chirp!”

With the Ammolite-bomber Eine and the super high-speed Ammolite-artillery battery Rick by my side, I could feel safe in a crisis. Also, if I was going to be the only one using Ammolites now, the other players would be keeping theirs in reserve, which meant we'd definitely still be able to gain the advantage in the forthcoming fight against the demon. *I'll give this my all.*

"Let's do this!"

"Whoaaa! Silver-Haired, look at you, meow!"

"I'll help too!"

"All I see is a future where you're completely useless, Eulen. So you can just stay here, meow."

"Why would you say that?!"

Everyone else was pumped up too. This was true of previous events too, but I liked this sort of vibe. Everyone was getting really hyped.

"All right!"

"Chirp chirp!"

"Tra-la-la!"

"W-Wait, stop! You don't have to go yet!"

"Chirp?"

"Tra-la?"

"Wait until I give the signal."

I had to be cautious about getting *too* riled up, since my monsters had a tendency to get carried away easily! We'd nearly just made a mess of things.

And so I was entrusted with the sacred task of throwing Ammolite at the skeleton Tyranno—in time, I was able to complete that mission.

"Groaaaar...!"

With its HP depleted, the Tyranno let out a shrill roar, and its body broke apart into pieces and disappeared. It had been really easy to spot its special attack action. All I had to do was throw the Ammolite at the right time, and that

was that. Easy peasy. Although there *was* one moment of panic when a black skeleton stood in my way and it seemed like I wouldn't be able to cancel the Tyranno's move in time. Thankfully, Eine dropped an Ammolite from above instead, preventing a catastrophe. I had been seconds away from getting a bunch of people killed because I screwed up a simple task, which wouldn't bode well for my future in this game. Eine was truly a lifesaver.

Unfortunately, the other dinosaur skeletons, besides the Tyranno, were still alive and kicking. Even from afar, I could see the skeletons rampaging.

"It looks like they're really struggling over there..." I muttered.

Having heard me, KingOysterMushroom informed me about the situation on the other side.

"I've been told there are locations where the pirate skeletons are fighting other players."

"Huh? For real?"

"Yes. It seems if you attack the pirate skeletons that emerge from the forest before their markers turn blue, they turn hostile."

"Dang, that's a sneaky trap. The devs are ruthless!"

The pirate skeletons were still pouring out from the forest. There weren't *that* many of them, but if they turned into enemies, then it would put people in the middle of a pincer attack. Also, any player attacked even once by a white skeleton would probably acknowledge any other skeleton that came out of the forest as an enemy and continue to attack them. If that happened, it would only mean even more enemies. This all illustrated the fact that relaying information and cooperating among all players was crucial.

"You really saved the rest of us by stopping people from attacking," KingOysterMushroom said.

"Oh, well, I wasn't the only one, you know?"

But there might well have been a lot of players who just launched long-range attacks before someone could stop them. Someone who didn't know about what went down in the sunken ship would assume the skeletons were enemies.

It was understandable. Thank god there hadn't been any impulsive players where we were.

"We should go help them, right?" I asked.

"I think it'd be a good idea to split up the players here into three groups."

"Three? Are you thinking we split up our fighting power evenly to confront the skeleton dinosaurs?"

"No. We'll send reinforcements to the right and left, and one group will attack the demon."

Here was KingOysterMushroom's plan: We would send the main force over to the group that was fighting against the skeleton Brachio, since they seemed to be having the hardest time. What they needed the most were tanks who could protect against the dinosaur's heavy attacks. Over to the Mosa, which was actually being handled pretty well, we could send just a few healers and supporters. The Mosa mainly used an electric shock attack, so some magic defense buffs would help to take off the edge. Then, once those two monsters were defeated, anyone who was available would head over to fight the skeleton Spino on the opposite side of the mountain.

Also, KingOysterMushroom wanted the troops who had Ammolites to launch an assault on Bifrons, in order to obstruct its ray beam attack and keep the black skeletons from spawning.

"Gotcha. I guess I should go for the demon, then?"

"Yes, please."

At KingOysterMushroom's orders, the Tamers split up and dispersed to their assigned locations. If we could take down even one skeleton dinosaur this way, it would give us a huge advantage.

KingOysterMushroom, MorningStar, Eulen, and I were part of the Bifrons containment team. Our job didn't change that much. We would defend against Bifrons and the black skeletons' attacks against the vanguard while also attacking it with long-range attacks. Bifrons had a tell before it summoned the black skeletons, which was to cloak itself in a black mist, so all we had to do was interrupt its action by throwing an Ammolite at it. However, we weren't able to

completely block its ray beam attack now that we were up close, so our troops gradually lost numbers.

“Honk honk!”

“Perca! Oh no! Perca, return!”

“Honk...”

*That was close.* Right after driving off some black skeletons with Penguin Highway, he unluckily got caught in Bifrons’s AoE attack, having been temporarily unable to move after his own attack. The black skeletons took that opportunity to try to swoop down on him, so I had no choice but to send him away.

“Are you reaching your limit too, Fau?”

“Aye...”

“Thanks for everything, Fau. You can take it easy now.”

“Aye!”

Fau, who had been busy casting buffs, was running low on magic. It was best that I send her away with Perca. In their place, I summoned Himka and Bear Bear. It was time to reinforce our defense. Fau snapped a salute, then disappeared.

“Growl growl!”

“Hm-hmm!”

In her spot appeared Bear Bear and Himka, already prepared to fight. I wondered if Perca had explained the situation to them.

“Give it your all, you two!”

“Hm!”

“Growl!”

Fau’s buffs were wearing off, but we were in the middle of a raid battle, thankfully. There were other players keeping up with the buffs, so there wasn’t much of a drop in our fighting power. In fact, now that we had two more tanks, our party had stabilized. I guess a sturdy front line *was* crucial for chaotic

battles like this.

Then, after a few minutes, the raid boss battle entered a new phase.

*“ALL RIIIIIGHT!!!”*

I heard powerful cries of victory as the skeleton Brachio and Mosa disappeared at nearly the same time. Siegfried had dealt the final blow to the Brachio, while Ursula had dealt the final blow to the Mosa. *Everyone’s working really hard. I need to do the same.*

Now all that was left was the skeleton Spino. The tides had all of a sudden turned in our favor. The front lines pushed forwards and players assembled around the perimeter of the rock mountain. But this was a raid boss—it wouldn’t be beaten *that* easily. Rather, the true battle was just beginning.

*“Graaaaagh! Fine! I see that I must crush you myself!”*

The battle was right at the twenty-minute mark, which might have been the trigger for what happened next. The Spino transformed into black mist and was absorbed into Bifrons. Instantly after, the demon started emitting even more black mist from its head than ever before. It flowed down from the top of its head and swirled around the top of the mountain. I tried throwing an Ammolite, but it didn’t do anything, probably because we were in the middle of a cutscene. *Damn it, I wasted one!*

*“Tremble in despair in the face of my true poweeer!”*

At Bifrons’s resounding roar, the black mist surrounding it blew away, revealing a giant, inky-black form. At its base it was a human skeleton, but with noticeable differences here and there. It had claws, fangs, and legs that must have been those of a dinosaur. Most notably, it had a tail. The demon had transformed into a gigantic half-dinosaur, half-human skeleton.

Bifrons touched down on the rock and the rock crumbled away. Now, close-range attackers could fight too. It was finally showtime.

*“I-It looks strong!”* I muttered automatically.

*“Growl growl!”*

*“Hm!”*



As if to encourage me, Bear Bear and Himka stepped forward. *My monsters aren't just cute—they're heroic too! They rock!*

"A-All right, we can do this!"

"Mm-mm!"

"Tra-la-la!"

However, the demon Bifrons, now in its true form, was even more troublesome to deal with than I imagined. In fact, most players were struggling with the fight. Not only did the demon unleash powerful physical attacks, but it was now summoning black skeletons even more frequently, and it was throwing black skeletal dinosaurs like Raptors and Stegos into the mix too.

Our Tamer Corps' attacks on Bifrons were starting to falter as dealing with the skeletons began to overwhelm us. Between both Bifrons and the skeletons' attacks, more and more players were perishing. In my party, Olto and Eine had sustained heavy damage, so I had no choice but to switch them out for Sakura and Drimo.

The ones who were persevering were the members of the top clans. After they took down the skeleton dinosaur boss, they kept up that momentum and went all out on attacking Bifrons. As one would expect from people with their capabilities, once they started coordinating with each other, they really pulled through. They continued attacking Bifrons even while defending against the few weakling skeletons. It felt great seeing Bifrons's HP get whittled down more and more. If the rest of us drew at least a few black skeletons over to us in order to help out the top players, then maybe they could bring home the win.

"KingOysterMushroom, I want to support the stronger players, but what do you think I should do? I bet if I use my Ammolite right, I could do something."

"...Are you sure you're okay with that?"

"Huh?"

Was I okay with it? What did he mean by that? Was he asking if I was okay with using up Ammolites?

"Oh, yeah. I really don't mind."

I could just mine some more after this, anyway.

“Y-You never cease to impress...” KingOysterMushroom always had such exaggerated reactions to what I said. What a nice guy. “If you want to support them, then I don’t think you should waste your efforts attacking Bifrons. Instead, you should just focus on interrupting its big attack.”

“Which one’s that?”

All of the attacks launched by the gigantified Bifrons could be called “big.” It swept a wide area with its tail, it shot out a piercing ray beam, it rapidly fired exploding magic bullets, and it had a simple, yet terrifying stomp attack. Furthermore, all of its attacks had a slight chance of inflicting Poison. If I was hit with any of those, I’d be a goner.

“The one where it occasionally shoots smoke out of its mouth. That one is the worst.”

“Really? *That* one?”

Personally, I thought it was the shrimpiest-looking attack. At first I assumed it would inflict a status ailment or something, but nothing in particular happened, so I instead figured it was probably just a move to conceal itself. Even though it affected a wide area, it only lasted for about ten seconds, so I didn’t think it presented that much of a problem...

“It seems it’s not just a simple smoke screen.”

Bespectacled tactician KingOysterMushroom had evidently sent out more scouts—he told me what he had found out about the other groups. That smoke, in theory, was an attack with a fixed chance of affecting any player it touched with a status ailment. According to the scouts, other groups were actually having a rough time with it.

“So what you’re saying is, we’re the only ones unaffected by the ailments?”

“That’s what it appears.”

“Why’s that?”

“I’m not too sure either...”

If the bespectacled tactician KingOysterMushroom didn’t know, then there

was no way I could figure it out.

“Anyway,” I said, “if the smoke is affecting the top clans that badly, then is the chance of being affected really high or something?”

“No, the likelihood doesn’t seem to be unreasonably high, but the ailments are quite severe.”

“Really?”

“It appears that outside of Poison and Paralysis, new, unknown status ailments have been appearing, and there are no means to cure them.”

There was Hex, which lowered the effectiveness of healing skills. Frenzy, which made someone attack their own teammates at full force. Seal, which rendered all skills and items unusable. And finally, something that had previously only been reserved for use by players: Insta-death.

“Those four new ailments, plus Poison and Paralysis, make six types of ailments. If anyone touches that smoke, they have a chance of being randomly afflicted with one of those,” explained KingOysterMushroom.

“Poison and Paralysis can be treated, but the others, woof... Also, Insta-death is being treated as a status ailment now?” I had used the instant killers as items before, but this was news to me. “There’s no way to even prevent that.”

“Apparently, some parties have been completely collapsing because their tanks are getting insta-killed.”

“Jeez...”

“It feels a bit harsh to implement incurable new status ailments during a boss fight...”

“Yeah, it does, now that you mention it. You think the devs made a mistake with the balance or something?”

“Well, complaining about it won’t help. In either case, if you want to offer support, I think canceling the boss’s smoke attack would be the best way to go.”

“Okay. I’ll try to do that, then.”

So in the end, my job still hadn’t really changed. I took out an Ammolite and

handed it to Rick, who was atop my head.

“Eine, Perca, and Fau aren’t here anymore, so it’s up to you now.”

“Chirp chirp!”

I had sent away my flying squad, so I couldn’t use an aerial Ammolite bomb attack. We had to make do with Rick’s and my throwing.

“You guys watch our backs, okay?”

“Squeak squeak!”

“...!”

“Growl growl!”

“Hm!”

Given the situation, our current tank-heavy formation wasn’t so bad. With everyone circled around me, I could focus solely on Bifrons’s movements. Though just because I could focus didn’t mean I could pull this off.

“*Graaaaagh!*”

“Dammit! It doesn’t make any special movements before it spews out smoke! Rick! It’s time to throw!”

“Chirp!”

Rick’s Ammolite made a direct hit with Bifrons, interrupting the smoke. But it looked like even just a few seconds of the smoke had caused a lot of turmoil.

“Still, since Bifrons doesn’t have a tell before it emits the smoke, then all we can do is interrupt it as soon as it starts...”

“Chirp...”

*Typical raid boss. Ordinary methods won’t work here.*

“Still, we need to keep trying!”

“Chirp!”

And so we all continued battling fiercely against Bifrons, when suddenly, yet another big change occurred in him. Had we finally reached the climax of the fight?

*“You won’t get away with thiiiis!”*

Bifrons gave a wrathful shout and then its body was enveloped in a bright red aura. It must have entered a strengthened state after its HP dropped below twenty percent. Its attack and defensive abilities had clearly increased, and its attack patterns had also changed. Its assaults were now even more vicious, and it had added in other moves, like a ground pound attack.

In contrast, we by now had way fewer players than we did at the start. KingOysterMushroom wasn’t lying about how rough those status ailments were. Putting aside Insta-death, which had players dropping like flies, the other status ailments were also absolutely terrifying.

Magic, skills, and items were rendered useless by the Seals status ailment, and even though it only lasted for a short amount of time, it drastically lowered players’ combat capabilities while it was active. If it hit at a bad time, recovery and defensive actions were blocked, resulting in some players finding themselves in a crisis at the drop of a hat.

The Hex ailment reduced our recovery efforts, which resulted in our front lines being gradually chipped away at. Also, when healers were afflicted by the ailment, the healing spells and skills they used even inflicted an effect that dampened one’s spirits. For a player, this was in a sense the worst status ailment.

Also, people afflicted with Frenzy would start rampaging out of nowhere, injuring their comrades. Friendly fire was fair game during their frenzied state, which was a huge problem. What was even worse was that they ended up using skills and magic that they’d been keeping in reserve, which meant when AoE magic users were affected by the ailment, the casualties were enormous.

Furthermore, after Bifrons became enveloped in that red aura, not only did it spew out the status ailment-causing smoke at a higher frequency, but the chances of being afflicted by it also rose. Even the players in my vicinity, who hadn’t been affected at the start, were starting to fall victim here and there.

As we fought, the players’ formation started changing by a lot. At first, they had just been encircled around Bifrons, attacking it sporadically, but now, most people were gathered in one area and attacking with a clearly divided vanguard

and rear guard. They had assembled to the south, where my group was, and on the opposite side to the north, making it so Bifrons was sandwiched between two armies.

It looked like, for some reason, most of the top clans and front liners had assembled on the north side of the mountain. Meanwhile, Tamers and solo players stood out the most on the south side. It seemed like things had just sort of ended up that way at some point. *Hey, can't some of those top clan people come over to our side?*

"I guess they're being stubborn over there too..."

"You say something, KingOysterMushroom?"

"We're lacking some hard-hitting power here, so I was wondering how we should act."

"Ah, gotcha..."

All I had been doing for a while now was throwing Ammolite, so I had no grasp of our current battle situation. Until KingOysterMushroom explained everything to me, I'd just been thinking everyone looked kind of hectic. That was thanks to me not having to move, since all the players on the southern side had gathered around my location. Of course, that wasn't because people were flocking to me out of admiration or anything, but probably just because our tactician KingOysterMushroom was with me. This was just a result of them assembling around the commanding officer.

"What do you think we should do?" KingOysterMushroom asked me.

"Hmm, good question..."

But since he was such a stand-up guy, he was still keeping up our General-Tactician routine from earlier.

"How about we support those on the north side by drawing Bifrons's attention to us?"

After all, our south side army was lacking in decision-making power, so I felt we didn't have much of a choice. KingOysterMushroom and the others, however, looked dissatisfied with that suggestion.

“But at this rate, top players are going to take all the glory.”

“I don’t want that to happen, meow.”

“Don’t you have a plan or something?”

MorningStar and Eulen both agreed with KingOysterMushroom.

Personally, I had no problem with that... I didn’t want to fumble an attack and die, and if the event could be a success even with someone else taking out Bifrons, that was just fine with me. No one else seemed to feel that way, though. I guess they all wanted to play an active role too.

I could understand their feelings, and it wasn’t like any one of them could fight in a raid boss battle alone. Right now, we had to work together. So, we tossed some ideas around, but we couldn’t come up with a good plan. In the meantime, something big started happening on the battlefield.

“Silver-Haired! *The captain!!!*”

I heard Chris’s resounding shriek. I whipped around to see a red light emitting from the pirate captain. As I watched, the captain held his sword up high, then the skeleton pirates who’d been fighting in the vicinity started emitting the same light. Since there were so many pirate skeletons around us, it was super bright.

I wondered what was going on, but it turned out to be some sort of power-up event. Up until now, the pirate skeletons had been a little weaker than the black skeletons, but now the pirate skeletons had started pushing back the latter. Their strength and agility had increased, and even without the help of any players, they were reducing the black skeletons’ numbers. Even the skeleton dinosaurs like the Tricerats and Stegos were no match for the new-and-improved skeleton pirates. Right now, they were completely unrivaled.

“This is our chance, right?”

“Yes it is!”

“All right! We can leave the mooks to the white skeletons while the rest of us charge!”

“They’re glowing red and moving at double-speed... The devs get it, meow!”

All us players on the south side of the mountain started rushing in simultaneously. The black skeletons' hate must have been entirely directed towards the pirate skeletons—they paid no attention to us at all. Thanks to that, it looked like it would even be possible for the rear guard to move forwards.

“Let's go too!”

“Growl!”

“Squeak!”

Bear Bear and Drimo were already raring to go. They must have been waiting eagerly for this moment.

“Chirp chiiirp!”

Rick took this opportunity to mess with the black skeletons. Things were fine for now, but what was he going to do if he overdid it and they directed their hate towards us again?

*Click-clack!*

“Chirp chiiirp!”

*Ugh, see! What did I say?!*

Evidently, even though they were busy fighting against the white pirate skeletons, if we attacked them, they would come for us. *Rick, you troublemaker, before you wipe the sweat from your brow and go “Phew, that was close!” maybe you should thank the pirate skeletons who saved you?*

“Chirp?”

“Just get back on my head.”

“Chirp!”

The tide of battle had started to change. The players on the south side were closing in on Bifrons. Meanwhile, there was little movement on the north side. A majority of people were still on the other side of the wall of black skeletons.

“Huh? What's going on there?” I asked KingOysterMushroom.

“It appears that since there are barely any pirate skeletons on the north side,



their fighting situation hasn't changed much."

"Ah, I see."

On the north side, people had fought with and defeated the pirate skeletons. At some point they'd been told that the skeletons would become allies, so they'd stopped attacking them, but...compared to the south, they had overwhelmingly fewer numbers of them.

"We have no choice. We have to be prepared to defeat Bifrons by ourselves."

"You're right! Okay, let's do this, everyone!"

"Growl!"

"Squeak squeak!"

"Yeeaaaah!!!"

I'd only meant to call out to my monsters, so I was really shocked when other people responded! *Nice, everyone's pumped!*

"Hraaaaah! Let's charge, meow!"

"Let's get that bastard!"

"We'll show you what us regular players can do!"

Thus, the south side players' all-out attack began. In our party, Drimo used Dragon Blood Awakening and unleashed attack after attack. We also used an exorbitant number of Ammolites.

"Everyone's pulling out all the stops for the finale, huh?"

Everyone was attacking as hard as they could, unleashing the attacks they'd been saving up and using up all their items. Amid all that, the ones that caught my eye were Amelia and MorningStar, who were in front of me. Next to Amelia was a wolf with beautiful green fur, and in front of MorningStar was a miniature tiger with red fur. Both were standing firm, their faces tense with determination. The wolf was an Air Wolf, and the tiger was a Burn Tiger.

"Go, Wolfy!"

"Woof!"

“Triaste! Get ’em, meow!”

“Gawr!”

I was sure that both were monsters that hatched from event reward eggs, like Drimo, and they were the ones that cost the next highest points after the Drimole egg. That meant they probably had special skills like Drimo’s Dragon Blood Awakening. Because of this, I decided to observe them for that reason; as expected, they used some fascinating attacks.

“Wolfy! Use Air Avatar, then Super Bite!”

“Awoooo!”

Wolfy’s body vibrated for a second, then split into several clones. And they weren’t simple illusions—each one seemed to have its own fighting capabilities. It must’ve been a technique that created corporeal copies. The Air Wolves, running around in midair, took turns biting at Bifrons. Amelia’s wolf was even more agile than it was as a Little Air Wolf. I had had the same thought about her rabbits, but if I ever had to face these Air Wolves as enemies, I just knew I’d be toast.

After Amelia, MorningStar commanded his Burn Tiger to attack.

“Triaste, use Burning Fang, meow!”

“Graaaawr!”

The Burn Tiger, which had red flames covering its head, chomped down on Bifrons’s lower leg. Then, there was an explosion along with a violent burst of flames. This move was also quite the show. Since our enemy was a raid boss and even heavy damage only moved the HP gauge by a millimeter, it was hard to tell how much damage the tiger dealt. But it was unmistakably a decently powerful attack.

“We need to show off what we can do too, right guys?!”

“Growl grooowl!”

“Squeak squeeek!”

“Chirp chiiirp!”

I still had several Ammolites remaining, so this was the time to go all out!

And so, we kept up the momentum in fighting Bifrons, and its HP started decreasing more rapidly.

“It seems that the people on the north side have forced their way to the front,” KingOysterMushroom said.

It looked like the tanks had stayed behind to restrain the black skeletons while the warriors and mages headed for Bifrons. I could see them attacking without pause, bellowing their war cries. Unsurprisingly for top players, they successfully dealt consecutive blows to the Bifrons, bringing its HP down rapidly. However, Bifrons wasn't going to endure their attacks without a fight.

*“Raaaaaaaaaagh!”*

“Wow...”

Bifrons swung its arms down hard at the players on the north side. I watched as people went flying like scraps of paper, dying on the spot. Without tanks to shield them, they'd taken the full brunt of its attack. At least the top players' noble sacrifice had brought Bifrons's HP down to ten percent. It was then that I saw a beam of light rise from the very front line of the players in the north.

“Whoa! What is *that*?”

The pillar of white light, which rose to over five meters, was gradually getting brighter. Looking more closely, I saw that in front of Bifrons stood a warrior clad in pure white armor. The white light was gushing forth from the two-handed sword he held high above his head. *Whoa, that guy looks like he's straight out of a movie! And he's the main character!*

“Damn, that's so badass!”

“That's Holland,” KingOysterMushroom informed me. “He's currently the highest-level player. He's also famous for being the only player who can use a special attack.”

“A special attack? Isn't that just another name for someone's trump card?”

“There is a category separate from normal skills specifically reserved for special attacks. I think Holland's is called Shining Saber? It's incredibly powerful,

but it also comes with some drawbacks.”

“Wow, so it really is a special attack!”

It really was an extravagant attack deserving of its name. The fact that he hadn't used it immediately meant it might've needed to be charged up. Just what sort of power did it have? I was sure the special effects would be out of this world too. *Man, I'm stoked to see it!*

While the defenders around Holland protected him, he continued charging Shining Saber. It seemed like Holland drew the enemy's hate while the skill was charging, since Bifrons kept swinging at him, but thanks to the defenders' impregnable defensive wall, he wasn't harmed. Meanwhile, the light emitting from Shining Saber started to turn a bluish-white. *Maybe it's almost done?*

I watched, my heart pounding with anticipation, when Bifrons attacked once again with its customary black mist.

“Oh no!”

“Chirp!”

I'd been so distracted by Holland's charging his special attack that I was super late in canceling Bifrons's attack! Rick? He was on my head staring at Shining Saber right along with me!

After the mist engulfed our surroundings, the shining blade vanished. Holland had crumpled to the ground.

“D-Did he get insta-killed?”

“Chirp?”

*Aw man, I was just about to witness something really awesome...* No, wait. This fight wasn't over yet! I still had that thing Sawyer gave me!

“Let's go use the Revive Potion on Holland!”

“Chirp!”

*I'd completely forgotten about it!*

“A white knight taking down a massive black skeleton with a giant shining blade. Tell me what could be cooler than that!”

I *really* wanted to watch that play out. Of course, even if I revived him, I didn't know if he could use that attack again. But one thing at a time!

I hurried over to Holland as fast as I could.

"There's no time to lose! We have to cut across!"

"Chirp!"

The Revive Potion had a time limit, and time was one thing we were sorely lacking. Fully prepared for how dangerous it would be, I passed through underneath Bifrons's legs. *Talk about a thrill!*

Name: Revive Potion

Rarity: 5 / Quality: 3★

Effect: Can be used within nine seconds of a player's death. Revives one player with ten percent of their max HP and MP.

I had to use it within nine seconds. But Holland had already died, so how exactly was I supposed to use it? I'd just rushed out here without even thinking things through...

While I was ruminating, I approached the spot where Holland had fallen. When I did, the Revive Potion started to glow brightly, and then a window popped up, showing me a list of players I could revive. There were other players' names on the list as well—those who had presumably died along with Holland. A countdown was displayed next to their names. *Three seconds, two seconds—*

*Oh shit! Is that the time limit?!*

"What the? Silver-Haired?"

"Damn it! He came to laugh at us for failing to get a jump on things!"

"Are we going to lose to Silver-Haired *again*?!"

I thought I heard the people around me calling my name, but they would have

to wait. The Revive Potion's time limit was about to run out! *Let's see, how do I use this? Can I just give a verbal command?*

"Revive Holland!" I yelled.

The Revive Potion shone brightly and disappeared as if melting into thin air. Then, Holland reappeared in the spot where he'd died. It was like he'd been teleported back.

"Whaaaaaat?! A Revive Potion!!!"

"Is he for real?! I didn't even know those existed yet!"

Immediately after, there were uproarious cheers of joy. Everyone sounded shocked that a Revive Potion had been used. Had it not even been discovered among the front liners yet? Did I just screw something up? Could Sawyer have been keeping it a secret? *Sorry, Sawyer! I just showed it off in front of everyone!*

But what was important right now was the raid boss battle. In fact, Bifrons was raising its arms up right behind me.

"Diiiiieeee!"

"Hmmm!"

"Raaaagh!"

Himka had managed to block the attack for me, but Bifrons wasn't stopping at just one swing. It brought its arms down not twice, but three times. My monsters were able to act as my shields, but because they had endured such heavy attacks, they were now stunned. They really didn't seem able to block the demon's fifth downward swing.

*Oh, am I dead?* Nevertheless, I tried to block the attack with my staff in a last-ditch effort to survive...

*Click-clack-click-clack!*

"Huh? Captain?"

*Click-clack!*

Amazingly, the pirate captain had rushed in front of me and was deflecting Bifrons's attacks. He turned around and flashed me his white teeth and gave me

a thumbs-up.

“Th-Thanks.”

*Click-clack-click-clack!*

I had no idea why the captain had saved me, but this was my chance to regroup! My monsters and I withdrew back to where Holland was. He was surrounded by a group of super strong-looking top players. *I've never felt safer!*

“Um... Silver-Haired?”

“Oh, it's nice to meet you. You're Holland, aren't you?”

“Y-Yeah. I heard you used a Revive Potion on me. Is that true?”

“Yes, I did. So, can you still use your special attack?”

“My special attack? Oh right, since it was canceled before I could use it, I guess I *can* use it again...”

*Hooray!* So it *had* been worth it to use the Revive Potion! Before I realized it, I was striking a victory pose.

“Then please, go ahead!”

“Huh? Are you sure? By the way, why did you revive me? Also, that Revive Potion—”

*“Grrraaaaaaghhh!”*

*Shoot.* We had no time for chitchat. Bifrons was spewing black mist again.

“Chiiirp!”

Rick disrupted the move by skillfully throwing an Ammolite at Bifrons, but some of the mist was already making its way over to us.

*Hey, hey, hey. Holland's not gonna die again, is he?* Despite my worry, everyone around us remained calm. It didn't look like anyone had been inflicted with any status ailments. When I took a better look, I could see an aura of light emanating from the captain that was extinguishing the black mist. Maybe being next to the pirate captain kept you safe from status ailments?

*Click-clack?*

The person—I mean, the skeleton—in question didn't even know!

“We'll talk later! Right now, let's take that thing down!”

“O-Okay! My attack takes thirty seconds to charge, so keep me safe in the meantime!”

“Got it!”

Holland raised his sword above his head once again.

“Greatsword secret technique!” he bellowed, then out shot a pillar of light. He had the same posture as he did when charging the attack before, a pose he apparently had to hold for thirty seconds.

It was a hard skill to use, but that just meant it would be all the more powerful. And more than anything, it would be cool as hell! Holland, who had the black-haired, somewhat gloomy prince vibe going on, was clad in holy knightlike white armor and covered in a bright light. The girls were absolutely squealing over him. Actually, the only ones around us were a bunch of single guys, so there wasn't actually any squealing. That was just what I was envisioning.

As I had thought, charging his special attack really did accumulate hate—Bifrons's attacks came flying in, but not one of them reached Holland. The tanks were more fired up than ever, and my monsters and the captain were there as well. Even some players from the south side had come over, and everyone formed a circle around Holland to protect him. Unsurprisingly, they all wanted to see his special attack in action too.

“We better step up too! Sakura!”

“...!”

“Can you use Divine Blessing?”

“...!” Sakura clasped her hands together in front of her chest. It looked like it would be no problem. Usually I had her use it on Drimo, but...

“This time, it's Rick's turn!”

Rick had received some substantial upgrades from evolving, so I had no doubt he'd live up to my expectations.



“...!”

Sakura’s expression was firm as she faced Rick and stuck out her hands towards him. Rick was on top of my shoulders, though, so it almost looked like she was holding her hands out to me. A blue light started streaming out from Sakura’s palms towards Rick.

“Chirp chiiirp!”

*Ahhhhhh! It’s blinding!* Rick, on my shoulder, was shining such a brilliant blue I couldn’t open my right eye. He had his fists clenched at his side and was yelling—a roar of overflowing power.

Then, he took out a tree nut. It was one he always used—a Blue Acorn.

“Rick, no! You can use a stronger one!”

“Chirp.”

“What? You sure that’s gonna be enough?”

“Chirp.”

Rick had chosen to go with the Blue Acorn of all things. He raised it up with full confidence.

“Chirp ch-chiiirp!”

“The color changed!”

Rick’s hand was now glowing with an intense green light, and that light began to transfer over to the Blue Acorn. Then, the acorn started to change shape, transforming into a perfect sphere. Also, it was now the size of an apple instead of an acorn.

“Deep Green Fruit? Huh? The Blue Acorn turned into an entirely different crop!”

When I appraised it, I found out that it wasn’t even a Blue Acorn anymore. It was a new fruit I’d never seen or heard of before. I was guessing this was an effect of Rick’s new skill, Deep Green Heart, but what the heck was going on?

“Chiiirp chirp chiiirp!”

“You threw it?!”

*He wasted it! Wait no, right now, the battle comes first!*

The Deep Green Fruit sliced through the air and hit Bifrons square in the head.

*VWOOOM!*

*“Raaaaaargh!”*

*“Whoa! Look at that explosion!”*

The explosion it let off was immense. *Wait, was that fruit inedible?* I was about to ask Rick if he could produce one again after the event was over, but...

The explosive flames shook Bifrons’s body while spewing out dazzling blue and green lights. It looked like fireworks. The power behind the attack was also extraordinary. Even though it had just been for a moment, the explosion had immobilized the gigantic raid boss. The effect of Divine Blessing had probably bumped up its power level. And on top of that, Rick had interrupted Bifrons’s attack.

*“Nice one, Rick!”*

*“Chirp!”*

*“Silver-Haired’s squirrel is so sick!”*

*“What was that?!”*

The surrounding players were also in an uproar. Unsurprisingly, that flashy attack was something out of the ordinary. Being praised had brought a smug look to Rick’s face, but he knew he wasn’t the leading man here, right?

*“Aaahhhhhh!”*

*This is it, this is it! Holland’s attack is fully charged!*

The glowing greatsword Holland held aloft towards the sky was now emitting an even brighter, white light.

*“Ahhhhhh! Shiiiiiiing Saberrrrr!”*

*“Graaaaaagh!”*

*Sweet! Cool! Awesome!*

Holland's special attack was such a sight to see that I lost the vocabulary to even describe it. He swung down his glowing sword, and the last few remaining percentages of Bifrons's HP were completely depleted. *It's so powerful!*

It had been a struggle, but we won! But as soon as I had that thought—

*"Curse youuu! I will not fall so easily!"*

*It's still alive!* I guessed it still had a tiny, invisible sliver of HP left.

*"I will take at least you down with me!"*

"Huh? Hey!"

Bifrons seemed to be looking my way, and then it started reaching its hand out to me. *Why me?!* The boss was clearly targeting me, right? Why? Holland had drawn much more of its hate by a long shot!

"Hmmm!"

"...!"

Himka and Sakura jumped out to shield me.

"You two! Don't even think about it!"

I was reliving the nightmare of the Event Brachio fight. Both Himka and Sakura had died in front of my eyes because of my own uselessness.

Sakura and Himka repelled Bifrons's massive arm, but I saw the pair's HP drop drastically. They hadn't been insta-killed, but they had been poisoned. At this rate, both my monsters and I were going to die, and unfortunately, I had no means of recovery anymore. My MP was exhausted, and I had used up all my potions.

"Damn it!"

All I could do was shout. *Just when it looked like we were about to win!*

But this time was different. Recovery spells came flying in from the surrounding players, healing the two of them as they were about to take heavy damage.

"Good thing I watched that video!"

“I won’t let the past repeat itself! Himkaaa!”

“I’ll protect you, Sakura!”

Thanks to them, Himka and Sakura made it out fine. I was very grateful.

“W-We’re saved...”

As I put a hand to my chest and sighed in relief, I saw Rick throw an Ammolite at Bifrons.

“Chirp!”

“NOOOOOOOO!”

The light of the Ammolite illuminated Bifrons’s black skeletal form with a white light, and then its HP bar shattered. I watched as the demon crumbled away, shrieking in agony.

“Chirp chiiirp!” Rick cried, his face triumphant.

“...Huh?”

“Silver-Haired! Well done!”

“Your squirrel dealt the killing blow, Silver-Haired!”

“Go Silver, go Silver!”

“...Huh?”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Wooooooo!” everyone cheered.

*Sorry, Holland! It looks like Rick got the last attack in!*

*Ding-dong!*

*“The great demon Bifrons has been defeated. Congratulations.”*

So it was finally over. That had been a really dizzying boss fight, though I guess this was always how raid boss fights tended to go.

*“Mr. Yuto, you earned contribution points among the top twenty percent in the battle against the great demon Bifrons. As a result, you will receive a special reward.”*

“Sweet!”

Well, I *did* use all those Ammolites, so it wasn't a surprise that I had ranked high. Rick's final attack probably hadn't had much of an effect on my contribution points. This game had done away with a lot of factors that would cause players to fight among each other. At most, it gave special rewards to players who ranked highly in contribution points, as with this time.

If the game did implement a bonus for getting the final attack, people might ignore everyone and everything else in pursuit of that. In the worst case, everyone would want to keep their strongest skill on the back burner to be used for the last hit, making the middle of the fight a struggle, and then overkilling the boss at the very end with a flurry of big moves. Also, it would be a killer for group coordination. The devs didn't seem to want that to happen either, since they never made any reference to a first or last attack—as far as I was aware, at least. Still, since other players showered you with attention for it, it was something a lot of people aimed for.

“We're leveling up too.”

I was getting notification after notification of level ups, not just for myself but for my monsters.

“All righty, let's take a look—”

“Um, Silver-Haired?”

“Hmm?”

Just as I was about to check the results, a voice called to me from behind.

“Oh, hello, Holland.”

“Hello.”

I turned around, and there was Holland. It wasn't because he was a top player or anything, but for some reason, I slipped into speaking politely. This was just a guess, but I had a feeling he was a fellow working adult. Instead of being a gaming junkie, he was probably just using up his PTO and summer vacation like me. This happened the first time I met Kokuten too. Once I sensed the working adult aura from someone, I automatically switched to business mode.

Holland looked stern. Was he angry?

“Um... I’m sorry?” I apologized on reflex.

I could only think he was upset about Rick getting the killing blow on the demon. As a top player, I bet he wanted to get the last attack. But that wasn’t my fault! Who could’ve guessed Holland’s special attack wouldn’t kill it! And I just had some leftover Ammolites...

“Why are you apologizing?” Holland asked.

“Well, my squirrel made the final attack...”

“Chirp? Chirp!”

“Now’s not the time to puff out your chest and gloat! Read the room!”

“Chirp?”

“Just bow your head, okay?”

“Chirp.”

Rick put one hand on my head and hung his head dejectedly.

“I’m not telling you to look repentant! You did that before too! Is that your go-to?!”

“Oh, uh, I’m not mad or anything, so you don’t have to apologize,” Holland said.

“Oh, really?”

*Why didn’t he say that earlier?! I got so nervous!*

“Yes. I actually have something I really want to ask you. Why did you revive me?”

“Huh? Oh, because I wanted to see your special attack. I thought it would look really cool.”

“...What? Is that it?”

“Well, yes.”

“No way! How could you use such a valuable item just for—”

*“The battlefield will now be terminated. Please be aware that all players will be teleported back to the location they were in before the start of the battle.”*

A server-wide announcement interrupted what Holland was saying. He disappeared as my vision turned black. *Dang it, I got teleported away mid conversation.* I was now back at the shore of the pond, where I’d been standing before the raid boss battle.

“Excuse me, are you Silver-Haired?”

“Yes?”

Someone was calling my name once again. I sure was popular, huh.

“Umm, who are you?”

“My name’s Huey. You used a Revive Potion earlier, right? Where did you get it? Did you make it?”

I was really getting interrogated here. Huey was shooting rapid-fire questions at me.

“Ah, well...”

Come to think of it, that Revive Potion really must have been a valuable item. The frontline players didn’t seem to have known about it either, and there was even the possibility that Sawyer was the first to make it. There were sure to be people who wanted to know about it.

“I just got it by chance, and that was the only one I had. I don’t know how to obtain it either, so I can’t tell you much about it. Sorry.”

“O-Oh, okay... Then—”

“All right, your time’s up!”

“Huh?”

*Wh-What?* A bunch of people just showed up out of nowhere. Did they all want to hear about the Revive Potion too? I thought about running away, but they actually weren’t here for me. A line of players stood between Huey and me, and another group of people circled around Huey like a wall.

“Sorry about this. We’ll handle things from here, so you’re free to go, Silver-

Haired.”

“You can’t grill him for valuable information in a place like this! It’s against the rules of etiquette!”

Were they Huey’s friends? It looked like they had intervened because they thought I was in trouble. Well, I sort of was, so they came at the right time.

“Okay then, can I go now?” I asked.

“Yes, go ahead! Take care of Himka, please.”

“Good work. Bye-bye, Rick!”

“See you later, Sakura!”

*I’ll take them up on that.* My monsters waved goodbye to them as we left the pond.

“Oh, Yuto!”

*Again?! Who is it now?* I wondered, and it turned out to be a friend this time. In fact, it was just the person I wanted to see.

“Hey, Sawyer!”

“You did great out there! Not that I’m surprised.”

“I just had a lot of Ammolites on me. But, sorry for using *that*. I think things might get a little out of hand because I used it in front of everyone...”

There was a chance that Sawyer would be subjected to some of this commotion too. I had really been careless. But for some reason, Sawyer was smiling.

“It’s fine. I sort of expected that to happen anyway... If I wanted to keep it to myself, I wouldn’t have given it to you.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. I’ve already promised to sell the recipe to the Quick-Eared Cats, so I think people will find out about it sooner than later. So don’t worry.”

If he did that, then it definitely would spread around quick. I’d feel bad if I’d caused him trouble, but that didn’t seem to be the case. *Good, good.*



## Management's POV

"Wheew. So, it all worked out, then?"

"So it seems. The second-wave players were able to participate too, even though the battle was fairly aggressive. It seems all the adjustments we made were a success, I'd say."

"Thank goodness. I was worried about how it would go, since we added that demon as a last-minute addition..."

"Originally, the plan was just to have the boss be the Undead dinosaurs and black skeletons. If we'd gone with just that, the fight probably would have ended in an instant."

"We debuted those new status ailments a little earlier than planned, but I'm guessing those went all right too?"

"Yes. There were no malfunctions. We also made it so the amount of interaction one had with NPCs reduced the chance of being affected by the ailments, and that also seemed to operate smoothly."

"I seem to remember we also made it so the players around the skeleton captain were unaffected by the ailments... Ah, there seemed to be no issues with that either, right?"

"Correct."

"What about the performance leading up to the fight? We made quite a few adjustments to the skeleton's entrance and actions to accommodate the newly added demon."

"That also seems to have gone generally well. There were some areas where our adjustments had issues, however, such as NPCs suddenly going expressionless when talking about the demon, and the fact that the demon's aggression was a little biased towards healers... Those didn't lead to any major problems, though, so it all turned out okay in the end."

"Though it seems Silver-Haired stole the show."

"That was to be expected. He had an absurd number of Ammolites."

“He might have thrown our plans for a loop once again, but if anything, he showed us that we should have been better prepared. I want to avoid having to do such haphazard adjustments in the next event.”

“...Even if future events don't turn out as chaotic as this one, to be able to perfectly predict what will happen... Isn't that impossible?”

“Why's that?”

“Do I have to spell it out? Because of Silver-Haired's presence.”

“Well, look, we can take precautions, we can make it so that players' behaviors don't affect how strong the boss is, we can do all sorts of things to deal with that!”

“...Even with all that, I just can't imagine it going well.”

“...There's no changing your mind, huh?”

“This is Silver-Haired we're talking about, after all.”

“No! There has to be a way! We can't give up!”

“Well, while we think about that, we have something else to do in the meantime, don't we?”

“We used Bifrons, so now we have to make another demon for the next event...”

“Good luck.”

“You have to work on it too! Ahhh! I need a drink!”

“Is drinking all you want to do? Besides, there's some good in this too. Wouldn't you say this was the perfect time to unveil the Revive Potion?”

“True, that was the perfect advertisement for it. The fact that it exists will spread in no time. And it's only a matter of time before the recipe is shared around too.”

“We might have had complaints from players that Insta-death was too strong otherwise... He really did use it at the perfect time. Good job, Silver-Haired!”

“I thought the one who discovered it would keep it hidden for a while, and then it got that big unveiling. If it makes it into the official video, that would be

perfect.”

“Now we don’t have to make all those sidequests and promotions to advertise the Revive Potion. Isn’t that great? People are already talking about it. Chief, weren’t you just crying about having to do another all-nighter?”

“I wasn’t crying! But, you’re right. Wait a minute. Does that mean...I can finally go home?”

“You only just realized?”

“I haven’t been able to go home for so long, I completely forgot that was even a possibility!”

“Is that so? But you’re happy about it, right?”

“Yes! Thank you, Silver-Haired! Wahooo!”

“Silver-Haired was *also* the main reason you weren’t able to go home, though...”

## **Holland and Huey’s POV**

“We lost...”

“Lost? It felt like we weren’t even in the running.”

“Honestly, I only used my special attack because I got caught up in the moment...”

“About that. If you had dealt the finishing blow, I think you would’ve gotten a lot of criticism from people outside of the top players.”

“I guess Silver-Haired’s squirrel saved me.”

“Add on that Revive Potion, and you’ve got a lot to thank him for. Without that, your place among the top rankings would’ve been in jeopardy.”

“Yeah, you’re right... Hey, you think his reason for reviving me is true?”

“Truthfully...I don’t buy that he would use something as valuable as a Revive Potion just because he wanted to see your special attack.”

“Yeah, same.”

“You know, I ended up asking him where he got the potion. I couldn’t help myself.”

“Oh yeah?”

“He just told me he got it by chance and didn’t know much about it. It didn’t seem like he was lying.”

“...If that’s true, then it’s a *super* valuable item.”

“Yeah. Who knows if he’ll be able to get it again. Considering that, his reason for reviving you could be...”

“Letting me take the credit?”

“Probably. Even though we’re top players, we didn’t do anything in this event.”

“So he...felt bad for us?”

“Yeah. When I talked to him, he came across as a regular, nice guy.”

“...So we lost.”

“Yup. Actually, it probably wasn’t even a competition in the first place. This event confirmed it for me, but I think the devs want us to play like Silver-Haired.”

“How would that even be possible?”

“Let me rephrase. I mean, instead of focusing on fighting all the time like us, they’d prefer we seek out different sidequests.”

“I see. So the right way to do things is to explore the towns and talk to all the NPCs?”

“I think sticking to the front line and efficiently grinding levels, which is the norm in other games, isn’t going to keep working for much longer.”

“But at this point, I can’t play like Silver-Haired. And I don’t want to. I realized that during this event. I just can’t do it.”

“I get it. Besides, I *like* how I play. Being the first person to beat a boss, being faster and farther ahead than everyone else. Being the first to step foot in areas where no one else has been.”

“Same goes for me. I like to see my levels go up as I fight. If I have the time to talk to NPCs, I’d rather grind levels. That was why the dinosaurs were so great. I wish I could’ve fought more of them.”

“That’s what I’m saying. We need to become the *real* top players using *our* playstyle. Let’s make that our goal for the next event. We’ll be number one.”

“Yeah. But some other people in the clan were saying they were going to change their playstyle, so there are probably going to be fewer frontline players.”

“So what? That just gives us even more freedom. A lot of the people who are saying they’re going to copy Silver-Haired just want attention, so I don’t think it’ll go well for them.”

“Well, in the meantime—”

“Yeah?”

“I’m going to thank Silver-Haired. I wasn’t really able to talk to him at the end of the raid boss fight.”

“...”

“What? Your face is scaring me.”

“The Defenders are out there, so be careful. They’re terrifying. Though I guess it was my fault for breaking the rules...”

“R-Right. I’ll be careful.”

“I mean it! Be *very* careful!”

“O-Okay.”

# Online Forum [Second-Wave Event] A Discussion Thread for the Ongoing Second-Wave Celebration Event, Part 10

Please post information regarding the event.

Info not related to strategy is permitted.

Feel free to ask any and all questions.

---

109: Marca

The scale of that raid battle was crazy.

---

110: Mimura

Well yeah, that was the first time that over ten thousand players were fighting against the same boss without being split into servers.

It was a sight to behold.

---

111: Baa\_Baa

It was like a celebrity exhibition.

That was my first time seeing Holland.

---

112: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

That's because the top players usually stick to the front lines.

A lot of the time, their names are well-known, but not their faces.

---

113: Murakage

Speaking of first times, that was my first time seeing Sir Holland's special attack.

I wonder if it is possible for me to acquire such a powerful move like that?

---

114: MurderLicenseBaki

You can probably learn one eventually, but not a lot is known about those moves right now.

I've heard there's a key that triggers some special quest somewhere in Zone Ten...

But if it's a battle quest, I'm out!

---

115: Mimura

YOU are? With a name like that? LOL

I mean, it's not even worth talking about anyway unless we can make it to the very front lines.

---

116: Baa\_Baa

I can't do that either! It's too far!

I'll wait until there's an easier way to learn them.

This event made it possible to learn skills like Botany, so you never know.

---

117: Marca

Maybe we'll be able to learn special attacks by using points? But they're really strong, right? Seeing as it took out a huge chunk of the raid boss's HP.

I bet it would cost an insane number of points.

---

118: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Well, Holland's first attempt went up in smoke.

---

119: Murakage

That was quite a pity.

---

120: Mimura

Top Players: No way we're gonna let Silver-Haired beat us! This isn't the time to act on our own self-interest! Let's band together and leave our mark! Holland, gooo!

Holland: All right! Everyone, lend me your strength! Aaahhhh!

Boss: Insta-death.

Holland: Gaaaaaah!

Top Players: Gaaaaaah!

---

121: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Yeah, that made me laugh.

---

122: MurderLicenseBaki

As soon as he let out his war cry and the pillar of light erupted from his body, he got hit with that black smoke and dropped like a log. Cue the shouts of "H-He's deeead!"

Who *didn't* laugh?

---

123: Baa\_Baa

I felt kinda bad for him.

---

124: Murakage

Yes, I couldn't help but feel sorry for him.

That was also probably why Silver-Haired used that item.

---

125: Marca

That. Right.



---

126: Mimura

I really wasn't expecting the Revive Potion to debut in such a grandiose way.

---

127: Marca

I don't think the words "monopolize" or "secret" are in Silver-Haired's vocabulary.

---

128: Murakage

He's an upstanding man. He never ceases to amaze me.

And that determination of his to yield the moment of glory to the top players, who were in need of a win!

I wish I could follow his example! But I know if I were ever in that situation, I wouldn't be so decisive.

---

129: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Without the clip of Holland using his special attack, the top players wouldn't have had any screen time in the official video.

I'm sure Silver-Haired wasn't even thinking about the video, but maybe he was trying to let them get a win?

---

130: Baa\_Baa

But I heard the only reason he used the Revive Potion was because he wanted to see Holland's special attack.

---

131: Mimura

No, I'm sure he was just saying that. There's no way he'd use the Revive Potion for such a ridiculous reason.

Do you know how much he could've sold it for?

---

132: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Yeah, I also vote for the reason being he did it for Holland's benefit.

---

133: MurderLicenseBaki

I mean, as a solo player, there aren't many chances to use a Revive Potion, so maybe he just figured that was a good time to use it.

If Silver-Haired dies, it's considered a party wipe. He can only use it to recover his monsters.

Still, I admire his mental resolve to use it so quickly. He really is one of a kind.

---

134: Baa\_Baa

Is that right... Wow.

I haven't met him, but I like him even more now.

If I was an NPC, he'd almost have maxed out my favorability score.

---

135: Mimura

You haven't even met him, and he's almost maxed your favorability?

I'm not sure what's more true. That Silver-Haired is just that good, or if the sheep girl over here is just a sucker...

---

136: Marca

But y'know, Silver-Haired doesn't seem that greedy for money or items, so I don't think it's totally out of the realm of possibility that he really DID just want to see the special attack.

---

137: Murakage

That is true. In fact, I could even see that being more like something he would do.

---

138: Baa\_Baa

Isn't that kinda amazing in itself?

I think that feels even more like a Silver-Haired moment.

Either way, he's won me over!

---

139: Mimura

I knew it. A sucker.

---

140: Marca

By the way, who was that guy wearing glasses that was with Silver-Haired in the official video?

The shipping thread was going crazy about it. There was a huge war between Silver-Haired x Glasses and Silver-Haired x Holland.

Once the Silver-Haired x Rabbit Gnome people started chiming in, all hell broke loose.

---

141: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

He wasn't that well-known, but he's got some nicknames from this event.

Glasses, Bespectacled Tactician, etc. Some people called him Mr. Glasses.

---

142: Mimura

He looked like a Tamer. He must be a friend of Silver-Haired.

---

143: Baa\_Baa

I prefer Glasses x Silver-Haired.

---

144: Marca

Huh? Not Silver-Haired x Glasses?

That one makes the most sense!

---

145: Baa\_Baa

Nooo, Glasses would be the top!

---

146: MurderLicenseBaki

Glasses on top... I can't see it.

Anyway, I'm a Sakura x Silver fan.

---

147: Murakage

These kinds of topics gaining traction is exactly why Silver-Haired doesn't read things about himself on here.

---

148: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

He's keeping his mind pure...

Understandable.

---

149: Marca

This time—by which I mean once *again*, Silver-Haired and his surroundings ended up being used a lot in the video, so Tamers got some fame from that.

---

150: MurderLicenseBaki

The Undine Tamer lived up to his name. A real man's man.

I was surprised that the Rabbit Gnome Tamer had a wolf with her. Is she the Rabbit Gnome Wolf Tamer now?

---

151: Mimura

That's too long lol

Some other originally non-famous Tamers got nicknames too.

Like the Bespectacled Tactician and Her Majesty. And some other nameless players stood out too.

---

152: Baa\_Baa

Her Majesty. I saw her. She dealt the killing blow to the Mosa.

What was up with that bondage look, anyway?

Tamers sure have some strong personalities...

---

153: Murakage

I don't think anyone other than Tamers can pull that off. That's for sure.

---

154: Mimura

Interesting for you to say, ninja.

---

155: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Giving your opinion on a topic about jobs and personalities?

---

156: Murakage

I feel like I'm being unfairly attacked.

---

157: Mimura

Don't worry, you're just paranoid.

---

158: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Just believe you're paranoid.

---

159: Marca

You're probably just paranoid.

---

160: MurderLicenseBaki

This vase with the words "paranoia" can be yours for just 1,000,000 evets!

---

161: Baa\_Baa

Does "paranoia" autofill to "paralyzing plant" for anyone else?

---

162: Murakage

I wish you all would've denied it...

---

163: Marca

We cannot lie.

---

164: Murakage

Gwah!

---

## [The Master Celebrity] Silver-Haired, Amazing as Always, Part 23

A discussion thread for the most famous of famous players.

We don't want to be deleted from the forums, so no dissing allowed.

Screenshots posted without consent are not permitted.

This thread will be deleted if we're asked to do so.

---

631: Cho

Once again Silver-Haired took center stage.

And he was able to do all that even though he doesn't have that much combat ability. Impressive.

---

632: Takashima

He was great in the official video too.

In a way, it was like a Silver-Haired greatest hits video.

---

633: Tetsu

All the Tamers gathering around Silver-Haired. That was a feast for the eyes.

He used his stock of Ammolites to cancel Bifrons's moves. Way to go, Silver!

And he even led non-Tamers to save the pirate captain. General Silver-Haired led the troops into the fray! And the bespectacled tactician was right there with him!

His leadership was excellent during the skeleton Tyranno fight. He helped his comrades even at the expense of using

most of his Ammolites. Hurrah! What a guy!

He helped out the top players, who were starved for glory. A sign of his maturity. Such generosity! Top players, take note!

Then, he used a Revive Potion, revealing its existence to the world. I can't take my eyes off him! Holland, you jerk, say thank you!

Then, at the very end, he gave us that grand finale. That smug little look on his squirrel was so adorable!

---

634: Tundra

The Revive Potion really was quite the bombshell.

But why are you getting so worked up? XD

---

635: Tetsu

Oh, I dunno.

---

636: Tomato Mato

I could see him tossing the Ammolites from afar too.

He had his monsters using them too, so I wonder just how many he used up...?

Just thinking about it scares me.

---

637: Cho

According to the Defenders, they think he used at least thirty.

---

638: Takashima

Whoa. That's like, hundreds of thousands of evets' worth.

I'd definitely be hoarding those.

---



639: Tetsu

Same.

---

640: Tundra

Welp, that's just the difference between us and Silver-Haired.

---

641: Takashima

You can say that again.

Also, I was surprised by how many people were surrounding Silver-Haired.

There were a lot of non-Tamers too, weren't there? I mean, I was one of them too, so I can't really talk.

Were they all reserve forces of the Defenders, like us? Every one of them? It can't be, right?

---

642: Cho

I think it is.

Even if a majority were drawn to Silver-Haired because everyone else was doing it, they still gathered around because they were interested in him. That meant they had some intent to watch over him protectively.

---

643: Tomato Mato

So you suspect every player of being part of the Defenders?

---

644: Cho

It was a super large-scale raid battle that wasn't split into servers.

Until now, people could only find out about Silver-

Haired's exploits from other people and official videos.

But now this was their chance to see it live, right?

---

645: Tundra

Well, everyone's always gonna crowd around him.

---

646: Takashima

People who want to see Silver-Haired's exploits live + fans of monsters + people who were crowding around because everyone else was crowding around = everyone except Silver-Haired haters.

---

647: Tomato Mato

Silver-Haired has haters?

---

648: Cho

Anyone who stands out is bound to get haters.

---

649: Tundra

Still, I don't think there's anyone out there who feels strongly enough to be labeled a "hater."

There used to be idiots bashing him on the forums, but they're gone now that the Defenders reported them.

Slandering people on the forums is against the rules, after all. Even something minor will get you a temporary suspension. People who go way too far get banned.

---

650: Takashima

Even previously anti-Silver-Haired threads don't hate on him at all anymore. They just turned into threads about analyzing him. Like discussions on how to get ahead of him.

Though their members are dwindling, so they mostly just

chat in there.

---

651: Tetsu

I bet there are a lot of Silver-Haired haters among the top players too.

---

652: Cho

There are probably a lot of people who are bitter about him.

He kind of took all the achievements from them this time around.

---

653: Tundra

Recently, it's been taking more and more time to conquer the Zones, so the top players have started fading into the background.

It's helpful if they've got a recognizable trait, like the highest level or a unique job class.

---

654: Tomato Mato

Like Holland.

---

655: Tundra

Holland, the highest leveled player and the only one who can use a special attack. That's exactly what it means to be on top.

There's also a rumor that his friend Huey has a unique job.

I don't think anyone would disagree that the clan they're part of is the top clan.

---

656: Tetsu

I mean, they're all players who cling to the very front line just like everyone else in their clan.

It's like, what exactly makes them so great?

---

657: Tomato Mato

Yeah, I think Silver-Haired is even more amazing than them.

---

658: Cho

And I don't think the top players who are barely staying on the front line can stomach that.

If this were any other game, they'd be getting all the attention.

---

659: Takashima

I felt kind of sorry for them for how badly they were beaten in this event.

---

660: Tundra

Holland was playing through the event normally without taking any shortcuts.

He was seen talking to NPCs and doing subquests in the villages.

Sort of like in the classic RPG way. He was progressing through the event step-by-step.

I mean, that was what the event was intended to be like anyway, and you could say there isn't any other way to progress through it, but...

---

661: Tetsu

Silver-Haired made a shortcut, and as a result, made his presence known.

---

662: Tundra

Yep.

In a way, the top players trying to copy Silver-Haired resulted in him passing ahead of them...

---

663: Cho

Resulting in a bunch of top players eagerly determined to go all out in the boss fight.

Then they just fought among each other and their coordination crumbled.

And because they were too late rearranging themselves, in the end, they lost out on all the good stuff.

---

664: Takashima

Silver-Haired wasn't built in a day.

---

665: Tomato Mato

Nice quote!

---

666: Tetsu

Nice quote...?

If you want a famous quote, then go with Silver-Haired's "I wanted to see your special attack!"

---

667: Cho

I wouldn't exactly call that a quote either...

Though I guess everyone was shocked to hear that.

---

668: Tundra

It sounds unbelievable, but also, I can't help but think he's serious, considering it's Silver-Haired.

---

669: Tomato Mato

So the most likely reason is because he wanted to let the top players take some credit?

---

670: Tundra

Normally people would think his reason was because “he was catering to the top players so they’d stop keeping an eye on him” or “he gave him the potion to assert dominance.”

But when it comes to Silver-Haired, strangely, everyone has a favorable view of him LOL

---

671: Tetsu

That’s Silver-Haired for you.

---

672: Cho

So in the end, when it comes to Silver-Haired, no matter what he does, we can say “Silver-Haired does it again!”

---

673: Takashima

If he was giving credit to the top players:

So nice! Silver-Haired does it again!

If he really just wanted to see the special attack:

He went that far for such a trivial thing? Silver-Haired does it again!

If he was doing it for his own self-interest:

So calculated! Silver-Haired does it again!

Like that?

---

674: Tomato Mato

I think you nailed it...

Silver-Haired does it again!

---

## Chapter Five: End of the Event!

I checked the results of the boss battle, finding that Drimo, Himka, Eine, Perca, and I had all leveled up. We could always count on a raid boss to give us a lot of experience points.

“Now, as for my drops... Bifrons’s Magic Core, Bifrons’s Claw, and Bifrons’s Grudge...”

I expected things like the core and the claw. But the “grudge”... It was listed as an ingredient, but was it safe to use? Who knew what sort of gnarly item I’d make if I used it for crafting...

“What’d you get, Sawyer?”

“Take a look.”

Sawyer had gotten the core and claws like I did, but he’d also received something called Black Smoke, which seemed like it could be used to make an item that inflicted a status ailment. For an alchemist like Sawyer, it was a useful item to have.

“What do you think I can use this ‘grudge’ item for?”

“Hmm... I think I’ve seen some Undead monsters drop something similar as an item. I think they were called things like Wraith’s Regret, or Ghost’s Grief. Both are really rare drops.”

“They do *sound* similar.”

“If the grudge item is the same as those, then you should be able to use it to make offensive items or as a material to craft weapons.”

“Wouldn’t they be cursed?”

“Not exactly, but it does result in a weapon with really unbalanced abilities. I’ve seen a staff made with Wraith’s Regret. It substantially lowered dexterity and agility stats, but gave a huge boost to sanity and intelligence.”

“Wow, you weren’t kidding about the balance.”



I decided I'd bring the item over to Lewin and Shuella's shop after the event. Also, maybe someone else would figure out another way to use it. It might've been a rare drop, but I doubted I was the only one who'd gotten it.

In addition to the material drops, I also got an event exchange ticket, and tickets for a Dinosaur Enclosure Set and an Extra Large Aquarium. My bonus for ranking in the top twenty percent was some events and one event exchange ticket, which meant I had earned a total of four exchange tickets in this fight alone.

"What else... Oh, right! The titan arum! I need to appraise it!"

"Thanks for the reminder. That was the reason I came here in the first place."

Sawyer and I weaved through the players checking their drops and made our way to the prehistoric pond. The closer we got to it, the stronger the stench became.

"I see it," I said.

"Let's appraise it quickly so we can leave."

"Hm!"

"...!"

The smell seemed to be too much for Sawyer. Himka and Sakura were nodding vigorously in agreement. They even started tugging on my robe, telling me to hurry it up so we could get out of here.

"Okay, okay, I get it."

"...!"

Even Sakura, who was usually so patient, was rushing me along. She *really* seemed to hate the smell. For a plant-lover like Sakura to be this averse was pretty impressive, in a sense. I patted Sakura's head to calm her down and appraised the giant flower from afar. Soon, I had successfully appraised it, meaning my encyclopedia should be complete—

*Ding-dong.*

*"You have filled in the entirety of the event encyclopedia. You will be awarded*

*the title 'Making the Most of Summer.'*”

*Whoa, the reward is a title!* My collection continued to grow. The title would reward me with evets at the end of the event, just like the dinosaur titles did, but there was one more reward that came with it.

Title: Making the Most of Summer

Effect: Receive evets at the end of the event. Unlocks certain skills to be obtainable by special means.

“Wonder what that means?”

I opened up my status window and found that sure enough, the list of new skills I was able to learn had increased by six. I could now learn Mineral Knowledge, Animal Knowledge, Aquatic Knowledge, Mineralogy, Zoology, and Aquatic Ecology. Even though I hadn't fulfilled the conditions for learning them, I could now acquire them by spending points. I guessed this was what it meant by “obtainable by special means.”

But they required a *lot* of points. I was pretty sure I had only used two points to learn Plant Knowledge, but the other “knowledge” skills cost eight points. Mineralogy and the like cost as much as forty points. Though I guessed that was understandable, seeing as this would allow me to skip those super long quest chains.

Naturally, other players other than me had completed their encyclopedias too. That would explain all the cheering.

“Whoa, nice! I got a title!”

“Hooray!”

“Now I can learn Botany!”

It sounded like a lot of players had finished their encyclopedias. Outside of the dunkleosteus, everything else wasn't too difficult to find, so anyone who explored the islands properly should've been able to complete it. It seemed unlikely that I'd be able to sell any information about the completed

encyclopedia.

“Hmm, hmm!”

“...!”

“Ack! Stop pulling!”

“Hm-hmmm!”

Himka couldn't stand it anymore and had started pulling my arm. With Sakura pushing on my back, I couldn't ignore them anymore.

“Wh-What's your plan after this, Sawyer?”

“I'm going to the Bazaar with some friends. I want to see if they're selling some ingredients for the you-know-what before the event ends.”

“Ah, gotcha.”

Apparently, Sawyer had researched and crafted the Revive Potion with those same friends, so they were probably going to try to find materials that would boost the quality. I thought about tagging along, but there were probably a lot of things about the potion that he was still keeping secret. I'd just be bothering them if I forced myself into their group. I decided to part ways with Sawyer here. My monsters waved goodbye to him as we walked away. I had a feeling I was forgetting something, but what could it be?

“Oh yeah! Rick's Deep Green Heart!”

“Chirp?”

“The reason the Blue Acorn turned into a Deep Green Fruit was because of your Deep Green Heart skill, right?”

“Chirp!”

It seemed my guess was right. Rick nodded from his perch on my shoulder.

“Okay then, could you use it again? Turn this Blue Acorn into a fruit.”

“Chirp.”

“Huh? You can't? Can you only use it once a day or something?”

“Chirp chirp.”

“Then, are there special conditions needed to activate it?”

What I learned after asking Rick several questions was that, like Sakura’s Divine Blessing, Rick’s Deep Green Heart was a skill that could only be used under certain conditions, which meant I likely wouldn’t be able to use this skill for things like farming. I guess I’d have to hold off on seeing the Deep Green Fruit for a while. As we were walking and discussing Rick’s new skill, I saw some familiar faces up ahead.

“Heeey! Amelia! Eulen!”

“Silver-Haired! Hey, whatcha up to right now? Interested in going to Gauntlet Beach with us?”

“Gauntlet Beach? To do what?”

“Well, y’see, Eulen and I still haven’t finished our encyclopedia. All we need is an oarfish.”

*The oarfish!* That’s right, since I had used the oarfish for a fish print, I still hadn’t caught one for myself! I knew I’d forgotten something!

“We were talking about going fishing for it. You want to come with? Actually, could you *please* come with us?” Eulen asked.

“Huh? I mean, I’m happy to be invited, but why me? I *have* caught it before, but it’s not like I’m an expert or anything.”

There were players out there who made fishing their main gig. They’d probably be better off asking someone like that for help.

“Don’t be silly! I’m sure you’ll be able to catch one!” Amelia said.

“Well, don’t get your hopes up too high... I can’t promise anything.”

“That’s fine!” Eulen asserted.

Though I had to admit, my luck had been pretty good throughout this event. Eulen was probably expecting that luck to carry over to this too. But I knew it was only a matter of time before my lucky streak would come to an end.

“W-Well, sure. I’ll come along. But don’t complain later, okay?”

“You got it!”

“Yippee! Let’s go! Oh, Silver-Haired?”

“What?”

“Where’s Olto?”

“...He’s resting.”

“Boo.”

*Amelia. You just wanted the chance to fish with Olto, didn’t you?*

“By the way, Eulen, are those all the undine evolutions?”

“Oho, you know your undines! That’s right! I have all four! Fräulein, Selkie, Archer, and Cook!”

Reflet was also a Fräulein, so Eulen’s undine looked pretty similar appearancewise. There were just a few individual differences, like their eyes, nose, and the length of their hair. The Cook looked similar to the pre-evolution undine, the difference being that she was wearing a stylish triangular bandana.

The one whose appearance was the most distinct was the Selkie. Like the others, she was blue-haired and cute, but she was about one hundred centimeters tall, which meant she was about ten centimeters shorter than the pre-evolution undine. Her face also looked more childlike. On top of that, her outfit was very different. Instead of a blue dress that was typical of undines, she wore a seal costume. I guess it was meant to resemble a baby seal, since it was covered in fluffy white fur. The head of the seal made up the hood of the costume and it came down low enough to cover her eyes. The body part was a cloak that covered her like a long cardigan. This evolution was pretty neat too.

“The Selkie is cool.”

“I know, right?!”

“I’m assuming the one with the ponytail and bow is the Archer?”

“Yup. That’s the evolution that gets unlocked at max favorability.”

“Thought so. So you got a Tamed Monster’s Heart?”

I’d been trying to shower Reflet with lots of affection, but she still hadn’t given me one. Eulen kindly filled me in.

“Seems like it has something to do with pools.”

“Pools?”

“Yeah. Having a pool or a big fountain in your home base seems to be the way to go.”

My place *had* water, though... But listening to what Eulen had to say, it sounded like it had to be something bigger in size. In Eulen’s case, he’d created a king-sized pool for his undines. Then, while they were playing in the pool, they’d given him a Tamed Monster’s Heart. He was absolutely positive about the pool being the key, since he’d received one from each of them when they’d been playing in it.

“Thanks for the tip. What do you want in exchange?”

“Oh, don’t worry about it. I don’t need anything. Consider it compensation for coming fishing with us.”

“I mean, I want to catch an oarfish too, so I was already grateful to be invited...”

“Forget about it. We’re really, *really* grateful that you’re coming with us!”

“You sure?”

I’d happily accept his information if he was fine with it. Oh, right. Eulen *was* a fan of Reflet. *You sly dog!*

“Eulen, you’re not allowed to sit next to Reflet.”

“Why not?!”

Shortly after, we set sail from Warrior Beach, and then started fishing for an oarfish. Three hours passed. There were only two hours left until the event ended.

“No one else is around...”

“I bet everyone’s looking for Ammolite and Amber. They can be sold for a lot,” Amelia said.

“Also, I think the prehistoric pond is a popular fishing spot right now,” Eulen added. “A lot of people want to catch a coelacanth.”

“Oh yeah, you’re probably right.”

The three of us let our fishing lines dangle from the boat while we chatted. I was a fan of this—sitting on a small boat and fishing leisurely. The waves gently rocking the boat almost made it feel like a cradle. Rick was already fast asleep.

“Hey, Silver-Haired. Looks like you might’ve gotten a bite?” Amelia pointed out.

“Whoops! It’s a heavy one!”

“Maybe it’s the oarfish?” Eulen said.

“Hraaaaah!”

*I finally caught one!* No mistaking it, this was an oarfish. It was a resplendent fish with a long, silver body with red and purple embellishments.

“Heck yeaah!”

“Nice!”

“That’s our Silver-Haired! You never disappoint!”

“Aha ha ha! Appraise it, if you so wish!”

“Thanks be!”

“Thanks a bunch, Silver-Haired!”

Amelia and Eulen completed their encyclopedias, cheering wildly over their new titles.

“Should we head back?”

“Good call.”

As we were making our way back, we ran into a bit of a snag.

*SPLAAAAASH!*

“Pweee!”

“Huh? Flopsy?”

Amelia’s tamed monster, who had been playfully swimming and diving around the boat, suddenly burst out of the water with a forceful splash of

water. This particular tamed monster was a rabbit that had swimming and diving abilities. It was squealing miserably. Had it been stung by a venomous creature?

“Flopsy! What’s wrong?!”

“Pweeeee!”

The light blue rabbit scrambled back onto the boat and was trying to tell us something, a look of panic on its face. What was it trying to act out, exactly? It was wiggling its arms and making its body undulate like a wave. Much like my monsters, Amelia’s rabbit had some really humanlike tendencies.

“Hmm... Is that an octopus dance? Did you see an octopus?”

“Pwee!”

“Doesn’t seem like it. I bet it’s a squid, not an octopus, right?” suggested Eulen.

“Pweee!”

Flopsy thumped on the floor of the boat as it shook its head no. Amelia and Eulen both needed to step up their game. I knew exactly what it was doing!

“It’s a sea anemone, duh!”

“*Pwee pweeee!*”

“D-Don’t get mad! Oh, now I get it! It’s a jellyfish!”

“Pwee!”

*Bingo.* So that meant—

“Humm!”

“Reflet! Huh? Um, that’s not good.”

I heard Reflet shriek, and when I turned to look, I saw a giant tentacle coiled around her torso and lifting her up. I’d seen that tentacle somewhere before.

“It’s the tentacle of the jellyfish that was by the ocean current! What’s it doing here?!”

“S-Silver-Haired! We have to save Reflet!”



“Y-Yeah! You’re right! Rick! Can you attack the tentacle using Nut Bomb?”

“Chirp chirp!”

I knew he could. He was pretty far away from it, but he pulled off the throw brilliantly. We all watched as the tentacle loosened its hold on Reflet. She dropped into the water with a splash but was quickly able to take refuge back on the boat.

“You okay?”

“Hum...”

It looked like she’d taken some damage, but that was it. She wasn’t poisoned or otherwise inflicted with anything.

“But what was up with that tentacle...?”

It had already vanished from sight, but it had to be close by.

“Let’s head back to the beach for now!”

“G-Good idea!”

“Got it! Everyone, bring us back!”

Eulen’s undines pulled our boat at breakneck speed back towards the beach. Once we managed to make it there, we saw a massive creature cutting through the surface of the water.

“It *is* a jellyfish!”

“I don’t usually mind jellyfish, but that one’s way too huge! Ew!”

“It’s giving me the creeps!”

It was a colossal Nomura’s jellyfish—that was the only way I could describe it. How was it surfacing from the water? Its tentacles were clearly supporting its body. I was pretty sure they would be crushed under the weight of the jellyfish if this were real life... But then again, this was a game. Different rules.

The jellyfish was making its way over to us. Then, right when it was right in front of the shore—

*Ding-dong.*

*“Due to certain conditions being fulfilled, the special raid quest ‘Vengeful Colossal Jellyfish’ has begun on Warrior Beach. The current number of participants is three. Players wishing to join the battle should do so as swiftly as possible.”*

After the server-wide announcement, a red marker appeared above the giant jellyfish, indicating it was a raid boss.

“Three participants... Is that *us*?”

“Seems like it.”

“Oh, heck no! No way! We can’t beat that thing with just the three of us—”

“Watch out!”

“Mm-mm!”

We didn’t even have time to make a plan! That giant jellyfish jerk attacked us with a gush of water. That would have ended really badly if Amelia’s gnomes hadn’t protected us.

“Wh-What do we do?”

I remembered that one of the routes to get past the ocean current featured a jellyfish boss. But this thing was tens of times bigger than what I’d heard about. Maybe it was a gigantified version meant to be used for a raid battle.

Eulen shook his head at my question. He was at a loss for what to do too.

“I’m sure other players will show up after hearing that announcement!” Amelia shouted. “Let’s just avoid its attacks and hold out until then!”

“G-Got it!”

As per Amelia’s proposal, we ran around evading attacks to buy time. The colossal jellyfish swung at us as it made its way closer to the shore, but it was no match for the gnomes and their amazing defense. They huddled together and linked arms, creating an impenetrable wall of defense to protect us. I was in awe as I watched them use their hoes to repel the jellyfish’s laser-like jet of water.

After a few minutes, the first players arrived.

“Silver-Haired! Amelia! And Eulen!”

“Oh, hey! It’s Ursula!”

“Whoa, the hell is that?! It’s so cool!”

“Whaaa?!”

Ursula was leading a large group of Tamers. They must’ve been having some sort of Tamer get-together or something. They’d gotten here so quick, so they must not have been very far away. Following them, I saw many more players rushing in.

“I-It’s huge!”

“W-We can’t take that thing down! Not a chance!”

Were those D-suke and U-ko? *Hang in there, kids!*

Also, players weren’t the only ones who came to back us up.

“Hey, boy! That’s the jellyfish king! It’s angry about its fallen comrades!”

“Huh? Ah! Ms. Legendary Angler!”

Before I realized it, an old woman was by my side—she was the legendary angler, who had given me advice on catching the dunkleosteus.

“Its weak point is the soft part under its hood! Aim for that!”

“H-How?”

“Normally I’d tell you to think for yourself, but this time I’ll tell you for free. That brute’s weak to ice, if you can believe it. If you deal it ice damage, its hood’ll be raised up for short moment!”

“Got it.”

“C’mon now! Get to it! This isn’t the time to dillydally! The sea claims the lives of those who let their guards down!”

Wow, for a game whose selling point was its lightheartedness, that was really hardcore! But the old woman’s battle-hardened warrior talk was just the sort of thing we needed. Other players who had heard the old woman’s instructions started moving at once.

“Ice spells! Can anyone here use ice spells?!”

“People who can use long-range attacks, get ready to use them!”

“Tanks, defend the rear guard!”

Once we had a plan in place, the rest went by quickly. We had already recently conquered a large-scale raid boss, so everyone knew what to do. And the jellyfish turned out not to be that strong anyway. It had high HP and a lot of moves, but its attack power was weak, so none of its moves were enough to kill anyone.

Also, as time went on, more and more players showed up. Once a certain number of players showed up, the playing field expanded, so thankfully we weren't all cramped together. The beach, which had at first been pretty small, had at some point grown almost as expansive as the Tottori Sand Dunes. There must've been well over ten thousand players here.

At some point during the fight, large numbers of the smaller jellyfish that typically appeared as the boss blocking the current popped up, but those were swiftly taken out. After all, hundreds of spells were being unleashed, at once, which shattered the countless small jellyfishes' HP bars instantly.

The jellyfish boss itself was also getting walloped by everyone's attacks. Even when it tried to unleash a special move, once it started moving suspiciously, it was hit with a barrage of attacks that canceled its action. Ultimately, it could only use normal attacks and summon its smaller jellyfish.

Then, twenty minutes after the battle began, among all the mayhem, the colossal jellyfish sank away. I sort of felt bad for it, seeing as it had basically been used as a punching bag. Holland got the final attack. He was able to deal the finishing blow with his special attack, and everyone showered him with cheers and applause. That shining sword of his never got old!

*“The special raid quest has been successfully completed. Each participant will be rewarded 616 evets and an Extra Large Aquarium exchange ticket. Each participant will also receive the title ‘Summer Beach Memories.’”*

“Huh? I appreciate the exchange ticket, but that's really all we get for evets? Really?”

People investigated after the fact, and they came to the conclusion that ten million events had to have been split among all the participants. Meaning, if fewer people had participated, we would have gotten a larger share. The experience points we got were also nothing to write home about, presumably for the same reason. Most people were happy about getting a title, at least.

Title: Summer Beach Memories

Effect: Increased favorability from NPCs in and around the Bazaar.

The thing was, it didn't really mean much to get this right before the end of the event. Were we supposed to have triggered this event a lot earlier?

"Oh well. There's about an hour left of the event, so I think I'll just play with my monsters."

# Online Forum [Gather 'Round Tamers] LJO Tamer Megathread, Part 37

Share the deets on new tamed monsters, show off your companions, etc.—this thread is for everyone!

Bad-mouthing other Tamers is not permitted.

Screenshots gladly accepted.

Avoid double-posting.

Be mindful of what you post.

---

766: IrumaBlack

So, are we assuming one of the triggers for the giant jellyfish fight was beating a certain number of the jellyfish by the ocean current?

---

767: KingOysterMushroom

Probably. The Prehistoric Island was meant to be discovered much later than it was.

The plan had probably been for the raid fight to be triggered from a mad rush of players fighting the jellyfish to get to the Prehistoric Island.

---

768: Ivan

But instead, the Prehistoric Island was discovered on the first day, leading to people finding and sharing alternate routes past the ocean current...

---

769: Ursula

It probably would've been better if only information

about the Prehistoric Island's existence had been shared, but instead it went like...

Silver-Haired got through? → Okay then, there should be routes where you don't have to fight! → Look for a way to get over without having to fight! → Discovery of an underwater route where you don't have to defeat the jellyfish.

---

770: Ivan

So maybe the original intent was for us to trigger the jellyfish raid fight, get the title that came as a reward, and then interact with the villagers.

Then, we were probably supposed to learn about the alternate routes from the villagers.

---

771: IrumaBlack

Silver-Haired strikes again...

---

772: KingOysterMushroom

As for the number of jellyfish defeated, there were a lot of people going up against them right before the end of the event.

Maybe because they thought beating the jellyfish might get them a title or something.

I think that might've been the final trigger.

---

773: Ursula

The quest *was* called "Vengeful Giant Jellyfish."

---

774: KingOysterMushroom

Though, and this isn't confirmed yet, there is talk that this was Silver-Haired's doing...

---

775: Ivan

Like how?

---

776: KingOysterMushroom

I don't know exactly, but people say he'd been in the raid fight from the start.

---

777: Ursula

That's definitely true.

When we arrived, Silver-Haired and the others were already fighting the jellyfish.

---

778: IrumaBlack

Silver-Haired was one of the first participants, so you're saying he might've also been the one who triggered the event?

He didn't just happen to be there when the boss showed up?

---

779: Ursula

Well, that'd just be another Silver-Haired moment.

Once the required number of current-blocking jellyfish were defeated, Silver-Haired pulled the final trigger—I think it's possible.

---

780: Ivan

Can't deny that logic lolol

It's Silver-Haired. That's all you need to know.

---

781: Eulenspiegel

Hmm, I wonder?



We were just fishing... Honestly, I have no clue.

---

782: Ivan

Huh? “We”?

---

783: Eulenspiegel

I was actually with Silver-Haired when the raid fight started. But we really were just fishing.

Maybe something else happened?

---

784: Amelia

I dunno.

But this is Silver-Haired we’re talking about, so he might’ve even done something without even realizing it.

---

785: Eulenspiegel

It’s Silver-Haired. So yeah, probably.

---

786: Ursula

Anyway, it started so suddenly, I had to rush to the beach.

But the fight ended up being pretty anticlimactic. The boss was so weak.

---

787: IrumaBlack

They probably expected fewer people to join.

Poor devs.

---

788: Ivan

Yeah, it seemed like people on the other side of the island didn’t make it over in time.

Same with the people still exploring the Prehistoric Island.

---

789: Ursula

There were a lot more front liners than I expected. Holland got the final hit. I got to see just how strong they are when they actually work together.

I bet they'll cooperate from the start in the next event. If they do, they might dominate the top rankings. I mean, that's how it usually goes. Everything up to now has been out of the norm.

---

790: MorningStarMeow

You can say that again. It looked like the top players were trying to restore their rep, meow.

Holland used his special attack twice in one day.

---

791: Eulenspiegel

Did you catch Silver-Haired shouting "Sweet! Cool!" while he was watching that happen?

Makes it seem even more likely that he really did use the Revive Potion just because he wanted to see Holland's special...

---

792: MorningStarMeow

BTW, if Silver-Haired was the one who triggered the jellyfish raid fight, then does that mean it's thanks to Silver-Haired that we all got titles?

---

793: Amelia

Oh, very true.

He bestowed a title to over ten thousand people... What

an all-star!

---

794: Eulenspiegel

Silver-Haired, setting off flags everywhere he goes. All-Star Silver!

---

795: KingOysterMushroom

So we've decided it *was* him who triggered it...

Before long, we'll have an "All-Star Silver" religion that credits all our good fortune as coming from Silver-Haired...

---

796: Ivan

He helped me level up.

All-Star Silver~

---

797: Ursula

He helped me beat the boss.

All-Star Silver~

---

798: Eulenspiegel

He helped me get a girlfriend. All-Star Silver~

---

799: MorningStarMeow

He helped me get into my first-choice school. All-Star Silver~

---

800: IrumaBlack

Uh-oh, an in-game joke has started creeping into the outside world!

Also, you last two need a reality check.

---

801: Eulenspiegel

What'd you say?!

---

802: MorningStarMeow

Yeah! Maybe Eulen does, but not me~!

---

803: Eulenspiegel

Wh-What...? You traitor!

Dammit! Fine! If that's how it is-

---

804: IrumaBlack

Yes?

---

805: Eulenspiegel

Silver-Haired! Get me a girlfriend!

All-Star Silver!

---

806: Ivan

Please stop. You're gonna annoy him.

Though I can't say I don't understand how you feel.

---

807: Amelia

He's escaping the confines of the game and assembling a religion.

All-Star Silver~

---

808: KingOysterMushroom

We Tamers waste no time joining a religion, huh.

Since there's a chance we'll be blessed with cute monsters.

---

809: Amelia

The divine was truly afoot during this event. From the beginning to end.

---

810: IrumaBlack

The event really kept us on our toes at the very end with the raid bosses.

It was fun, though.

---

811: Amelia

Oh, for sure! This event was a blast!

The raid boss battle was a lot of fun, but so were a bunch of other things.

The ocean was so blue!

---

812: Ivan

Tamers really stood out during the boss fight.

Silver-Haired was the star player, but KingOysterMushroom and Ursula also got a lot of attention.

Seems like the names “Her Highness” and “Bespectacled Tactician” are going to stick.

---

813: Ursula

Tee hee. Just how I planned!

---

814: Eulenspiegel

Y-You planned that?

---

815: Ursula

Sure did. That’s why I dress the way I do and use a whip.

Tee hee hee... AH HA HA HA HA!

---

816: Ivan

I can't bring myself to ask why. Scratch that, I don't wanna ask.

---

817: KingOysterMushroom

Bspectacled Tactician...

---

818: Amelia

Oh? Do you not like it? I think it's neat!

---

819: KingOysterMushroom

It's not that I dislike it. I just realized I'm going to be called "Glasses" in the game too.

---

820: Ivan

I'm guessing you also wear them IRL?

---

821: KingOysterMushroom

Ever since elementary school, my nickname has been Glasses...

---

822: IrumaBlack

So then why do you even wear glasses in the game?

Are they some special, unique equipment?

---

823: KingOysterMushroom

I just don't feel right not wearing glasses.

---

824: Eulenspiegel

Ah, I've heard other glasses-wearers say the same thing.

---

825: KingOysterMushroom

I always wear them, except when I'm sleeping. Not wearing them feels too weird.

Also, "tactician"? All I was doing was standing next to Silver-Haired...

---

826: MorningStarMeow

It's the Silver-Haired effect, meow.

Besides, you should be happy you got a nickname!

People have just been calling me the Undine Tamer's friend, meow!

---

827: IrumaBlack

You need to stand out plus have a definable characteristic.

You're kind of all over the place.

You can't keep up your speech quirk, and even though you have some cute monsters, you have some beast-type monsters too.

I can't tell you to be like Silver-Haired, since that's impossible.

But compared to other people with nicknames, you don't really have "it."

---

828: MorningStarMeow

Grrr... I keep forgetting to role-play...

And I can't help it that I wanted to be waited on by cute girls, meow!

---

829: Ursula

Just give up, then.

There's something more important we need to talk about.

---

830: MorningStarMeow

I-I'm being ignored...

I thought we were about to discuss a nickname for me...?

---

831: Amelia

MorningStarPest.

So, what do we need to talk about?

---

832: Ursula

It's about Silver-Haired's monster.

---

833: MorningStarMeow

Y-You really are ignoring me...

But I'm interested in hearing about Silver-Haired, so okay, meow.

---

834: Eulenspiegel

It's okay, man.

---

835: KingOysterMushroom

So, you were saying? Though I think I have a guess.

---

836: Ursula

Silver-Haired's squirrel, Rick, evolved, right?

He's much fluffier now!

---

837: Amelia

Oh, yeah! He told me about it. Didn't he sell the info to the Cats?

---



838: IrumaBlack

That basically confirms it! It's gotta be a special evolution!

---

839: Ivan

I'll go buy the info later.

But man, a special monster? I'm so jealous. And he's just walking around with one like it's no big deal.

---

840: Eulenspiegel

I feel like I can't imagine Silver-Haired walking around with a *non-special* monster LOL

Speaking of special, Amelia's Air Wolf and MorningStar's Burn Tiger were pretty remarkable.

They made an appearance in the official video too.

---

841: UdagawaRollerCoaster

I saw the official video. It was awesome.

Also, I have a question.

Watching the video made me a fan of undines, but which one's the best evolution?

---

842: Ursula

You men are all the same!

---

843: Amelia

So true.

---

844: IrumaBlack

Hey, I don't wanna hear that from you, Rabbit Gnome Tamer!

---

845: Ursula

Sorry, you're on your own here.

---

846: Amelia

Too bad!

People are already calling me the Animal Gnome Tamer anyway!

---

847: Ivan

I don't think "rabbit" was the part he had issue with.

---

848: KingOysterMushroom

There are some girl tamers who have parties made solely of salamanders. So neither side can really talk.

My party, meanwhile, has only bugs.

---

849: MorningStarMeow

You said it, meow.

---

850: Ivan

I wouldn't exactly say you and KingOysterMushroom are the same, though.

---

851: MorningStarMeow

We're both loyal to our tastes, meow!

---

852: UdagawaRollerCoaster

Sooo...which undine is the best?

---

853: Eulenspiegel

Undines can't be ranked! They're all great!

---

854: Ursula

The criminal has made his statement.

---

855: UdagawaRollerCoaster

Okay, you say that, but...

An undine that can't fight would make things pretty difficult, you know?

Fräulein specialize in healing. I read that Selkies and Archers have some fighting ability, but I'm having trouble visualizing it. So I wanted to ask how they actually perform in a party.

---

856: Amelia

Right, Eulen's the only one with an Archer right now. Considering how you get it...

---

857: Eulenspiegel

The Fräulein is definitely good at healing. She'll keep your party stable.

Also, she watches over you from behind, which is so cute and inspiring! It's the best!

---

858: Ivan

That's what you focus on?

---

859: Eulenspiegel

That's important!

Selkies are good at fighting underwater. But they're not that great on land. But the baby seal costume is amazingly fluffy. She's like a little sister!

Among all the undines, the Archer has the worst

underwater abilities but is the strongest fighter.

And she can use water spells. Also, she can be pretty imposing, so nothing makes me happier than getting scolded by her when I do something stupid!

---

860: MorningStarMeow

Oho. The Selkie sounds great.

I want us to play together. I want to put her on my lap and pat her head.

---

861: Amelia

Uh... That's a little...

Please don't.

---

862: MorningStarMeow

I creeped out the gnome fanatic?!

---

863: Ursula

You're out, MorningStar.

---

864: Ivan

Guys get treated harsher when it comes to this topic...

So just stop.

---

865: IrumaBlack

I'm a fan of the Archer!

An older girl wearing a ponytail! I like it! I want her to scold me too!

---

866: Ivan

W-Wow, mad respect to you for being able to say that

right now!

---

867: KingOysterMushroom

I'd say the Fräulein is the best, no?

She's very graceful.

---

868: Ivan

You too, KingOysterMushroom?!

---

869: Amelia

I'm all for the Cook. I want to try her homemade meals!

---

870: Ursula

Oh, me too! I want her to take care of me like a maid!

---

871: Ivan

Wait, everyone's joining in?

---

872: Eulenspiegel

I told you! All undines are cute!

---

873: UdagawaRollerCoaster

So are you not going to answer my question...?

---

# [I Wanna Pet All the Monsters!] Tamed Monster Appreciation Thread for Non-Tamers and Non-Summoners, Part 10

Are you a non-mainstream command-class player or a non-command-class player who wants to express their admiration of monsters? Do monsters make you lose your breath and mind? Then this is the thread for you!

We're looking for any information on the usability of Tame or Summon skills by other classes.

Feel free to just talk about cute monsters.

This includes mascots too.

Please obtain permission before posting screenshots of other players' monsters.

---

887: Raspu

The Tamers rocked this event.

Kinda jealous.

---

888: LordApple

Yup, they went all out during the demon fight.

I wonder if we'll see an uptick in Tamers? People might be going like, "Tamed monsters are great! They're cute and capable, and I can be just like Silver-Haired!"

---

889: Ruach

I'm guessing more people will probably learn Tame.

---

890: Raspu

There are already enough Tamers!

This has been a trend for a long time.

---

891: Requiem

I think Necromancers are getting more recognition now too, thanks to the dinosaur skeletons.

Though they can't compete with Tamers.

---

892: Longneck

And when is the Onmyoji's turn?!

---

893: Raspu

Hey, top Summoners! It's time to get to work! You need to get more attention than Silver-Haired and increase the Summoner pool!

---

894: LordApple

Do it yourself LOL

---

895: Raspu

You know Tamers only blew everyone else out of the water because there were a bunch of famous players working together, right? So that's a lot to ask of a fighter who just has the Summon skill.

I died instantly from the black mist... I knew I should've made the trek to the south side!

---

896: Requiem

But there were some other command-class players who made their mark. Like Chris, speaking of Necromancers.

---

897: Ruach

And among the Summoners, Sakkyun really put in the work too.

---

898: Longneck

But still, compared to the Tamers...

Silver-Haired goes without saying, but the Bespectacled Tactician, Animal Gnome Tamer, Undine Tamer, and Her Majesty all garnered a lot of attention too.

---

899: LordApple

But people like the Bespectacled Tactician and Her Majesty, who only *just* got their nicknames, weren't that famous until this event, right?

It's because they teamed up with other Tamers to fight that they gained enough battle achievements to even get a nickname out of it.

---

900: Ruach

So you're saying other command classes need to link up and fight together?

---

901: LordApple

Exactly. If players of the same job classes band together, they can get some attention.

Then, if one person stands out among the rest, that just means an even brighter spotlight on all of them.

---

902: Requiem

You're right!

So maybe they should be strengthening their relationships with their peers a little more?

---



903: Raspu

I think that Necromancers have a shot if they team up.

---

904: Longneck

But there are still barely any Onmyoji around!

---

905: Ruach

Well, not much you can do about that. Once there are more people actively playing as Onmyoji, more people will choose that class.

Case in point, Silver-Haired.

---

906: Longneck

Come on, Hamakaze! You can do this!

---

907: LordApple

Yeah, I'll mooch off the effort of others too!

---

908: Requiem

Chris! I'm rooting for you!

---

909: LordApple

Me too!

---

910: Longneck

Competing with Silver-Haired...?

---

911: Requiem

There's no chance, right?

---

912: Raspu

Nope.

---

913: Ruach

Definitely not.

---

914: Requiem

It's fine when I say it, but I don't wanna hear it from you guys too!

---

915: Longneck

But it's the truth. Let's just accept reality.

---

916: LordApple

On that note, Tamers don't need me to do anything anyway!

---

917: Raspu

I wonder if any Summoners will start playing Silver-Haired's way?

---

918: Ruach

Instead of praying for something that'll never happen, I think it's more realistic to find more people to team up with in anticipation for the next raid boss fight.

---

919: Raspu

N-Never happen...? You really think so?

A miracle Summoner might appear who can miraculously play on Silver-Haired's level!

---

920: Ruach

So clearly you acknowledge you'd need a miracle, seeing as you said it twice. Suffice to say—there's absolutely no chance.

---

921: Requiem

Yup. Zilch.

---

922: Longneck

Not a snowball's chance.

---

923: Raspu

I know, okay?! Can't I hope for a miracle?!

Screw it! In the next event, I'm gonna make a team of Summoners so great that we'll be bound to all get nicknames from it!

---

924: Requiem

I'm with you there! My plan's to preach about Necromancers and strengthen our teamwork in preparation for the next event!

---

925: Longneck

There aren't many Onmyoji to call peers, huh.

Guess I'll start by talking to Hamakaze.

---

926: Ruach

Hee hee hee. I've already got an Elementalist-only clan in the works!

---

927: LordApple

Mwa ha ha ha ha! Tamers will take it all again next time! The military might of our Tamers' Corps is unparalleled! All thanks to Silver-Haired!

Go ahead and bring home the gold next time too, Silver-Haired!

---

928: Raspu

Stop gloating!

Hey, Defenders! I got one for you!

---

929: Ruach

Defenders! If you don't mind, please!

---

930: LordApple

Stop calling for the Defenders!

I-I've done nothing wrong!

---

931: Longneck

Say your thanks to Silver-Haired.

---

932: Ruach

Apologize to Silver-Haired.

---

933: Requiem

Jump down to prostrate on the ground to Silver-Haired.

---

934: LordApple

I'm sorryyy! I went too far!

I respect him, for real!

So please, forgive meee!

---

## Epilogue

*“The event has concluded. We will now calculate all players’ evets to announce the rankings.”*

The event was over. I splurged a good amount on Terrariums, so I only had about two hundred thousand evets left on me. I decided at the end that I would buy as many items as I wanted without worrying about the rankings. But since it’d be pretty embarrassing to rank lower than the second-wave players, I kept enough evets to avoid that outcome. I would also be receiving more evets from the titles I had earned during the event...

*How would I rank?* I wondered. Tens of thousands of people participated in this event, so I’d be happy with any rank that got me at least some sort of reward.

“What do you think my rank will be?” I asked Olto.

“Mm?”

“Ha ha, no clue, huh?”

“Mmm.”

I was currently in my event home so I could watch the results come in with all my monsters. I was sitting on the bed, staring at the screen with everyone.

“...!”

“Hum!”

“Oh yeah? You think I ranked all right?”

“Hum!”

“Hm!”

Rick was lying face up on my lap, and I was petting him while I waited for the announcement.

“By the way, Rick, you’re *way* fluffier now.”

“Chirp.”

“It feels so nice.”

“Growl!”

“Honk honk!”

“What? You want to be petted too? All right, come on.”

Once I started petting Bear Bear and Perca, who came over demanding pets too, my other monsters also came over and nudged their heads against me.

“Okay, okay. I get it.”

Before I knew it, things had turned into an odd ceremony of everyone taking turns having me pet them. The only ones not joining in the circle were Fau, who was sitting on top of my head and singing a song, and Drimo, who was looking on with an air of exasperation.

“La-di-daaa! ♪”

“Squeak.”

*Ding-dong.*

“Oh! I think it’s time!”

“Mm!”

“Let’s see, I ended up with about 450,000 evets? So I got 250,000 evets just from the titles... Wow.”

*Those are some great titles!* Though actually, it did seem like not a lot of people were able to get the dinosaur-related titles, so maybe I had gotten a bigger bonus from them than I’d expected.

“I’m sure I didn’t get as much as the people who were grinding dinosaurs, but maybe this means I’ll rank pretty high?”

*“The calculations are now complete. Mr. Yuto, your total number of acquired evets is 452,317. You ranked in eleventh place.”*

“Huh? Eleventh place? Whaaat?! Seriously?”

How’d I rank so high? The player in first place had 480,000 evets, so it had

actually been a pretty close game. Weren't there people who beat the Brachio like twenty times? Or did they splurge even more of their events than I did? I guess that was a possibility. There were Terrariums, perfume, Ammolites, fossils, and Amber. Plenty of interesting items to spend all your money on.

"Mm-mmm!"

"...♪"

"Aw, thanks guys."

My monsters were congratulating me on my rank.

"Let's see, I get 200,000 G and ten bonus points? That's so much! And I got four event exchange tickets."

Not a bad reward at all, I had to say. And with the extra tickets, I now had twelve event exchange tickets, four Dinosaur Enclosure Set tickets, and three Extra Large Aquarium exchange tickets.

"I also got one hundred rank points."

I could use rank points to obtain various additional rewards. Ranks 1 through 100 received one hundred points, ranks 101 through 1,000 received ninety points, then every next thousandth rank received ten fewer points. It looked like even last place received at least ten points.

"Oh, looks like Rikyu's group ranked high too."

There were several other people I knew among the top one hundred players. Everyone had worked really hard.

*"This marks the end of the event. The items currently in your inventory, save for event-exclusive items, will be transferred out as personal belongings."*

"Figures. I guess some items can't be taken out of the event..."

I could keep the Terrariums and all the mined items, right? I collected a bunch, okay? If those all vanished, I'd just collapse on the spot. I really wasn't sure about the Ammolites, but I'd held on to five of them just in case.

*"You will now be transported out of the event."*

After the announcement played, my monsters and I were teleported to the

garden in front of the veranda on my home base.

“We’re home!”

“Ya!”

Mamori, my Zashiki-Warashi, came jumping out from the living room to greet us. She had a big smile on her face as she threw her arms around me. I was glad she was so happy to see me, but...time in the event was sped up, so though for me it felt like I hadn’t seen her in a long time, it should have only been a few hours for her. Oh well, I was still glad she was happy. After I patted her head to her satisfaction, I went inside to the living room and opened up my inventory.

“All right, what items did I keep from the event...?”

I opened up my status window, praying for my items to still be in my inventory.

“Oh! I still have my Terrariums and creatures! Looks like I was also able to keep the Ammolites and dinosaur items.”

All my items were still sitting in my inventory. The Terrariums were treated as household objects now, but I probably wouldn’t be able to place all of them down. The Extra Large Terrarium especially would probably take up a lot of space. The only item I had lost was the key I used in the pirate ship event.

“Also...it looks like some new features were unlocked.”

I checked the data. The feature that seemed most relevant to me was regarding mascots—I could now increase my maximum number owned.

“Yes, take my money!”

When it came to mascots, the more the merrier!

“Whoops, I also have to check what I can exchange my points for, and the exchange ticket list. Man, it’s almost funny how busy I suddenly am!”

*Okay, show me! What kind of items can I exchange my points for?*

I opened up the list.

“Whoa, there are a lot of choices.”

The items at the very top of the list were weapons and armor. That was a pass



for me. I had no need for them.

“Potions might be a good call. This could also be a good opportunity to get some food ingredients. I’ll consider them possible candidates.”

The next thing that caught my eye was the list relating to households. There were a lot of objects that sounded interesting, but there were also options for enlarging my home or adding new features to it, like expanding the garden and upgrading the workshop, for example. And that wasn’t all.

“Whoa, hold up! There’s a pool option! Wait, maybe I should get the spring instead?”

The list included not only a regular pool but also a large spring and other bodies of water. Not only could we all swim in them, but I could even leave my underwater-type mascots there to play. Eulenspiegel had also said that a pool was required to receive a heart from an undine. If I wanted to get a Tamed Monster’s Heart from Reflet, I *had* to get one of these. In addition to all that, there were a lot of other fascinating objects to choose from.

“A botanical garden and a prehistoric garden? There’s even a private beach! Awesome!”

If I kept looking at the home section, I’d want to buy everything. I decided to check out the other options.

“Let’s check the mascots... Oh, a sea otter!”

Right, the sea otter was added to the exchange list after I captured it. I could make that sea otter mine? *Hell yeah! That’s what I’m talking about!*

Dinosaurs were also on the list as mascots. I could even select a Raptor or a Tyranno. *Could those really be called mascots?* But unlike regular mascots, they couldn’t be selected unless you already had a particular garden or installation. Their description stated that there were certain conditions required to obtain them as mascots, like having a prehistoric forest or body of water.

“Last are the Tamer-exclusive rewards.”

As usual, there were equipment and incubators exclusive to Tamers, as well as a list of eggs.

“The most expensive one is...a ‘Rainbow egg’? Rainbow?”

What would hatch from *that*? I couldn’t think of anything right off the bat. Had a rainbow shown up anywhere in this event...? The only thing I could think of was the Ammolite, since it was shiny and rainbow-colored. So did that mean this egg would hatch some sort of seashell monster? Maybe it would be like an ammonite. What I really wanted was a dinosaur-type monster... The egg that cost the second highest points was an Origin Dragon egg. Could that be a dinosaur? Dinosaurs and dragons were sort of similar, after all.

“Oh, right. I should see what I can get with tickets too.”

I needed to check out if there was any overlap with the items I could get with points and the items I could get with tickets, so that I could work things out to get as many high-cost items as I could.

“Wait, tickets...? Oh! *Now* I remember!”

I hadn’t used my rare drop ticket! I even brought it into the event with me specifically to use it! I totally forgot about it!

“I-It’s gonna expire... I need to use it for something as soon as I can... Okay, well, first I need to focus on the rewards...”

I pulled myself together, then checked the items I could get with the exchange tickets and found that there was some overlap with what I could obtain with points. The event exchange tickets could be used to get most of the items on the point-exchange list. Though it looked like I wouldn’t be able to use tickets to get the more expensive items on the point-exchange list side.

“For the Dinosaur Enclosure Set, I can choose from a forest and a swamp... But I need to expand my home first. Then, from the enclosure, I can select from the dinosaurs that are able to be kept there.”

For example, if I chose the prehistoric swamp option, I could choose from among a Spino, a Brachio, or a group of Raptors. It was a similar feature to having mascots, but choosing them this way made it so they didn’t take up one of my mascot slots. The Extra Large Aquarium exchange ticket had the same deal. I could choose from the monstrous dunkleosteus, a coelacanth, and an oarfish, among others.

Also, about the Aquarium: it seemed that it could house several creatures at the same time, and I could release the creatures I had in my Terrarium into it. It looked like there was an upper limit, but I would be able to house a good number of sea creatures inside.

“There are a lot of things I want to set up, but first I need to expand my home.”

After I was done checking the lists, I headed to the real estate agent and expanded my home to the maximum size I was currently able to. I had to say goodbye to all the money I’d earned, but this was a necessary expense.

My garden and house were now over twice their original sizes. Though it was just the space inside that had expanded; it would look exactly the same from the outside.

“Okay, I’ll make this big room the animal room! I’ll buy an indoor garden and —”

Jeez, I was really going crazy with the renovations. This was as fun as playing one of those home-customization games.

Here was the layout of my new-and-improved home:

First, on the first floor, a new path appeared around the end of the veranda, past the transporter and the shed. It was a hallway that connected to the new rooms.

There were a total of four rooms lining the new hallway. First was a playroom filled with toys that my monsters, mascots, and yokai could play in. I filled the room with some vintage games, like ohajiki, so we could all play them here together anytime.

Then there was the indoor garden with all the bugs and other creatures I’d caught. It was a miniature garden that included silvergrass and small sawtooth oak trees, as well as a flowing stream, making it feel like I wasn’t even indoors at all. An image of the sky was projected on the ceiling and would change to match the outside time. The room was about two hundred square feet, so I could easily find and observe any bug I wanted to. This would be a great place to pull up a chair and relax to the sounds of the insects and the babbling brook.

The third room was the aquarium room, where I placed the Extra Large Aquariums. The tanks could be joined together, so I currently had the room set up so that there was one huge tank three times the size of the original aquariums. It seemed like the water in the tank was neither fresh nor saltwater, since I could put creatures that inhabited both inside. There was a dunkleosteus and coelacanth swimming around alongside other various fish, and a sea otter was floating on the surface of the water. I had also gotten a great white shark as a mascot, which didn't seem like it was going to attack my other mascots or animals. That was a huge relief.

The last room was a darkroom. I didn't have an urgent use for this room, but I went ahead and got it because it sounded interesting. It was a room where I could place and even cultivate glowing items like the luminous moss, glow shroom, and fluorescent gentians. I'd bought it on impulse since it sounded like it would look fairly fantastical.

“My yard got bigger too!”

An arch-shaped tunnel made out of entwined ivy had appeared in the back of the garden, which led to its new additions. Even just going through the tunnel was a lot of fun; I felt like I was in a Miyazaki movie. Halfway through the arch tunnel, the path split into two directions.

To the right were the prehistoric forest, prehistoric garden, prehistoric marsh, prehistoric pond, and prehistoric mountain all consolidated together, creating a (miniature) Prehistoric Island. Though despite calling it “miniature,” it was still pretty big. This was where all the dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures had been released, like the Meganeuras and ammonites. I was pretty sure all the creatures that had inhabited the Prehistoric Island were here. I couldn't fight or catch them, and I could only have minimal physical contact with them, but that was enough. In a sense, this area was like having my own private Jurassique Parque. It was a dinosaur-lover's dream.

The left side of the fork led to a crystal clear spring, a forest crawling with creatures, and a private beach all merged together. Here was where all the non-prehistoric creatures I'd caught in the event were placed. Both the spring and the beach could be played in, so this would be a nice place to hang with my monsters.

In addition to the new installations, I had also upgraded the farm in my yard and the basement workshop. Even though the exterior looked the same, it was like a whole new house. The New Yuto Estate, so to speak.

I had also welcomed in a lot of new mascots. In addition to mascots like the regular-sized dinosaurs and the great white shark that were fixed to certain installations, I'd also acquired some others. First, the mini dinosaurs. I had lots of cute, chibified dinosaurs about two heads tall. There were five types: the Mascot Tyranno, Mascot Brachio, Mascot Plesio, Mascot Tricera, and the Mascot Ptera. But, without exaggeration, the stars of the show were the sea otters. I'd been surprised to see that both an adult and baby sea otter were available, and that I was able to obtain both. The baby sea otter was just way too cute for words.

Moreover, by using my increased mascot slots, I was able to get the moon bear cub I'd missed out on last time, as well as the newly added calf, foal, piglet, and lamb. Everyone was playing to their heart's content in my newly enlarged home. It looked like the sea otters and the Mascot Plesio could teleport across the various bodies of water. I was surprised to see them wherever I went. But, there was one problem.

"Hmm, looks like I spent all my points and tickets on my home and mascots..."

At some point I'd started having so much fun, I couldn't stop myself. Because of that, I had no more points left over to spend on an egg or an incubator. I was left with one leftover point, so I used it to get an item called Bifrons's Bone Meal. It seemed to be a kind of fertilizer, so I was sure I could get some use out of it.

"Welp, this turned out pretty nice. I'm just hyped that I was able to get dinosaurs!"

*Man, what a fun event.* Beaches, dinosaurs, gathering, fishing. We'd had heart-pounding battles *and* a relaxing vacation. It was an extravaganza of fun things to do. There *were* some horror and suspense elements too, but those only added to the excitement!

"Mm?"

"What did you think of the event, Olto?"

“Mm-mm!”

“Did you all have fun?”

“...!”

“Squeak squeak!”

Sakura and Drimo, usually the more reserved types, were absolutely raving, so they must've had an enjoyable time too. Everyone else was also dancing around them. The most important thing was that all of my monsters had fun. For now, I figured I should organize all the items I'd earned in the event.

“Now, where should I display my Ammolites?”

# Online Forum [Assemble, Fans of Silver-Haired] All Things Silver-Haired-Related, Part 16

This thread is for people who are interested in Silver-Haired, the famously eccentric pioneer, and his monsters. Feel free to exchange information about them here.

Slander or abuse will not be tolerated.

Please treat sensitive information with care.

This thread may be deleted without warning should we receive a complaint from Silver-Haired himself.

---

97: Yang Yang

This event began and ended with Silver-Haired.

---

98: visitorfromanotherplanet

I know he did a lot, but does it warrant saying that?

---

99: Yodel-Ay-Hee

He discovered the Prehistoric Island super early, stupefying all the players and the devs, and he discovered the ways to beat all the bosses.

No sooner did he give the demon boss a run for its money than he triggered the jellyfish raid boss.

Calling this an event made for Silver-Haired is no overstatement.

---

100: visitorfromanotherplanet

Y-You're right! This event really *did* begin and end with Silver-Haired!

---

---

101: Willow

Hey, you wouldn't believe what's going on with Silver-Haired's house! It's crazy!

---

102: Yang Yang

How so?

---

103: Willow

It's crazy, I tell you! Like, crazy crazy!

---

104: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Crazy enough that you can't think of any other words, I see.

---

105: Willow

He's got loads of mascots! And loads of household objects!

I've never seen so many installations before!

It's crazy!

---

106: Yang Yang

Wait, how do you know all this? You can peek into his farm, but definitely not his home base.

---

107: visitorfromanotherplanet

Are you close enough with him that you were invited in?

Y-You... Since when?!

---

108: Willow

'Course not.

---



109: visitorfromanotherplanet

That tracks.

---

110: Willow

I don't like how quickly you accepted that!

---

111: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Onto more important things—how do you know what's going on with Silver-Haired's house?

---

112: Willow

From Mamori's Diary!

She just posted an update!

---

113: Yang Yang

Didn't she *just* update not too long ago? There's already a new one?

---

114: visitorfromanotherplanet

Didn't you know? The Zashiki-Warashi's Diary doesn't update on a regular schedule.

Sometimes she doesn't post for a while, and sometimes she makes a series of posts.

---

115: Yodel-Ay-Hee

She's more likely to upload when something Diary-worthy happens.

Though some things probably depend on the Zashiki-Warashi's AI.

---

116: Yang Yang

So basically, the thing with Silver-Haired's house is

amazing enough to make Mamori want to make a series of posts?

---

117: Willow

Pretty much. Silver-Haired gave his house a whole new facelift.

---

118: Yodel-Ay-Hee

I'm watching the vid right now.

You weren't lying! This is crazy!

---

119: Willow

See?

---

120: Yodel-Ay-Hee

First off, he has so many mascots I've never seen before, I was wondering what the heck happened.

Then, while I was looking at those cute little dinosaurs waddling around—bam! Regular-sized dinosaurs are right behind them!

---

121: Willow

They could be exchanged for event points, but I don't think anyone else has gotten *that* many, have they? Lots of players have been uploading videos of them, but at most they have three or four.

Just how much did he spend on them...?

Knowing Silver-Haired, I guess I'm not surprised that he passed on all the weapons and went straight for the mascots.

---

122: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Then, when I finally got a look behind them, there were all those insane installations!

It's like looking at a replica of the Prehistoric Island!

---

123: Willow

Not just the Prehistoric Island. The other areas are insanely big too.

Though from the outside, it just looks like a regular Japanese-style house, since just the space inside was expanded.

But the inside is a paradise.

---

124: Yodel-Ay-Hee

OMG! What the heck?! He's got a garden *inside* his house? I so want to paint that!

So cool! This is the kind of house I want!

---

125: Yang Yang

Me too! I want one of those tiny dinos so bad!

---

126: visitorfromanotherplanet

I want that darkroom! It looks so dreamlike!

---

127: Willow

See what I mean? It's crazy, right? Right? Right?!

---

128: Yodel-Ay-Hee

What are *you* bragging about?

---

129: Yang Yang

Monsters, yokai, mascots. They're all jumbled together, so I don't even know how many there are.

But it looks like so much fun.

---

130: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Seeing this sort of makes me want to become a Tamer.

I can't change my job class, but I *can* learn Tame or Command.

---

131: visitorfromanotherplanet

I mean, if you just want mascots, you don't need to learn any skills or change your job class.

---

132: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Yeah, those mascots are cute!

But I wanna play with a tree or water nymph!

---

133: visitorfromanotherplanet

Don't indulge your desires so much!

Make do with a squirrel.

---

134: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Ooh yeah, petting a fluffy squirrel sounds nice!

And Silver-Haired's squirrel looks mega floofy.

---

135: Yang Yang

I think his squirrel evolved into a special evolution.

---

136: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Really?

So even if I learn Tame, I won't be able to get the same type of squirrel?

---

137: visitorfromanotherplanet

Wow, you're actually more interested than I thought you'd be.

---

138: Willow

Unfortunately, not much is known about that evolution. That little guy even beat the raid boss.

---

139: Yang Yang

Oh yeah, didn't he throw some bright green ball in the promotion video?

---

140: Willow

Didn't the squirrel deal the final blow too?

---

141: Yodel-Ay-Hee

I see... He's not just any ordinary squirrel, but the Chosen Squirrel.

Drats.

---

142: visitorfromanotherplanet

That squirrel turned out to be Super Squirrel.

Among all of Silver-Haired's remarkable monsters, I thought he seemed the most ordinary...

---

143: Willow

The elemental monsters, and the bear, who have all those rabid fans. The mole who can turn into a dragon, and the penguin.

Yeah. The squirrel was the most ordinary one.

---

144: visitorfromanotherplanet

But now look how incredible he turned out!

In Silver-Haired's hands, he evolved into an evolution nobody's ever heard of in no time at all!

---

145: Yodel-Ay-Hee

A Silver-Haired before and after.

There's no chance of me doing the same thing.

He's Silver-Haired, after all.

---

146: Yang Yang

But I think more people might try taming squirrels on the off chance a miracle happens.

---

147: visitorfromanotherplanet

Tamers will, probably. Squirrels are cute even if they don't get a special evolution anyway.

I bet Silver-Haired's squirrel stole the hearts of everyone who got to see him up close during this event.

---

148: Willow

Speaking of Silver-Haired's squirrel, he kinda stands out with how humanlike he is, huh?

---

149: Yang Yang

Maybe it has to do with his favorability score?

Now that you say it, he does seem kind of different.

---

150: Willow

After watching Silver-Haired's stream and Mamori's Diary, I get the sense that he's kind of a mischievous rascal.

---

151: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Ahhh! What should I do?!

I can't decide!

---

152: visitorfromanotherplanet

If you're struggling so hard to decide, why don't you just go ahead and learn Tame? Squirrels look like they have a lot of uses.

---

153: Yang Yang

They're surprisingly capable at stuff like recon, scouting, and gathering.

And now we've learned that they can hold their own in a fight if you raise them right.

---

154: Willow

And they're cute.

---

155: Yodel-Ay-Hee

A life with a capable squirrel on my shoulder! I can see it now!

---

156: visitorfromanotherplanet

Sounds like he's gonna go for it.

---

157: Yang Yang.

Yup. And I can even envision him moping over the fact that it didn't get a special evolution.

---

158: Willow

He's definitely going to tame a bunch of undines.

---

159: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Hey, taming a lot of water nymphs is what men do, okay?

Silver-Haired's the impressive one for being able to resist doing that! His mental fortitude is inhuman!

But I don't want people to start calling me Yodel-Ay-Creep or something.

Ahhh! I still can't decide!

---

160: visitorfromanotherplanet

Just hurry up and learn Tame. Yodel-Ay-Creep.

---

161: Willow

Go on and tame a bunch of undines. Then paint a picture of them and sell it.

Yodel-Ay-Creep.

---

162: Willow

Th-That's genius!

If you don't want to be called Yodel-Ay-Creep, then paint us a picture of your water nymphs, please!

---

163: Yodel-Ay-Hee

I-Is that a request? Or a threat?

---



A LATE-START

# TAMER'S LAID-BACK LIFE 10



A Late-Start Tamer's Laid-Back Life











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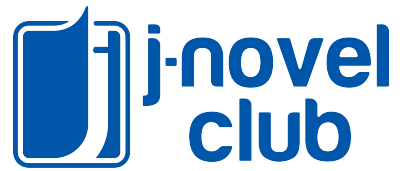
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by Yuu Tanaka

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