

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

9

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Illustrator:  
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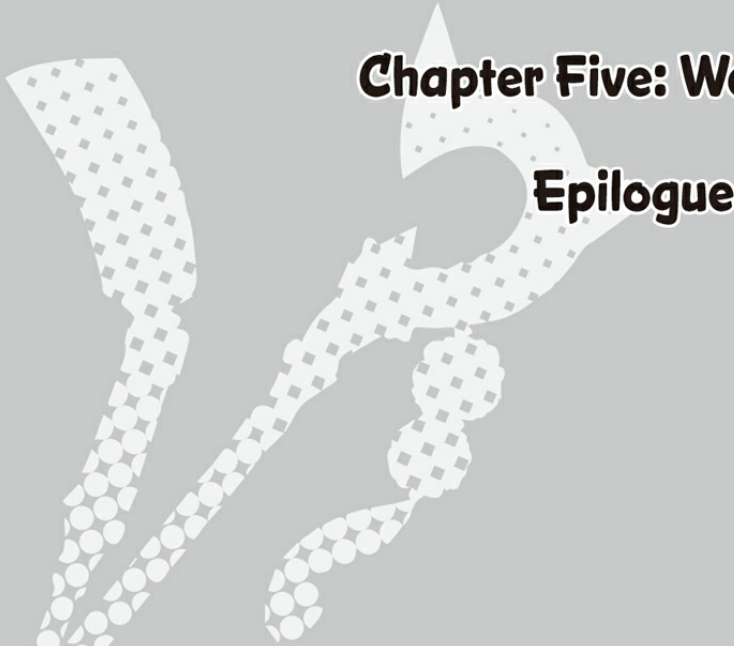
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A Late-Start Tamer's  
Laid-Back Life

# Chapter One: The Summer Event Begins

“My preparations are all complete. All that’s left now is to wait for the event to start.”

“Mm-mm!”

“...!”

It was while I was waiting leisurely on the veranda that the announcement finally came.

*“The event to welcome the second-wave players will now commence.”*

“Here we go!”

I selected “Yes” when the prompt appeared to ask if I wanted to participate. Instantly, my monsters and I began to shine, and then we were transported to an unfamiliar room: a midsize studio apartment. The only furnishings were a bed and a table big enough for six people, and the floors were wooden, to my surprise. Well, a tougher flooring made sense, since players would be wearing shoes.

There were no windows, but a large lamp hung from the ceiling emitting a bright white light, so the lack of them was hardly noticeable. The room looked a bit old and lived-in overall, which brought to mind the sort of cheap inn that would appear in a fantasy novel. It was charming in its own way.

“What’s this? We’re not on a playing field?”

“Hum!”

“Squeak!”

My monsters had also been safely transported with me. I chose my party members to have a balance of fighting and crafting abilities. Our team was Olto, Sakura, Reflet, Himka, Drimo, and Perca. I hesitated a little on Perca, but I ended up bringing him along so that he could level up. That wasn’t the only reason, though. It was just a rumor on the forums, but people had been



speculating that this event would take place on the water.

It was currently the middle of summer in the real world, but LJO hadn't yet held a summer-related event. This was in spite of the fact that other games regularly held ocean-related events, like beach events or gacha rolls for swimsuits. People were convinced that LJO would do something for the season too. So it wasn't farfetched to expect that this event would be the one.

"Looks like I've got all my items."

For this event, players could bring with them at most ten items. Since crafting sets were considered a single item, I went ahead and brought all of mine with me. That included my concoct, cooking, and alchemy sets. I also brought a farming hoe, logging ax, mining pickax, fishing pole, and fishing bait, so I was perfectly set up to gather materials. I couldn't reasonably participate in battles anyway, so I had to do my best in crafting. Those items took up eight slots, so for my last two items, I brought an Escape Orb and a Flee Orb. These were for getting me out of a crisis if it came to it.

*"We will now explain the details of the event."*

"Oh, I got a message."

I looked it over. The first half was the usual precautions, such as the handling of pictures and warnings about harassment.

"Okay, so as the earlier announcements said, it's going to be an adventure taking place in a large city and around the island where the city is located. Here, we'll be earning points through various actions..."

As I continued reading, I found a few new bits of information. The first was the deal with this room. We were in the Event City Bazaar. This room was one of the special homes for players within the Bazaar. Each player was given their own personal room, which could be used to log out and other purposes.

The other important bit of information was regarding the currency that would be used during the event. To my surprise, I wouldn't be able to use any of the currency that I already had on hand. Instead we would be using a currency with the unimaginative name "evets." This was probably for the sake of leveling the playing field, considering that this was an event for the second-wave players.



I was given one hundred evets to start, but I had no way of knowing how much that was really worth.

“Should we start by heading outside?”

“Honk!”

“Hm!”

Normally, when I left my room, I would emerge in the large plaza in the middle of the city. However, only for the very first time apparently, I would be transported to a random spot within the city in order to mitigate congestion. I could easily access my home from the plaza by using a menu window.

I opened the doors of my event home and stepped outside. I was transported somewhere that looked like the back alley of a residential area. The street was lined with a messy array of brick houses. I wouldn't go as far as to call it a slum, but it did sort of have the appearance of a rough part of town. Though I doubted I'd be mugged by an NPC or anything.

“Let's start by looking for a shop. I want to figure out how much my currency is worth. You all keep an eye out too, okay?”

“Mm-mm!”

“Hm!”

After a few minutes of walking, said shop practically fell into our laps. Once we left the alley and made it onto a main road, we found plenty of NPC carts lining the street. There were carts selling juice and sweets, along with those selling flowers and accessories. Oh of course, though I called them carts, they weren't like the ones you might see at a Japanese festival. They were smaller, like a small box with small wheels attached to it. Sort of like a European-style wagon.

I decided to start by approaching the cart nearest to me. It was a flower cart, tended by a petite elderly woman. The flowers, which looked like sunflowers, were being sold from a basket. I thought maybe they were some special item, but the flowers were just listed as a weed, with no effects. All the plants in the world of LJO that had no special effects were classified as either weeds or shrubbery.



“Are you selling locally picked flowers?”

“These flowers here are ones I grew in my own home garden.”

“Wow, really?”

Each sunflower cost one ever. I’d assumed getting one hundred evets at the outset was chump change, but I guessed its value was different from gold. I decided to try buying a sunflower. I picked one up and selected the option to purchase.

“All right, here you go.”

“Thank you, son.”

*Buying and selling works the same, huh?* The sunflower was now in my inventory. The truth was, I had another reason for buying this other than it being the first time I had seen one. I wondered if I could get some seeds out of it if I dried it. Rick would like that. I took out the sunflower and appraised it, but it really was just a regular sunflower, so it seemed unlikely I could get any—

*“You have appraised a sunflower. It will be registered to your event encyclopedia.”*

“Huh?”

There was a sudden announcement. *Event encyclopedia?* When I checked it out, I found that an extra page called “Event Encyclopedia” had been added after my regular encyclopedia sections. There were four categories in this extra section—Plants, Animals, Insects, and Ocean.

I looked at the plant encyclopedia, where there were already five types of plants registered. In addition to the sunflower I just appraised, there were also hydrangea, Japanese beech, sawtooth oak, and mizunara listed along with their pictures. It looked like the plants I already had in my regular encyclopedia prior to the event would be considered appraised without my having to do so again.

“So there’s twenty-five left?”

Thirty varieties could be registered under each category of the event encyclopedia. We were obviously meant to go to various locations to complete this encyclopedia during the event.



“It might be fun to fill this out as we go.”

“...♪”

“Oh? You think so too, Sakura?”

Sakura was also in favor of obtaining some new plants.

After buying the sunflower, I decided to go around to check out the other sellers. By doing so, I found out that even if I appraised the items being sold at the carts, they wouldn't be registered to my encyclopedia unless I purchased them first, but it worked fine once that had been done. I also registered a rhinoceros beetle being sold at a cart after buying it. However, that wasn't what was important to me.

“Hold up... I can own a rhinoceros beetle?”

It looked like a regular rhinoceros beetle. It wasn't a tamed monster, and it didn't even seem like raising it would give me any sort of benefit. And actually, the moment I put it into my inventory, it wasn't considered a living creature. But I didn't care about that. Owning a rhinoceros beetle was every boy's dream. I couldn't believe that dream could come true in a game...

“Can I make my own case for it? I think these cases are made completely out of plastic, though...”

Each beetle was being sold in a clear plastic case. It was one of those cases with a blue or green basketlike lid that I often saw in real life. It was called a Terrarium, so was it exclusively used for that purpose? *So if I have one of these, could I use it to keep insects I catch?*

If that were the case, I definitely wanted one.

“Let's look around town.”

As I walked through the town with that thought, more players started to show up. And almost all of them were staring at me.

“Mmm-mm!”

“Honk honk!”

*Well, my monsters do stand out.* Add Perca into the mix and we stood out

more than any other party. They were all friendly and even waving their hands, so they were bound to get the attention of even people who didn't like cute things.

*They're keeping their distance, and no one's coming up to talk to me, so maybe I should just not pay them any mind.* I ignored the onlookers and returned to my shopping, but I never found what I was looking for.

"Hmm, no one's selling a Terrarium, huh..."

*I really want one!*

"Squeak squeak!"

"What is it, Drimo?"

"Squeak!"

Drimo suddenly started tugging at the hem of my robe. He seemed to have spotted something.

"Did you find a Terrarium?!"

"Squeak?"

I followed Drimo's gaze.

"...Hm?"

It looked like it was *not* the Terrarium that he found. *Well, I shouldn't be surprised.* He seemed to be staring at a space between two buildings. What was he looking at? As I approached the gap, I saw what it was that Drimo was reacting to.

"Uh...a cat?"

"Squeak."

Come to think of it, this was probably the first time I had seen a stray cat in this world—though cats did exist as mascots. Judging from a glance, it was a brown tabby cat.

"Uh-huh, it's a regular cat."

After I appraised it, one of the squares under "Animals" became filled in. First



the sunflower, and now the cat—it looked like the subjects of the event encyclopedia were all fairly common plants and animals.

“It also registered the rhinoceros beetle. This is starting to feel like I’m doing a summer break research project.”

Actually, that probably *was* what this was supposed to be. It was currently summer break, and a lot of students played this game. There were probably a lot of elementary and middle schoolers too, so it wouldn’t be odd for this event to have been made with that in mind.

“Well, all right. Now I know that there are a bunch of things I can register to the encyclopedia in town too. Should we indulge ourselves in a little town exploration?”

“Hum!”

“Hm!”

“You’re all motivated too, huh? Okay then, let’s make it a competition to see who can find the next thing to register! How about it?”

“...!”

“Honk honk!”

Then, ten minutes later...

“...!”

“Whoa! Nice find, Sakura!”

Sakura was pointing at a small, white butterfly that had stopped to rest its wings on top of the leaf of a weed. I appraised it. It was instantly registered to my encyclopedia.

“A cabbage butterfly! Nice, great job. Keep it up!”

“...!”

“Mmm!”

“Hm!”

After seeing me praise Sakura, the others became even more motivated. They

started searching for the next thing that could be registered to the encyclopedia more seriously than ever.

Reflet was on her hands and knees as she examined the ground, looking way too much like a little rascal. Even though she was wearing a dress. The image didn't match up at all.

Incidentally, the weeds we found didn't get registered. To be more precise, they were all lumped together and registered as "Summer Weeds." When I selected that, I was able to see the ten types of weeds I'd found, like ragweed and green foxtail, along with their pictures. *Alas, poor weeds.* Herbs also weren't registered to the encyclopedia, even though ones like Basilil were growing here.

"Maybe they need to be more unique... Though I don't know whether a cat or a sunflower counts as being unique."

"Hmm!"

While I was looking through the encyclopedia thinking about that, this time it was Himka who spotted something. He was beckoning me over urgently.

"Hm-hm!"

"What did you find this time?"

"Hm!"

Himka was pointing at a lone dog tied to the front door of a house. My guess was that it was a Labrador Retriever. But when I appraised it, it just showed up simply as "Dog." The dog offered no resistance even when Himka ran up and threw his arms around it.

"All right! Nice, Himka!"

"Hmm!"

I unintentionally patted Himka on the head like a dog while he himself was petting the actual dog. He seemed to like it, though, so it was probably okay.

We continued walking around the town in the same fashion for two hours, and we ended up doing a complete lap around the place. The town was pretty spacious, its size probably necessary in order to accommodate all the players.



In the center of town was a plaza where players were free to open up their own stalls, and it was already bustling with people. At a glance, the plaza didn't look that big, but apparently the size changed depending on how many players were in the area, so it wouldn't be a problem even if everyone gathered here.

"All right, we managed to find a Terrarium *and* filled out the encyclopedia a bit."

In addition to the sunflower, rhinoceros beetle, cabbage butterfly, cat, and dog we had already found, we also found a Joro spider. Since we had to search meticulously for insects, the encyclopedia could still turn out to be surprisingly difficult to fill out.

We also found morning glories entwined around a gate, but for some reason I couldn't register those to my encyclopedia. They weren't even lumped in with the weeds, so it was unclear why they didn't get added in. Well, if I found another chance to appraise them again and it still didn't work, I would ask Alyssa about it. Since players weren't divided into servers this time, she was probably around here somewhere.

"Okay, I've got a good feel of the town, so how about we go outside of it next?"

"Mm!"

"Honk honk!"

Perhaps looking forward to exploring a new area, Olto led the way with a smile on his face. My other monsters looked excited too. It was worth it to participate in this event just to be able to see them like that.

"Squeak squeak?"

"Oops, sorry. I'm coming, I'm coming."

"...♪"

I had already procured the information regarding what was outside of the Event City Bazaar. The old man selling the rhinoceros beetles told me about it. There were gates on the east and west ends of the Bazaar. The east end led to a stretch of plains while the west was a wooded area, both geared for beginners.

Only weak monsters appeared in the plains and the wooded area. They were probably on the same level of difficulty as Zone One. That meant that I would have no issue with the outskirts of the Bazaar either. I decided to leave from the east gate—I wanted to warm up in the plains where I'd have good visibility.

“Is this the road the guy at the stand told me about?”

“Mm!”

“Squeak.”

I headed east from the gate, where a road paved with brick stretched ahead. Apparently, if I followed this brick road, it would lead me to a village.

“All right, let's go!”

“Hum!”

“Hm!”

I felt at ease knowing there were very few monsters around this road. There wasn't a zero chance of monsters appearing, but they wouldn't pose a problem to us. Sakura restrained the one Fanged Rat that did appear, which became a sacrifice to Perca's battle practice.

I was surprised to see I could gain evets just from felling monsters. I was sure they had explained that event points could be obtained by defeating enemies. That meant the in-game currency “evets” equaled “event points.”

*So does that mean if I splurge too much on shopping, my rank will go down?  
I'll have to be careful.*

“Well, I'll think about that when I need to. It'd be lame not to buy the things I want.”

“...!”

As we were leisurely making our way along the tranquil path, Sakura found something. She was crouching down at the side of the road and looking intently at a grassy spot.

“A mantis?”

“...♪”



“Oh wow, you can just reach out and grab it.”

“...?”

Sakura firmly grasped the mantis and tried handing it over to me. Very intimidatingly, I might add.

“Th-Thanks.”

“...♪”

We came across many other insects and animals along the road: a white-tailed skimmer, a swallowtail butterfly, a Japanese honey bee, and a migratory locust. Aside from insects, we even saw a tanuki.

Meanwhile, monsters were few and far between. I saw some players here and there battling monsters in areas away from the road, so the road itself really must have been special. It was probably set up in a way to keep monsters from approaching.

*Clip-clop clip-clop clip-clop.*

I was crouched over at the roadside turning over rocks, wondering if I could find pill bugs too, when I heard what sounded similar to the clopping of horse hooves. *No, it's not “similar.” It is a horse.*

“Is that Siegfried...? No, it's not!”

“It has been quite a while, Yuto.”

“Murakage. And Ayakage too.”

“Yes. I'm delighted you remembered.”

*There's no way I'd forget characters like you two.* Two ninjas already made a strong impression, but they were also a married couple, which was a terrifying prospect. They were more impactful than any other players I met in this game.

“Anyway, I see you've got yourself some horses.”

“That is correct!”

Murakage rode a black horse, while Ayakage a white one. Murakage happily stroked his horse's neck.

“This horse of mine is named Dust Storm. My wife’s horse is Blizzard.”

“They look a little more slender than Siegfried’s horse.”

“That they are. That’s because they’re different breeds.”

Apparently, Siegfried’s horse had already evolved twice, while Murakage’s and Ayakage’s horses had only just recently evolved once.

“So, what are you up to, Yuto?”

“Huh? I’m looking for bugs. Look, there are pill bugs.”

I showed Murakage the pill bug that I placed in the palm of my hand.

“Y-You seem to be enjoying yourself.”

“Ha ha ha, I subconsciously reverted back to childhood.”

“Are you headed towards the village up ahead?”

“For now, yeah.”

“Is that so? In that case, we may very well meet again there.”

“Sure, see you there.”

Naturally, I wasn’t going to suggest we go together. After all, they were on horseback. There was no telling when we’d arrive at the village if we went at my party’s pace. Murakage and Ayakage seemed to understand that too. They said their goodbyes and took off.

“All right then, should we start heading for the village too?”

“Honk!”

I was a little worried Perca might have a hard time doing stuff on land, but it was less of a problem than I expected. That was to say, he wasn’t as fast as my other monsters, but compared to me, he was moving quickly enough.

We walked for about thirty minutes, me admiring Perca’s chonky butt as he waddled all the way, when the village to the east that I had heard about came into view.

“It’s pretty small, huh? Can that village even take in players?”

As we got closer, I saw that it really did look like a remote, desolate village.



There were only thirty wooden shabby huts that were just slightly bigger than the barn on my farm, lined up in a row along the border between the plains and a sandy beach.

I could see some fishing gear and small boats, so it must have been a fishing village, as I had heard. I continued to approach, examining the village, when a small window popped up with a *ping!* Then, I heard an announcement.

*“Would you like to enter the East Fishing Village?”*

“Well, yes...”

In an instant, the scene before my eyes changed. It looked like I had been transported right to the front entrance of the fishing village.

“Hmm? There are no other players here.”

I thought for sure that at least Murakage and Ayakage would be here, but the village was devoid of anyone but NPCs.

“Maybe there’s a village for each individual party?”

It was the same with dungeons. In order to prevent dungeons from becoming overrun with players, each party was transferred to their own individual instance.

“Well, this way means it’s much more chill than if it were packed with people.”

“Mm!”

The charm of the village would have been lost if it was crowded.

I walked lightly around the East Fishing Village and quickly spotted the first villager. He was a young man who looked like Urashima Taro, the protagonist of a certain folk tale. Villagers of insular villages like this were usually wary of outsiders. Therefore, in an effort not to put him on guard, I decided to do what I could to greet the man with a smile. *Smiling is fundamental for communication, after all!*

“You all show him how cute and friendly you are too!”

“Mm!”

“Hm!”

*They saluted me!* Mm-hmm, they were all very determined. I could always depend on my monsters.

“Hello there!”

“...♪”

After I called out to the young man, Sakura turned to him with a cheerful smile and a wave. It was super cute. There wasn’t a person on earth who wouldn’t melt from that.

“Squeak squeak. ♪”

*Drimo’s getting into it too!* Here was the ever-tough Drimo who usually gave a thumbs-up with his back turned, now folding his hands in front of his face and giving a slight tilt of his head. He followed my directions to a T.

*So cute. No really, he’s super cute, you hear me?* He was exploding with the cuteness of a mole that didn’t feel out of place at all. But for some reason, it wasn’t fully convincing.

It was sort of the same off-putting feeling I got when I saw a work colleague, who I thought of as being taciturn and reliable, turn up their excitement to the max during karaoke. Well, I guess he was having fun, so it didn’t matter.

“Oh, why hello!”

*Nice, he responded with a smile.* In fact, *he* started to approach *me*.

“My my, it’s been quite some time since we had travelers pass through here. What brings you to our little village?”

*I guess these aren’t the overly cautious type of villagers.*

“I heard at the Bazaar that there was a fishing village here. I came thinking I could get some fish.”

“I see!”

The young man’s expression was extraordinarily cheerful. It seemed like his favorability towards me was high to begin with.

*Maybe I won’t have any issues asking him some questions, then?*

“Um, I was wondering if you might tell me about your village’s specialties, if you have any. Such as food or places I should go see?”

“That’s a great question! There’s lots to do around here!”

The first thing he told me about was the beaches near the village.

“To the north, there’s Recreation Beach. To the south, you’ll find Warrior Beach. No monsters show up on the Recreation Beach, so it’s perfect if you just want to enjoy yourself.”

“Huh? No monsters appear at all?”

“That’s right! So you can play as much as you want there.”

It was a beach completely for sightseeing. *A present from the devs?*

“On the other hand, a good number of monsters show up on Warrior Beach, so you’ve gotta be careful there. Though it makes for a much better fishing location than Recreation Beach, so lots of villagers frequent there.”

So the Recreation Beach was purely for recreation, and not only were there no monsters, there weren’t even any regular fish.

“So you’re saying if I want any seafood, I need to go to Warrior Beach?”

“Oh, well, if you just want to eat some, we sell it in the village too.”

“Really?!”

“Yep.”

The young man told me about the shops that were in the village. There was a foodstuff store, a general store, a fishing gear store, an ocean supply store, an inn, and a boat rental store.

“Thank you, sir.”

“Well, see ya around.”

After my monsters and I parted ways with the young man, we rushed right for the stores.

“First and foremost, food!”

“Hum!”

“Honk!”

Reflet and Perca, who both loved fish, looked at me with hopeful eyes, having overheard that there would be a variety of fish around.

“Whoa! This *is* a fishing village, all right! They’ve got ocean fish!”

“Humm!”

“Honk honk!”

There was no stopping Reflet and Perca from breaking out into a happy dance.

Lots of different types of seafood were displayed on a street stall. Inside a wooden crate filled with an armful of ice were Begini Horse Mackerel, Begini Mackerel, Begini Octopus, and Begini Squid. All of them were the first saltwater fish I’d seen in this game. The ocean hadn’t been discovered yet in the regular playing field.

The middle-aged man at the stall, who was wearing a towel twisted into a headband, greeted me with a hearty voice. He sounded exactly like a fishmonger.

“Welcome! What’ll it be?”

“Hmm, all of them look good, but I can’t buy them all.”

Even the cheapest option, the Begini Horse Mackerel, cost twenty evets.

“Guess I don’t have much choice. Okay, for now I’ll take one mackerel and one horse mackerel, please!”

“You got it!”

*What should I make with these? Sashimi, or grill them with salt? Simmer in soy sauce, or sauté them? I have so many options... And I have white rice! The possibilities are endless.*

The fishmonger wrapped up the fish in a paper-thin sheet of wood. As I took it from him, I decided to ask him a question.

“Excuse me, but do you know any spots where I can cook?”

“Cook? Ha ha ha, so long as you’ve got cooking utensils, you can do it



wherever.”

Apparently, cooking in the middle of the village wouldn’t be a problem. If I were in a town, I’d probably be scolded for cooking on the roadside.

“So wait, son, you can cook? If so, could ya make somethin’ for me too? If ya make me something tasty, I can share some insider info with ya. And I can pay!”

“Do you mean it?”

“I do! A man doesn’t go back on his word!”

*I must have triggered some fetch quest or something. I should take this seriously.*

I decided to save my experimenting for later, focusing my efforts instead on making the best dish I could. “Make something tasty” was pretty vague, but making my best dish should cut it.

“In that case...”

I was more likely to produce a high-quality meal by making something simple rather than something complicated—though the greater variety of ingredients I used, the more extravagant it would look. And if I wanted to make something that didn’t require complex heat adjustments...

“Well, horse mackerel in ochazuke, obviously!”

That was the only thing that would satisfy all the requirements. At first, I thought *seasoned* minced horse mackerel would be a good choice, but I didn’t have any ginger or spring onions, so I gave up on that.

I jumped right into cooking. Preparing the dish was simple. I just had to trim and cut the fish, then take out the bones to use in the soup stock. Next, I placed the sliced fish on top of the white rice, poured the soup stock on top, sprinkled on some shredded dried seaweed, and then it was complete.

“Looks pretty good, if I do say so myself.”

Thanks to the method being simple, the quality was also high.

“Oh ho ho, this *does* look tasty! Well then, don’t mind if I dig in!”

When I handed the boss of the seafood shop the ochazuke over rice and fish,

he immediately started shoveling it in his mouth.

“Mm-hm! Delicious! This is top-notch!”

*Good, he likes it.* The boss kept shouting, “Delicious, delicious!” while he ate, and he polished off the dish in no time.

“Phew, that was satisfying.”

“I’m glad to hear that.”

“I *have* to share what I know with you now! Son, you want more fish, don’t you?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“Then here’s a juicy tidbit for ya. The fish I’m sellin’ at my stall can be caught in the water around here. If you cast a fishing line at Warrior Beach, you’ll be able to catch them.”

“I see.”

“But! You won’t be able to catch much fish just by doing that. If you cast from the shore, you can only catch a few fish. So, a boat.”

“Ha ha... So you’re telling me I need to rent a boat?”

“That I am. If you hit a good spot, you might even get fish biting at every cast.”

That really was solid information. Frankly, I was too afraid of the monsters to go out in a boat on our own. But if this was the way to get my hands on some ingredients, it wasn’t a bad idea to face the challenge.

“A boat, huh...”

“Oh, and take this.”

“Huh? Evets?”

“That’s right! That’s for the tasty meal!”

Not only did the seafood shop owner provide me with info, he even paid me three hundred evets. Cooking food for him really *had* been a fetch quest. With that, not only could I repurchase the Begin Horse Mackerel I had used for his

meal, but I could also buy the Begini Octopus and Begini Squid.

Oh yeah, the white rice and dried seaweed I used were items I had brought in with me of course. I could register twenty each of five different relevant items in the cooking and other crafting sets I had brought. If that wasn't possible, then crafters wouldn't have been able to do anything in the event at all.

I brought with me white rice and seaweed for onigiri, soy sauce, miso, and powdered edible grass, which could be used for multiple purposes. Naturally, I couldn't register a whole meal in the set, so I'd left behind the thick-rolled sushi.

"Making one dish got me three hundred evets, huh...? Aren't the evets we earn from beating monsters way too few, then? Oh, or maybe that was because they were minor enemies?"

I only got one evet each from the Gray Squirrels we defeated on the plains for beginners. Slaying a bunch of much stronger monsters was probably the way to make it among the top rankers.

"Oh well, it's impossible for me to earn evets through battles, so I'll just work hard in other endeavors."

For example, I could cook the fish I caught and sell those meals. But for that, I would need a lot of fish.

My only option really was to fish.

"Should we go to the boat rental shop?"

"Hum!"

"Honk!"

Reflet and Perca had been in especially high spirits ever since we made it to the fishing village. Was it because we were close to the ocean? We could even see the ocean from the spot we were in. It was right in front of the village, after all. A refreshing, salty sea breeze blew towards us from over the blue water.

"The boat's not going anywhere," I said, "so why don't we go check out the ocean?"

"Hum-hum!"

“Honk honk honk!”

Those two agreed, of course. Everyone else looked excited too. Except for Himka, that is. As expected of a fire elemental, he was *not* a fan of water.

“Himka, are you okay with going to the ocean?”

“Hm.”

Himka gave me an unenthusiastic nod. Well, it wasn't like he'd be dealt any damage by getting wet, so it must have just not been his preference. *Just bear with it this time, bud. I won't force you to go in the water.*

And so, we put our stroll around the village on hold for a moment and headed to the water.

“It *is* a beach, but this doesn't seem like an easy spot to play...”

The terrain here was a little peculiar. It was set up sort of like this: village → sandy beach → a stretch of rugged, rocky shore → the ocean. In order to get to the ocean, we would have to cross the rocky shore, and it didn't seem like the sort of spot where we'd be able to play in the water.

We walked to the edge of the water, where some fairly rough waves were breaking against the rocks on the shore, splashing up a generous spray of water. I wasn't surprised to see Reflet and Perca jump into the water without a moment's hesitation, but that was impossible for the rest of us. However, that didn't mean we couldn't do *anything*.

“Nice! I registered a new species to the encyclopedia!”

“Squeak!”

“...!”

The rocky shore was crawling with living creatures. The first one I found was an acorn barnacle. After that, I found a starfish. The third creature, however, caused a little incident.

“Mm-mmm!”

“O-Olto! What's wrong?!”

Olto, who had been peering into a tide pool a little farther away from the



group, suddenly let out a scream.

“Huh? Poison?”

“Mm-mm...”

Olto came running back to my side, looking miserable. I saw he was afflicted with Poison. It was a slight poison, dealing only one point of damage every few seconds. Plus, Olto recovered naturally while I was thinking about how to remove his poisoned status, so it hadn't done much harm in the end. Olto must have just been surprised by it.

“But anyway, what happened?”

“Mm?”

I confirmed the situation while I stroked Olto's head as he clung to my leg. Then, Olto walked over to the tide pool and beckoned us over.

“Y-You sure it's not going to poison us too?”

“Mm!”

Olto nodded with full confidence. Apparently, it was fine to just get closer.

“So? What poisoned you and how?”

“Mm-mm!”

“These fish here?”

“Mm!”

Inside the tide pool, which was the size of a bathtub, was a school of countless tiny black fish that looked like catfish. Dozens of them were gathered together, swimming like one big ball.

“Wow.”

“Mm-mm!”

I extended a hand out to touch them when Olto slapped it away. *Ah, he's telling me not to touch it.* Apparently, these tiny fish were what had poisoned Olto.

“Let's see... Striped Eeltail Catfish?”

*I feel like I've heard of those before...* After reading the newly registered description in the event encyclopedia, I remembered.

Striped Eeltail Catfish: A type of catfish that dwells in salt water. Their dorsal and pectoral fins are venomous. They travel together in ball-shaped schools to protect themselves. These fish remain venomous even after they die, so let's all be careful. Their stings really hurt!

That was what was written in the event encyclopedia. And of course I had seen these things before—they had been mentioned in a special feature on dangerous creatures that had played on the news or something during summer break.

"This description... It feels like it's written as a warning for kids."

Having players register dangerous animals that lived by the seaside—was this an effort to warn children about those same creatures in the real world? They weren't just thinking of the second-wave players when making this event, but also about the children that were playing this game.

"And the reason for the venom not being very strong is also because it's just meant to act as a warning?"

"Mm?"

"Well, all right. From now on, let's all be careful about not touching unfamiliar animals! Got it?"

"Mm!"

"Hm!"

"...!"

Olto and the others enthusiastically raised their hands up. Himka was making a face that suggested he wasn't planning on doing something like that in the first place. He had been hugging that dog so affectionately, but it looked like he was not a lover of sea creatures.

“I’ll have to warn Reflet and Perca when they get back.”

As I was saying that, I heard Perca shriek.

“Hyooooonk!”

“Oh no! Maybe I’m too late!”

Right after I heard his shriek, he and Reflet returned. Reflet was looking at Perca with concern. Perca himself looked super dejected.

“Honk...”

“Humm.”

Just a moment before, he was having fun cheering and poking his head out of the water. But his bad mood was unavoidable.

“A-Are you okay, Perca? You got poisoned?!”

“Honk.”

He hadn’t taken much damage, but his marker did show that he was poisoned, same as Olto’s had earlier.

“What happ— Wait, what’s that?”

“Honk honk!”

Perca slammed something wet he had been holding in his hand down on the ground. *Is this what caused Perca’s bad mood?*

At a glance, it looked like a blue plastic bag. But when I took a better look, I saw I was wrong. A bunch of tentacle-like things were sprouting from it. I appraised it and saw it was called a man-of-war. *I knew it was something venomous.* Its disturbing description noted, among other things, that it was also called an electric jellyfish.

“Is this part of the warnings about dangerous creatures?”

Perca must have gotten in this thing’s way while swimming.

“Honk honk!”

“Yes, yes. I know you’re mad at it. But thanks to you, I registered it in the encyclopedia, so well done.”

“Honk?”

“Yup. I’m saying you did a great job.”

“Honk!”

“Okay, let’s return this back to the water. It’ll die out here.”

“Honk.”

Having me praise him and pat his head seemed to have lifted his mood. I gingerly picked up the man-of-war and tossed it back into the water. As long as I didn’t touch its tentacles, I’d be fine. In any case, was this ocean filled solely with venomous creatures? Even if they were only slightly venomous, it was a little scary.

“That’s enough playing here. Let’s go back to the village. There probably aren’t any venomous creatures at the Recreation Beach.”

“Humm.”

“Honk.”

The underwater duo looked disappointed, but they’d just have to deal with it for now.

Before we went back to the village, I briefly looked around the rocky shore. As I suspected, there was something else there: a black longspine urchin, another one for the dangerous creatures series. At a glance, it looked like a sea urchin with long needles, but its description when I appraised it said it was dangerous. Their sharp venomous spines could apparently even pierce through rubber boots.

“Yikes. It’d hurt like hell to step on one of these guys in real life.”

*Well, I have no plans to go to the beach this summer anyway! If I do go someday, I’ll watch out for these.*

Afterwards, we returned to the village, where we made our rounds of the different shops. First was the general store. Here, they were selling soy sauce and other condiments. They were on the pricier side, but it was a relief to know these were available for purchase during the event. I was close to using up all the condiments I had brought and being left with only salt.



The fishing gear store sold bait for sea fishing. With this around, I wouldn't have to worry about burning through my own fishing bait. The fishing rods they sold were lower rank than the one I brought with me, so there was not much else of note in the store.

"All right, then, next up is the ocean supply store..."

The ocean supply store sold several very interesting products.

The first thing that caught my eye was called "Avatar Costume (Swimsuit)." If I were to equip this, it would change my avatar's appearance to be wearing a swimsuit. But only my outward appearance would change—my armor and everything would stay equipped, and my abilities would remain unchanged.

This was definitely just an item to add to the ambience so people could enjoy the beach. If you moved a certain distance away from the beach, the swimsuit would automatically be removed. That must have been a measure against attention seekers getting carried away and people too lazy to be bothered to change out of it from moving around in their swimsuits in towns and on the field.

"I'm not sure about that price..."

There were ten different options for men's and women's swimsuits for players, and each one cost one hundred evets. It was also possible to purchase them with real money, with each one costing one thousand yen. *I guess I'd be fine paying that much...*

"They even have swimsuits for tamed monsters."

For humanoid monsters, there were several options of swim trunks, bikinis, and full-body swimsuits. For beast-type monsters, they could only wear full-body swimsuits. I could choose to pay with evets or real money for these too.

"What should I do...? Well, if I don't have to use my evets, should I go ahead and buy them?"

Their descriptions said that we could keep them even after the end of the event, so I purchased swimsuits for me and my monsters. There was no restriction on who could wear the swimsuits for monsters, so if I bought several, they could all take turns wearing them.

“Besides swimsuits, there are beach umbrellas, swim rings, beach balls, and surfboards.”

“If you’re goin’ to Recreation Beach, why don’t you buy something?”

“Hmm...”

There certainly were things I was drawn to. I could imagine myself setting up an umbrella and a beach chair on the sandy beach where the summer rays were beating down, while my monsters played beside me. But after the event ended...I wouldn’t really have another place to use them. Plus, each one was pretty expensive. The beach ball was 100 evets, the swim ring 150, and the umbrella and surfboard were both 250 evets.

*Well, I can’t say I don’t need them.*

“Mmm.”

“Honk.”

“Hummm.”

The sparkle in my monsters’ eyes was unreal. They were fixated on the beach ball, as though they’d sell their souls for it. Moreover, the beach ball was the cheapest option, so I could certainly afford to buy it. *Did these guys realize that...? So venomous creatures aren’t the only danger of the seaside!*

“Mm?”

“Ugh, don’t look at me like that...”

“Honk?”

“Hum?”

*Dammiiiiit!*

“I’d like one beach ball, please...”

“Thanks for your business!”

*What can I say? I’m a sucker.* We definitely had to go to the beach now, so I could get my money’s worth. Maybe we could all play beach volleyball together. Well, that would come after we had gotten everything done in the village first, though. The next shop we were headed to would be our last.

“The boat rental store, huh...”

“...”

Sakura and I crossed our arms and groaned. The rental fee was pretty exorbitant. It cost one hundred evets per hour. With the money I had on me now, even just a short fishing trip would be enough to bankrupt me.

“Did we come to this fishing village too early?”

Should we have come here after earning some money at the Bazaar first? I hadn’t been thinking of anything except wanting to go see the ocean. *I need to raise some funds.*

“We could hunt monsters in plains for beginners... Or maybe even at Warrior Beach?”

No, before that, maybe I could find some quest to do in the village? There were probably many other NPC villagers who would offer me spontaneous quests, as the owner of the seafood shop had. I didn’t know if they would be quests we could fulfill, but it was worth searching.

“Instead of just sightseeing around the village, let’s search for some quests too.”

“...♪”

And so, with our hunt for quests in mind, we walked through the town talking to various NPCs, and sure enough we found several. Some quests involved catching particular fish or slaying particular monsters, while others were simple manual labor jobs.

“We can’t clear all of them...but a few of these seem doable.”

“Mm!”

Our objective would be labor quests we could do in the village. Those had the lowest risk.

“All right, then, let’s do our best, everyone!”

“Mm-mmm!”

*A few hours later...*

“Phew. Is that enough?”

“Yes, that’s perfect. You’ve been a big help.”

“No problem. Always happy to help someone in need.”

“Mmm!”

“Your monsters’ help is appreciated too.”

After we completed our last labor quest, cleaning a barn, we accepted our reward from the elderly lady who had requested it.

We completed a decent number of quests, like tending a flower garden, organizing a storehouse, fixing a broken shelf, repairing a broken harpoon, and participating in a children’s rock-fishing showdown. I wasn’t sure if you could really call them *quests*, though—most of them were just us helping out around the village.

The fishing showdown with the children was probably the most quest-like of them all. Plus, it was fun. I ended up reverting back to being a kid in spite of myself, shouting things like “Wahoooo!” and “Wow, look at that big fish!” My only miscalculation was that instead of evets, the reward was fishing bait.

“Nice, now I’m up to thirteen hundred evets! We can rent a fishing boat!”

“Hm!”

Not only could we rent a boat, but it would be nicer than the normal one, thanks to Himka successfully repairing a broken harpoon for the owner of the boat rental store. Even more luckily, the boat was slightly faster than the standard, and it had the ability to repel magical beasts. I had been disappointed at only receiving one hundred evets as a reward for the shop owner’s quest, but if anything, this was the best possible outcome.

“Well, let’s go ahead and try renting a boat for now.”

Our first voyage would be a test, so two hours would be enough. I paid two hundred evets to the old man at the boat rental shop, and to my surprise he hoisted the boat that was in front of the shop onto his shoulders and started walking. I hurried after him as the man nimbly crossed the rocky shore and set the boat afloat on the water.



*How is he faster than me even while carrying a boat? His strength and the way he carries himself are off the charts.*

“Gah ha ha ha! This is where you’ll return to, lad!”

“U-Understood.”

“Best of luck to ya!”

The old man pounded hard on my shoulder before heading back to the store. *He perfectly embodies a man of the sea.* Even now, he was carrying a steel harpoon as though he was about to go up against some giant sea creature.

“Let’s just fish at our own pace, okay?” I said to my team.

“Squeak.”

“Hm.”

“Okay then, let’s set out— Well, I’d *like* to, but... Seriously, a *rowboat*?”

The boat had oars on its left and right sides. Since I had paid the rental fee in advance, I was told that when my time was over, we would automatically return to the village. I wish that same function could have brought me to a fishing node on the outbound trip...

We would have to row to get anywhere. *We don’t have any sort of boat steering skill, though. Can we still manage?*

“Hup!”

Getting in the boat was easy. Usually, it was difficult trying to climb into a small boat from a rocky area since the boat would rock, but this was a game. The boat barely rocked at all.

“I’ll row first, but can you all help too?”

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak!”

“...!”

Apparently, a skill wasn’t needed in order to row a boat. But I bet something like a steering skill would have made us much faster at it.

“Everyone in? All right, then, full speed ahead!” I declared confidently. Then, I started rowing with all my might, but...

“Hmm?”

“Hummm?”

“D-Don’t look at me like that. I’m rowing as fast as I can!”

*I’m not picking up any speed! Is it my strength? Endurance?* In any case, even though I was rowing with my full strength, the boat moved at a snail’s pace. Our progress was about as speedy as you would imagine from a girl on a boat date rowing in place of her boyfriend, whining in a purposely helpless, flirty voice, “Awww, the boat just won’t go at *all*!”

“Urgh... Hnnngh!”

“Mmm-mm!”

“Squeak squeak!”

Everyone was cheering me on, but it made no difference.

“It’s no use... Let’s forget about the open sea. We’ll just fish somewhere a little farther ahead.”

*I was told I wouldn’t be able to catch much fish near the shore, though...*

“Hummm!”

“Honk!”

“Ah! Reflet? Perca?”

While I was struggling with the oars, the underwater duo suddenly dived into the water. *Are they trying to make the boat a little lighter so I can row more easily?* I wondered, but I was completely wrong.

“Hum-humm!”

“Honk honk!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Huh? Olto, what’re you— Whoa! We’re going so fast!”

To my amazement, Reflet and Perca asked Olto to throw the mooring rope

into the water, which they then grabbed onto and started pulling the boat along. And they were swimming so fast! That was despite Reflet having her head above water and her posture not at all matching her speed. *No time to question it. I should just be glad that we're moving now.*

“Now we can make it out to open waters!”

“Honk honk!”

“Hummm!”

But how far exactly were those two planning to take us? If they went too far, we might run into some strong monsters.

Ten minutes later...

“Hum-hummm! ♪”

“Honk honk hooonk! ♪”

Reflet and Perca were humming a tune while continuing to pull the boat along. It seemed like really hard work, but as long as they were having fun, that was what mattered. There might have been people who disliked the smell of the salty breeze and the feeling of being damp and sticky, but I didn't mind that at all. In fact, breathing in the scent of the seaside actually put me in a good mood. Moreover, the underwater duo and I weren't the only ones having a good time.

“This sure is a nice sea breeze for being artificial, isn't it?”

“Mmm!”

“Squeak!”

Olto and Drimo had their eyes half closed and their arms raised to feel the breeze against their entire body. Drimo especially seemed to be enjoying the ocean quite a lot.

“Squeeeeak.”

“Are you liking the ocean, Drimo?”

“Squeak.”

Even though he was a mole monster and by nature a creature of the underground, he seemed to wholly enjoy the sensation of the sea breeze on the boat. I would have thought he'd be the type to hate sunlight and being around water.

Drimo took up position at the bow, taking in the wind while his whiskers fluttered in the breeze. His pose was reminiscent of that iconic scene in the movie about a certain "unsinkable" ocean liner. Except he was by himself.

The only one eyeing Drimo with a face of distaste was—you guessed it—Himka. Apparently, he couldn't relax being surrounded by water. He was clinging to my back, making no move to let go.

"Sorry, Himka."

"Hm..."

But I couldn't send Himka back. His skills were essential for any smithing quests we'd run into during the event.

"But anyway, just how far are they taking us?"

We had left the area surrounding the village a while ago and had started progressing into the part of the ocean considered an open playing field. I knew that was the case because we suddenly passed by other players several times. There were even some players whose monsters were pulling their boat along, just like us.

The enemy monsters that appeared were all minor monsters that showed up in the Water Elementals' trial, so they helped with Perca's experience points, but...

"Hey! Reflet, Perca! Don't you think this is far enough?"

"Hum-hum-hummm!"

"Honk honk hooonk!"

"It's no good; they're not listening."

Were they on a boat-hauling high? They were completely absorbed in swimming, deaf to the world around them. Well, we would automatically be returned to the shore when time was up, so we probably didn't need to worry

about being shipwrecked. *I'll let them keep doing what they want for a little more.* As soon as I thought that, the boat suddenly slowed down.

“Honk!”

“Hm? Why’d we stop all of a sudden?”

I thought that maybe they were tired, but Perca started gesturing towards me.

“Honk honk!”

“Yes?”

“Honk! Honk honk honk!”

“Hummm!”

Even Reflet joined in, the two of them making a huge fuss.

“Is there something in the water?”

Judging by their expressions, it didn’t seem like it was a monster.

“Honk!”

“Yeah, in the water?”

“Hum-humm!”

“‘A lot’? Oh! Are you saying there are a lot of fish?!”

“Honk!”

So the two of them hadn’t just been running wild—they were bringing us to a spot with a lot of fish. They hadn’t just been swimming aimlessly. *This should be promising.*

“Hooonk!”

“Oh! The Fire Lure!”

Perca produced a yellow flame and submerged it underwater. This skill was supposed to attract certain types of fish, so I was looking forward to the result.

“Nice! Let’s give it a go!”

I quickly got to work putting the bait I got as a reward on my fishing rod and

then cast the line into the water, aiming for the area where the Fire Lure was submerged. Then, not even five minutes later, I got a bite.

“I got one! I got one!”

“Hummm!”

“Come on, fish!”

I reeled in a Begini Horse Mackerel. Then, I caught another, and another. At my quickest, I was reeling in a fish every minute. In the end, I successfully caught as many as thirty Begini Horse Mackerels in just one hour—and four Begini Squids as well.

“This spot’s full of horse mackerel, huh?”

“Honk.”

We must have run into a school of horse mackerel, thanks to Perca and Reflet leading the way. Even though it was the cheapest fish, catching thirty of them was definitely enough to recoup the cost of the boat. And with the added squid, I was ecstatic. I wondered if I had caught those because of Perca’s Fire Lure.

“Humm!”

“Honk honk!”

“Whoa! You caught even more?!”

Perca and Reflet had also caught several fish by free diving. They had even caught a fish that wasn’t being sold in the shop: Begini Sea Bream. That brought our total number of fish caught close to fifty. If we sold these, we’d probably get about fifteen hundred evets.

“We’ll make some decent cash if we cook and sell these!”

There was a slight problem, though.

“...?”

“Mm?”

Since we were only out here for a short amount of time right now, and this was our first boat trip, Olto and my other monsters were enjoying themselves. But what if we stayed out here for longer? I was sure they’d get bored. But I

wanted to fish again tomorrow and the following days, and for several hours at once if possible. If only there were a way for the others to pass their time...

“What’s a good way to make sure they don’t get bored out here?”

Ideally, they would fish. But they would need to have the Fishing skill—

“Oh wait, that’s right! Skill-granting fishing rods are a thing!”

Skill-granting was exactly what it sounded like. It was the process of endowing an item with a skill at the creation stage. Skill-granting equipment bestowed the effects of a skill to the wearer or user. For an item to grant advanced skills at a high level, you’d need to be a highly skilled crafter and use a valuable item. But if I just wanted to grant a beginner skill like Fishing at a low level?

“Then with Sakura’s Woodworking and my Alchemy, we should be able to make a fishing rod that grants the Fishing skill!”

Actually, I already knew the recipe for it. It wasn’t anything hard, after all. However, since I couldn’t make anything high performing, I had never tried making a fishing rod with the Fishing skill. *Isn’t this the perfect time to put that recipe to use?*

“Now I just need to collect the materials. I need wood, string, and seafood.”

For the seafood, I had today’s catch. And I could probably find wood and string in the town.

“All right, we’ll head back to town and look for materials!”

*After we kick back at Recreation Beach, that is!*

“We’re heading back to the village, guys!”

“Honk.”

“Hum.”

“Oh, we’ll be returned automatically, so you don’t have to pull the boat.”

“Honk...”

“Humm...”

*What’s with the drooping shoulders? Is it that fun to pull the boat?*



“Oh, we’ll come back again tomorrow to fish, so I’ll count on you then.”

“Honk!”

“Hum!”

That perked them right back up, thankfully. Of course, if I broke my promise, that might lower my favorability score. *We’ll definitely come back to fish.*

After we were returned to the village with the boat’s automatic return function, I finished up some quick shopping and then headed north to Recreation Beach.

“There’s no one here, though...”

It wasn’t long before the beach came into view. Even from where we stood, I could see the beautiful shore and the palm trees swaying in the wind. But I didn’t see a single person there. I did see some players nearby who seemed to be headed to the beach, though. My confusion was cleared once I got closer to the beach.

“Oh, hmm...there are two beaches?”

After moving a few meters towards the sandy beach, a window popped up, asking me whether I wanted to enter the public beach or the private beach. The open beach was filled with everyone who selected that option. Since the size of the beach changed in accordance with however many players entered, it could avoid getting overly packed. The private beach, as the name suggested, was a beach for your own party only. At most, one team of twelve people could enter.

The private beach was probably intended for those who didn’t like crowds or for female players who were concerned about being stared at. Meanwhile, the open beach was intended for those who wanted to have fun with everyone else.

“Let’s go to a private beach first!”

It was a luxury I’d never be able to experience in the real world. Besides, I hadn’t promised any friends I’d hang out with them. I tapped the button on the window, and in an instant, the scenery in front of me changed. We had been transported to a private beach.

“Wow, there really is no one else here.”

We had the entire white sandy beach, which stretched one hundred meters or so on both sides, all to ourselves. It was a beautiful area that regular beaches couldn't hold a candle to, the sort of beach you'd expect from a resort. And it was all ours.

“Woo-hoo!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“...!”

We all rushed excitedly towards the water's edge.

“It's cold!”

“Mm!”

“Squeak!”

I stuck my toes in the water and a pleasant coolness raced through me. Olto and the others also seemed to enjoy it. That was when I realized something.

“Oh right, I bought swimsuits.”

Without moving from my spot, I selected the option for costumes and proceeded to get everyone in their swimsuits. I chose simple blue swim trunks for myself. There was an option for swim briefs, but I wasn't brave enough to wear something so bold. Well, my avatar *was* handsome, so it would probably look good on me. So, it was probably fine to wear an adventurous swimsuit in-game that I would never be able to pull off in real life.

“You guys are up next.”

“Mm?”

The settings for the tamed monsters' swimsuits were extremely convenient to access. I could choose my preferred style when dressing them. I selected one of the six tamed monster swimsuits in my inventory and then I was asked to select which monster I wanted to put it on. Then, once I made my selection, I could freely choose the style and color of the swimsuit. The settings could be reset on each dressing, so I could let them wear a different swimsuit every time.

And so, I spent five minutes playing dress-up with my monsters until everyone's swimsuits were chosen.

"That suits you, Olto."

"Mm-mm!"

"Sakura, you look cute too."

"...♪"

Olto was wearing blue swim trunks, same as me. He looked human, after all, so I went with the standard option. Sakura was wearing a flattering white bikini with a cute pareo that was the same cherry blossom pink as her hair.

"Humm!"

"And you're adorable too, Reflet!"

"Hm!"

"Looking good, Himka."

Reflet was wearing a navy blue school swimsuit. That was her own preference, not mine. She kept pleading to me that she wanted to wear it, so I had no choice but to let her. I mean it, it really wasn't my preference, okay? Okay sure, it *was* the first one I showed her...

Her name was populated automatically and was written on her swimsuit in a bubbly font, like so: **REFLET**. *If you want to blame anyone, blame the devs.*

Himka was wearing red swim briefs. It really suited someone as toned as he was. He was sure to grow into being a handsome heartbreaker.

"Mm-hmm, you two look good too."

"Squeak!"

"Honk!"

The remaining beast-type duo were wearing red-and-white striped full-body swimsuits. *Oof, their cuteness has doubled!* I was especially happy to see Drimo like that, since it wasn't often that I saw him wearing something adorable.

"Okay, we're all ready now, so once again—to the sea!"

“Mm-mmm!”

“...!”

*Man, this is exactly what they mean by feeling like a kid again! Why is it so thrilling to just run towards the water?*

“Woo-hoo! This is awesome!”

“Honk honk!”

“Humm!”

We were getting drenched as we splashed and chased each other at the edge of the water. Even though I didn’t have a beautiful woman at my side, it was still plenty of fun.

Himka had plopped himself down on the sand and was soaking up the sun. He looked like a beach bro working on a tan.

“Hm-hmm! ♪”

I was glad to see he was enjoying himself even though he hated the water.

“All right, how about we play with the beach ball now?”

“Mm!”

“Hum!”

We didn’t have a net or anything, but I knew how to compensate for that.

“Sakura, could you use your ivy?”

“...♪”

Sakura hung some ivy between two palm trees growing a bit farther away, creating an impromptu net. Next, I drew a rough outline in the sand, and our volleyball court was complete. Although it was a bit crude, it was good enough for a casual game.

“How should we divide the teams? Are we okay with three against four?”

“...♪”

“Huh? You’re okay with being the ref, Sakura?”

“...♪”

Sakura seemed to want to watch instead. She raised her hand and volunteered to be the referee. I would have been fine with sitting out myself, but my monsters probably wanted to play with me. *I swear I'm not being overly self-conscious. I am the Tamer here, aren't I?* In any case, now we could split up perfectly into teams of three.

“Okay then, let's divide ourselves up between rock and scissors!”

“Squeak.”

“Hm!”

“Hum!”

“Honk!”

Drimo, Reflet, and I threw down scissors. Olto and Himka threw down rock, and...what was Perca doing? I could only see his flipper as being paper. My monsters, however, understood perfectly fine. Perca went walking off with Olto and Himka, and everyone else accepted that without question. *I guess he played rock. I still have much to learn about penguins' flippers...*

“O-Okay, then. Should we start?”

Each team took to their side of the court, and we started the match. We didn't have to play by any strict rules. This was just for fun, after all. I decided that we would switch who served every five times regardless of the score.

“Here I go!”

I tossed the ball up with my left hand, then lightly hit it with my right. *Oh? That was actually a pretty good serve.* I hadn't meant to, but I sent the ball arcing towards the back-right corner of the court. But I hit it too well—the other team was probably not going to make it. We were just playing for fun, so it was going to get boring if we couldn't keep up a decent rally—

“Mm-mm!”

“Hm!”

“Honk!”

“Whoa, what?! Y-You guys are good!”

Olto easily received my serve, Himka tossed it up, and then Perca spiked it down hard. He’d leaped up pretty high. There was no way we’d stop that. He hadn’t used Penguin Highway, but apparently he was still capable of moving that way with just his natural agility. When I thought about it, with the way he had been hopping around on the rocky shore earlier, his jumping power was nothing to sneeze at. *Wait a second, is this not just a casual game?*

“Squeak squeak.”

“Oh, you want to serve this time, Drimo?”

“Squeak.”

Drimo took the ball from my hand and got in position to serve. He looked surprisingly competent. I was waiting with anticipation to see what his serve would be like—it ended up being super dynamic.

“Squeak squeeek!”

“Damn, are you serious?!”

To my amazement, he performed a jump serve. And he really went all out. He lightly tossed up the beach ball and then leaped towards it, bending his body like a bow in midair and using the recoil to put all his strength into striking it with the claws of his right hand. It was a super powerful killer serve done with perfect form, like something you’d only be able to witness in a manga or anime.

“Drimo, that was awesome!”

“Squeak!”

The beach ball went whizzing through the air with tremendous force. How was the lightweight beach ball moving that fast? If I got hit by that thing, I knew I’d be blown back. However, my other monsters were as extraordinary as Drimo.

“Mm-mmm!”

“H-He caught that?!”

“Mm-mm!”

Olto, taking on the role of libero, caught the ball wonderfully once again. He killed the momentum of that bullet serve and retaliated with a clean A-pass. (Incidentally, an A-pass is when the receiver perfectly passes the ball to the setter so that they won't have to move much at all to get to it.) Himka nimbly bounced up that pass. The ball was moving super quickly and was placed at *just* the height of the net.

"Huh? Ah! Where'd he come from?!"

"Honk hooonk!"

Perca was next to the net in the blink of an eye. *Ah, that's called a quick.* I couldn't even jump to block it—all I could do was watch the ball as Perca hit it. *They got us!* I screamed mentally, but a second later, a figure stepped in where the ball was supposed to land.

"Humm!"

"R-Reflet!"

Reflet shot the ball splendidly back into the air.

"Hum."

"Honk."





Reflet's and Perca's gazes crossed in midair—the former smiling fearlessly and the latter opening his beak in frustration. They were like two rivals in fierce competition, like something you'd see in a sports manga.

“Squeak squeak!”

“M-Me?”

“Squeak!”

“Wait, give me a sec! L-Like this?”

Drimo had called out to me as he started running up for a spike. He was clearly telling me to toss it up for him, right? *Wait, wait! I've only ever played volleyball in gym class!* But Drimo's sharp gaze was boring down on me, so I made a desperate attempt to toss the ball up. With an anticlimactic *plop* sound, I tossed it limply up into the air.

“Squeak.”

After seeing it, Drimo gave me a light nod like he was saying “Good enough,” then leaped up to let loose a spike. His spike, which had the same tremendous power as his serve, hit the other side of the court.

“Squeak!”

“Humm!”

Drimo and Reflet cheerfully high-fived each other, while the other team looked bitterly disappointed. *How'd this game end up so serious? Everyone got super competitive all of a sudden. Am I the only one who's playing for fun?!*

The volleyball match continued, with me feeling very out of place. I considered bowing out halfway through, but I also didn't want to dampen the mood. I ended up staying on the court until the end. *Who won, you ask? After three tie games, I called it a draw!* If we kept playing, we would have been here forever.

“I'm beat. It's not like I'm out of stamina, but I feel kind of mentally tired.”

“...♪”

“Oh, water? Thanks, Sakura.”

“...♪”

We'd been playing hard this entire time, so maybe it was time for a short break. Sakura and I both lay out on some beach chairs. There were enough beach chairs for all of us, but Sakura and I were the only ones who used them.

“Hum-humm!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Honk honk!”

My other monsters gave in to their excitement and ran for the water. Even Drimo, who was usually calm and collected, couldn't contain his enthusiasm. He was frolicking around with everyone else at the shore. Sakura and I also joined in eventually, and we all played together until we tired ourselves out.

“Ahh, that was fun.”

“Squeak squeak...”

After we had our fill of playing in the water, we lay down on the sandy beach. It was a totally different sensation from lying out on a beach chair. The grittiness of the sand against my back felt oddly nice.

“Mm-mmm!”

“Did you all have fun too?”

“...♪”

“Hum!”

They all seemed to have enjoyed themselves. Normally, I would have had us have a meal here, but we couldn't do that today. I didn't have much food on me, after all. The Bazaar had honey and other things for sale, though, so I'd be able to make something if we went back there...

“No, wait. I bet they're selling some at the open beach.”

Players could open carts and stalls at the open beach just as they could at the Bazaar. Earlier, I had been so completely taken by the idea of the private beach that I hadn't thought about it, but I figured I should be able to get a hold of food and other stuff where the other players were.

“Should we take a quick peek?”

“Hum!”

“Squeak!”

And so, we left the private beach and tried going to the open beach...

“Wow...”

But it was insanely crowded. Weren't they trying to mitigate crowding by expanding the size of the beach? Many players were wearing swimsuits, but there were also a good number who were wearing their regular armor. There were probably people who didn't want to spend money on a costume that only changed their outward appearance.

The beach was in total chaos, with dwarves in swimsuits and warriors in full plate armor playing beach flags, and elves walking side by side in sweltering-looking robes. I was perplexed by the insane congestion around the entrance, but I quickly figured out the reason for it.

“They're all dudes...”

“Mm!”

“Let's head to the market stalls.”

“Hm!”

Near the entrance of the beach was a group of female players gleefully playing by passing a beach ball around. Every one of them in swimsuits. A number of players were watching them from a distance. And inevitably, there was a high ratio of men in the crowd. I was worried about potential sexual harassment, but the guys really did seem to just be watching. Moreover, there were eight girls. Frankly, there were just enough of them that if they didn't want people staring, they could go to a private beach. And yet here they were hanging out at the open beach, and near the entrance at that. *Well, that's just the way it is.* They were on the rise these days—women with a purpose.

“Not that that has anything to do with me.”

“Squeak?”

“Honk?”

However, about half of the people were staring our way. Our ratio of girls was higher, plus my monsters were cute and conspicuous.

“Mm-mm!”

“Whoops, sorry, sorry.”

“...!”

“Look, I’m walking. You don’t have to pull me.”

I was pulled along towards the site of the Beach Bazaar, which was a short walk away. There, as I expected, were over a hundred stalls.

“Oho ho, there’s so much to see!”

“...!”

There were various goods lined up for sale, such as fish and drops from monsters in the area, as well as food and armor. The armor pieces weren’t very powerful, but they did come with effects like extending your breathing time. Those types of items would be helpful by the beach and underwater.

“Oh, this looks good.”

“Whuh? Are you Silver-Haired?”

“Y-Yeah, I am. Could I get three of these Honey Candies?”

“Sure thing! Thank you very much!”

Honestly, there was no getting around my identity being revealed. I had Perca with me, and my other monsters were also adorable. It had now been established that if you saw a Tamer with silver hair traveling with cute, unique monsters, that was me. Never mind me, my monsters stood out a lot. I was just becoming well-known since I was their Tamer. That really became evident during raid boss fights and events. Even some new players knew who I was. Apparently, people had been writing about me on the forums. I was too scared to look, but it didn’t seem like they were saying bad things.

The main things people wrote about were my monsters’ cuteness and talent, but those forums probably weren’t just filled with praise, right? There were

people out there who randomly trashed others without knowing the situation, acting like they knew what they were talking about, weren't there? Just seeing that sort of thing was enough to wear down my spirit.

"Wow, he really does have a penguin!"

"A-A school swimsuit! Silver-Haired gets it!"

"Oltoooo... *Urgh!*"

"Medic! We need a medic here!"

"Ahh, Sakura, you're sho pretty..."

People were really staring at us, but this was nothing. After all, I was already used to people around me ogling Olto and my other monsters. My trick for evading stares was to push everyone out of my consciousness and convince myself that my monsters and I were the only ones around.

As long as no one heckled me like they did when I had been chased around after acquiring my unique title, I could ignore them. Besides, no one was coming up to talk to me directly. It was nice that LJO was strict about etiquette like that.

Afterwards, I went and bought meals for my monsters, which used up a lot of my evets. I got the bare necessities of food, but now it seemed unlikely I'd be able to buy the wood I needed to make the fishing poles. I'd heard there was a forest near the Bazaar, so maybe I should do some logging there first? Or maybe I should find some way to earn evets? The lumber wasn't that expensive, so I'd be able to make it if I just earned a little more.

"Hmm, I can probably make enough by selling some dishes, right?"

It didn't take much to set up a stall here. Then I could make something with the large batch of fish I caught earlier and sell them. I already had condiments I bought at the fishing village. All I had to do now was rent a space.

"Let's see here... I can apply from my window, right?"

It was a straightforward process. Not even a minute later, the location of my stall was displayed on my window. I thought it'd be farther in the back, but it was actually close to the entrance. Players must have been given an empty

space in order of when they arrived. I probably lucked out with the timing.

“Should we cook first? I have a lot of horse mackerel, so what would be something easy to make with that...?”

The things that easily came to mind were deep-fried horse mackerel and horse mackerel nanbanzuke, but of course I couldn't make those here.

“I don't have any spices or vegetables, so I guess all I can really make is sashimi...”

*Oh well, I don't have much choice.* After giving it some thought, I felt like you don't need much else when you have fresh horse mackerel and soy sauce.

“All right, time to get cracking. You guys can go play over there.”

“Mm!”

“Hm!”

Everyone obediently went to play in the sand, except for Reflet. She alone stayed by my side.

“Hum!”

“Are you going to help me cook?”

“Hum-humm!”

“Well, look at you all motivated.”

Reflet must have been in higher spirits than usual because we were by the seaside. I felt bad disregarding her enthusiasm, so I decided to let her help me. I had Reflet take care of removing the fish's scales and organs and then washing them with magically produced water. From there, I would fillet the fish and turn them into sashimi.

Although this was a game, if I was diligent in my work, I could expect to make a higher-quality dish. So, I made sure to cut off the scute—the hard scales of the horse mackerel—and carefully removed the bones.

“Six-star quality. Not bad for something easy to make, huh? I guess it helped that I used a fresh catch.”

“Hum!”



I placed it on a plate, and with just a drizzle of soy sauce, it really looked delicious. Other players seemed to think so too. Once I put them out for sale, they were quickly sold out.

“Give me one sashimi!”

“As a Japanese person, I *need* to eat sashimi!”

“The water nymph’s handmade sashimi!”

“S-Silver-Haired’s ultra-rare homemade meal!”

The moment I opened up shop, I was flooded with customers. Thankfully, Drimo made everyone line up, avoiding mayhem. Barely five minutes later, I had sold out of everything, despite my boldly setting the price at three hundred evets. I ran out of soy sauce, so I could only prepare thirty pieces, but I would have probably sold even more if I had made them.

“Let’s make a trip back to the fishing village. We can stock up on soy sauce there.”

“Hum.”

I was able to earn nine thousand evets in one go with this stall. Now I could stock up on more condiments and earn even more!

“But why were we the only ones who sold so much? There are other stalls selling sashimi.”

The sashimi I made came only with an effect of increasing your HP by five points for one hour, so it didn’t make that much of a difference to have or not. It really was just regular sashimi. And yet my shop alone had been booming.

“Thanks for your hard work too, everyone.”

“Mmm.”

“...”

“Honk.”

Olto and the others had helped on the selling front, so they had been caught up in the flurry of activity too. *Oh, maybe my booming business was thanks to the power of their cuteness? Though people did seem to line up abnormally*

*quickly...* It looked like the people who had been staring at us were the ones who came lining up. Maybe it had something to do with my cooking performance? They had probably gotten a hankering for sashimi after watching me prepare it. I hadn't even been able to stop myself from drooling while making them, so the same must have gone for the onlookers.

"Okay then, I've made enough evets now. Should we head out?"

"Squeak!"

"Humm!"

# Online Forum [Gather 'Round Tamers] LJO Tamer Megathread, Part 35

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.

---

447: MorningStarMeow

I still can't find any special, event-exclusive monsters, meow.

---

448: Ivan

All the monsters in the ocean are the ones that appear in the Water Elementals' trial. We probably have to expand our search area.

---

449: Eulenspiegel

Sometimes I hear a report of someone who found an unusual monster, but when I ask for details, it ends up just being about Silver-Haired's penguin.

---

450: KingOysterMushroom

His penguin's something else, huh?

Even I kind of want one now. And I'm not even that interested in cute things.

---

451: Ursula

I want a penguin!

---

452: Amelia

Me too me too me too!

---

453: Ivan

This time, I vehemently agree.

I already got a Garuda's egg.

---

454: MorningStarMeow

Me too, meow!

Their price has skyrocketed lol

---

455: Ursula

Penguins! Moles! Where are you?!

---

456: KingOysterMushroom

A lot of Tamers have headed to clear the south in search of a penguin.

South Gate was full of Tamers right before the event.

---

457: IrumaBlack

Penguins live in cold places, so wouldn't they be north?

---

458: Ivan

That's a common misconception. There are no penguins in the north pole. Penguins are mostly found in the southern hemisphere.

Though that might not be necessarily true in the game.

---

459: Eulenspiegel

Ahh, makes sense. So that's why there was a big rush of people heading south.

---

460: Ursula

If I can't get one, I at least want to cuddle and shower one with affection!

---

461: Amelia

I want to squeeze Olto and Bear Bear and the penguin tight, and then be buried that way.

---

462: KingOysterMushroom

There's been an outbreak of people like you guys even outside of Tamers.

The front of Silver-Haired's home looked like a packed train for a bit with people crowding around trying to catch a glimpse of his penguin.

There are a lot of people doing what they can to gather information, so we should have some info sooner than later, right?

---

463: MorningStarMeow

Oh, you sweet summer child! Sweeter than gulab jamun!

Have you forgotten the repeated tragedies of the past?! Starting with the Gnome Search Party, followed by the tree nymph, and the mole...

The only one we had any luck with was the fairy.

---

464: Amelia

The history of monster search parties.

The history of us dancing to the tune of Silver-Haired's

information...

---

465: Ursula

Where are you, Mr. Mole...?

Are there truly no hints?!

---

466: Ivan

Well, we do have hope of getting a fairy.

In fact, there've recently been some other players with fairies popping up here and there.

There's also been some people hastening their evolutions.

More importantly, what the heck is gulab jamun? A legendary weapon?

---

467: KingOysterMushroom

Gulab jamun: A dessert from India said to be the sweetest dessert in the world.

Put simply, it's a very sugary doughnut soaked in a super sweet syrup.

So sweet, just one bite might give you a cavity.

---

468: Eulenspiegel

No thanks...

I'm not much of a sweets guy.

---

469: Amelia

That's useless information! I don't care!

---

470: Ursula

Yeah! No one cares about you, Eulen!

Penguin information is more important!

---

471: Eulenspiegel

“No one cares”? Mean.

---

472: MorningStarMeow

Anyway, I’m aiming to win this event, meow.

---

473: IrumaBlack

And you bring that up why?

---

474: MorningStarMeow

I’m going to exchange my event points for Silver-Haired’s Drimole!

---

475: KingOysterMushroom

This time, there’s a high chance a rare monster or a rare monster egg will be part of the reward.

---

476: Amelia

Oh, that’s right!

So even if I can’t get a penguin, there’s still a chance I could get another cute monster...!

---

477: Ursula

Bwaaaaaaaaaaa! There’s no holding me back now!

The winnings are mine!

---

478: Amelia

No way, they’re mine! I’m going monster hunting right now!

I need more evets!



---

479: Ivan

You know, rare doesn't automatically equal cute.

---

480: KingOysterMushroom

Shhh! Don't say that!

---

## [Second Wave Event] A Discussion Thread for the Ongoing Second Wave Celebration Event

Please post information regarding the event.

Info not related to strategy is permitted.

Feel free to ask any and all questions.

---

773: Mimura

Has anyone else noticed the weird number of players gathered near the ocean? They're packed like sardines over there.

Are they here for the beach or for the girls in swimsuits?

Oh right, so I've been hanging out at the open beach, but I've spent a lot of time at the private beach too.

---

774: Murakage

I'm guessing it's just because the ocean is still novel?

We also wrapped up our exploration of the Bazaar as quickly as we could and went to the fishing village.

My wife and I are quite enjoying ourselves on a private beach.

---

775: Mimura

How? I can only conjure up an image of a black-masked couple in swimsuits.

I don't envy you at all.

---

776: Murakage

Why not?

I'll have you know my wife is a beautiful woman.

---

777: Mimura

Beautiful or not, she's a ninja...

---

778: Marca

Well obviously, we want to play in the water!

But anyway, that's not the only reason there are people swarming the beach!

---

779: Mimura

So there's an actual reason besides the novelty factor?

Did new information come to light or something?

---

780: Marca

It has nothing to do with the event!

It has everything to do with penguins!

---

781: Baa\_Baa

My group also came to the beach to look for a penguin!

---

782: Marca

On the regular maps, there's no trace or hint or clue or lead...

But while we're on this island, surrounded by water on all sides for this event, then maybe...!

---

783: Baa\_Baa

Also, some people witnessed Silver-Haired walking towards the ocean.

---

784: Marca

Yeah, they followed him.

---

785: Mimura

I think you mean stalked— No wait, as long as you don't lay a hand on him, it's not against the rules of the game, right?

Well, that's the price of fame. Besides, Silver-Haired seems kind of dense about that sort of stuff.

In fact, I saw him at the beach earlier, and he wasn't paying attention to people staring at him at all.

---

786: Murakage

I myself crossed paths with Silver-Haired.

I see. I'm sure the Defenders will be moving en masse.

And front liners are naturally also paying attention to him, wanting to ride on the coattails of whatever he stumbles onto.

---

787: Mimura

Regular players + players who want penguins + the Defenders + opportunists + people who want to play on the beach.

Yup, that'll make things crowded!

That means over half of the people are there because of Silver-Haired...

---

788: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Hey, there seems to be a huge difference in the speed of boats. What's going on there?

---

789: Murakage

The speed?

Was there that much of a difference?

---

790: Mimura

Isn't it just based on your strength?

---

791: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

We got overtaken super quickly even with our hammer wielder rowing as hard as they could.

Can that really be possible with just a stats difference?

When I looked to see who the other person rowing was, they were just a mage.

---

792: Baa\_Baa

Oh! In that case, maybe the speed of the boat depends on how you get it to move?

A water mage in my party unleashed some sort of water spell and it made us go a little faster.

I also saw a boat where a Summoner had their monsters to row for them.

---

793: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Oh, that could be!

So there are other ways to make it move besides rowing!

---

794: Marca

I can see the light!

But does that mean you can devise a way to cross over that spot where the ocean current is moving really fast?

---

795: Baa\_Baa

That's to the north of Recreation Beach, right?

We tried that already, but it didn't work.

The party with the Summoner also failed.

---

796: Murakage

Ocean current?

---

797: Mimura

You know how you can rent a boat at the East Fishing Village?

If you go north from there, there's a spot where you'll get pushed back by a current and can't move any farther.

It's a little farther north than Recreation Beach.

---

798: Murakage

Is it not simply the edge of the map?

---

799: Marca

If it was, then it'd say so.

But since nothing popped up...

---

800: Baa\_Baa

Then there must be something beyond it!

This is the first ocean map, after all, so they've probably prepared a lot for it.

---

801: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Besides that, one of the other unique things about this event is the encyclopedia. We'll obviously get some sort of bonus if we complete it.

---

802: Baa\_Baa

I've still only filled out ten entries.

---

803: Murakage

I have about the same.

Also, will the swimsuits be limited to this event?

---

804: Marca

Swimsuits!

They have school swimsuits! The devs get it!

---

805: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Silver-Haired! Why isn't Sakura wearing a school swimsuit?!

Her swimsuit is still cute, though!

---

806: Marca

I know what you mean.

---

807: Mimura

Why are you sympathizing? You're a girl!

---

808: Baa\_Baa

Did Silver-Haired do something again? Something swimsuit related?

---

809: Mimura

Not exactly, no. It's just, he opened up a stall at the open beach's market.

His monsters *were* in swimsuits, though.

---

810: Baa\_Baa

Ah... Did that...

Did that cause a panic again?

---

811: Mimura

Silver-Haired's fans are trained now, so it was fine.

Thanks to rumors of the Defenders flying around like an urban legend, there's no one who'd even think of pestering him, even outside of his fan base.

Didn't seem like any chaos broke out.

---

812: Baa\_Baa

That's good.

---

813: Marca

No, it's not! I missed out on buying sashimi!

Dammit! I didn't realize everyone else had the same idea!

The water nymph's school swimsuit was cute, though!

---

814: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

The tree nymph was helping out as a salesclerk!

Why couldn't I have made it in time?!

Well, I'm glad I was able to see her in her swimsuit at least.

---

815: Baa\_Baa

Officer! Over here!

---

816: Murakage

Constable! This is the man right here!

---



817: Mimura

You never break character, do you?

---

818: Baa\_Baa

Aren't ninjas and law enforcement enemies?

Anyway, command-class players have to buy swimsuits for their monsters too, huh? That's gotta be expensive.

I mean, it's not like it's required, but I'm sure they'd want them.

---

819: Mimura

It looks like for tamed monsters, you can choose the type of swimsuit you want each time, so I feel like you get more bang for your buck than with players' swimsuits.

But this event was definitely the reason they made it so that we can make purchases with real money even while in-game. They want to bleed us dry!

---

820: Murakage

They won't make the game pay-to-win, but they don't hold back when it comes to avatar cosmetics and home decorations.

I purchased a Sanskrit tattoo. It cost me one thousand yen.

---

821: Baa\_Baa

I bought sheep wallpaper for my home. For three hundred yen.

---

822: Marca

I admit, I bought a futon with chibi bears on it!

That was also three hundred yen...

---

823: Mimura

The devs are pretty crafty, eh?

If you want to get a perfect matching set for your room, you'll have to spend thousands of yen...

---

824: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Even though it has nothing to do with beating the game, as you play you start to obsess over that sort of stuff.

I understand the feeling.

And by that I mean, chop-chop on tree nymph merch, devs!

---

825: Mimura

If they start selling, say, the Silver-Haired Adorable Critters line, they'd fly off the shelves.

---

826: Marca

I'd buy!

---

827: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

I'd buy a Sakura and Reflet set!

---

828: Baa\_Baa

They'd be cute for sure! I'd buy too!

---

829: Mimura

Ahh, the Silver-Haired effect...

---

830: Murakage

Management, how about a ninja set?

---

## Chapter Two: The Prehistoric Island

“All right, we’re back in the village.”

“Mm!”

“Hm!”

Although the open beach gave us some trouble, the returns had been huge. I earned a lot of evets by selling sashimi, and I obtained the wood I needed to make fishing rods. I even filled out my encyclopedia a bit.

“Beach morning glory and beach pea. And a windmill palm.”

There were things that could be registered to the event encyclopedia all around us. I would have to keep my eyes peeled on my surroundings at all times, lest I overlook something.

“I’m stocked up on soy sauce, so now I need to get more fish for sashimi!”

I wanted to catch even more fish than before so I could cook a bunch and sell it. For that, I needed fishing rods.

“Can you make them, Sakura?”

“...!”

“Nice, I knew I could count on you!”

Sakura picked up the wood, smiling from ear to ear. She looked confident. But could we make them right here?

“Hmm, it’d be great if we had a spot to work from...”

There was no way there was a workshop in the village, but when I took a look around, I did notice a usable spot. There were tables and chairs placed outside of the general store. *Is that a casual workspace?* With that thought, I asked the owner if we could rent it out, and they told me I could go ahead and use it. In fact, they even went so far as to give me advice when I said we were going to make fishing rods, selling me some optimal string to use for the fishing line. The

string hadn't been among the products displayed in the store, so perhaps I had triggered something that let them sell me secret products? *Good thing I brought up fishing.*

"We should be able to make the fishing rods with regular string, but this'll let us make some higher quality ones, right?"

"...!"

"Nice, this is getting fun!"

Dividing the work up between us, Sakura and I got right into making the fishing poles.

"Right, the rest of you can go ahead and play for a bit."

"Hum!"

"Honk!"

My other monsters ran for the rocky shore with the underwater duo in the lead. If this had been real life, I would have worried about them drowning, but I had confidence in my crew. Besides, even in the worst-case scenario, they had the strongest lifesavers with them. Nevertheless, I decided to give them a warning. My monsters were surprisingly reckless when I took my eyes off them.

"Heeey! Don't do anything dangerous, you hear?!"

"Squeak."

Drimo turned around and gave me a slight nod. "Don't worry. I'll watch them" was what it looked like he wanted to say. *You're so reliable, Drimo!*

"Look after them, Drimo!"

"Squeak squeak."

I was genuinely moved by Drimo's responsible attitude as I watched him turn and walk away. *They should be safe with him.*

"All right, then, let's get to work."

"...♪"

Sakura sat down by my side and smiled, clearly happy we could work

together. *Mm-hmm, very cute.* I lightly patted her head and then got to work. Well, it was mainly Sakura doing the work with her adept Woodworking skill, while I took care of simple tasks like filing the wood.

After an hour, we completed six fishing rods. Each one had the Fishing skill attached, so anyone using them would be able to take part in fishing.

“We could probably sell these rods somewhere.”

“...”

The rods I had made as a test with the regular string were terrible. Here was a comparison of the two types:

Name: Wooden Fishing Rod (Sakura & Co.)

Rarity: 2 *Quality*: 7★ Durability: 220

Effect: Grants Fishing skill.

Weight: 2

Name: Wooden Fishing Rod

Rarity: 2 *Quality*: 2★ Durability: 120

Effect: Grants Fishing skill.

Weight: 2

The one with “Sakura & Co.” in its name was the finished product. On paper, they didn’t seem much different outside of their quality and durability, but for skill-granting items, the quality had a huge influence on the effect of the skill. In the case of wooden fishing rods, a one-star change could increase or decrease the Fishing skill by two to three levels. A seven-star and two-star item would have at least a ten-level difference between their skills. That was huge.

What I wanted to do was try using my Engraving (Wind) skill on these, but that was impossible. The fishing rods were too thin, so I wasn’t able to engrave a seal on them. Disappointing, but there was nothing I could do about it.

“Okay, now we can go fishing! What are the others do— Whoa! That’s a huge haul!”

“Mm?”

There was a mountain of fish and shellfish piled in front of Olto and the others, whom I’d assumed to be playing on the rocks.

“Wh-Where’d all that come from?”

“Mmm!”

“Hm!”

“Squeak squeak!”

Apparently, Olto, Himka, and Drimo had dug ten Begin Basket Clams out of the sand. *So they went clam digging?*

The other sea creatures, Begin Shrimp and Begin Scallops, were the fruits of Perca and Reflet’s free diving. I couldn’t believe they were able to get so much in such a short amount of time. Obtaining food was a lot easier than I thought it’d be, probably to make things easier for the second-wave players. If people couldn’t easily obtain food, they’d have to spend a lot of time focused on that and wouldn’t be able to enjoy the event.

“Great job, guys!”

“Mmm!”

“Hmm!”

My monsters jumped up and down happily at my words of praise. *What a bunch of cuties.*

“All right, we’ve finished making the fishing rods, so let’s get back out there!”

“Humm!”

“Honk honk!”

“Wow, are you all that excited?”

Everyone looked thrilled, but Reflet and Perca’s joy was extraordinary. They were probably happy about being able to pull the boat along again. The two of

them tugged on my robe, trying to bring me towards the boat rental shop. *I knew it.*

“Okay, okay. I’m moving.”

“Hum-hummm!”

“Hooonk!”

I could look forward to getting a monster boost this time too.

“...I know I was hoping for this, but are you sure you two aren’t working a little *too* hard?”

“Hum-hum-hummm!”

“Honk honk hooonk!”

After renting a boat and rushing for the ocean, we moved around to several different spots, enjoying our fishing experience, before we made our way once again into deep waters.

“Hum-hum-hum-hummm!”

“Honk honk hooonk!”

“Hm, maybe I should have worded my request differently?”

I had rented the boat for five hours, thinking we could take a proper tour of the area, so we still had a lot of time left...but I was starting to think my little helpers were traveling a little too far as we started drifting farther and farther out to sea. Where were they taking us?

This was likely my fault, though. You see, I had unintentionally said something after we caught a bunch of horse mackerel at the third fishing spot.

“It’d be nice if there was somewhere we could catch some new fish.”

After I said that, Reflet and Perca started pulling the boat along again with full enthusiasm. At first, I just watched them without saying a word, but once we hit the thirty-minute mark, I started getting anxious. Now that an hour had passed, I had accepted our fate. *Okay fine, you can take us wherever you want.*

Besides, it wasn’t like we couldn’t fish while we were moving. The chances of

catching something dropped dramatically, but we did reel in a few fish. That was why I didn't mind letting the underwater duo swim until they had their fill.

"Though that thing earlier did scare the crap out of me..."

"Hmm..."

"You too, Himka?"

"Hm!"

"Yeah..."

The uneasy-looking Himka and I faced each other and nodded.

About ten minutes earlier, I had seen something I did *not* want to see ahead of Reflet and Perca as they were pulling the boat: a fin sticking out from the waves.

"Um, *what?*"

"H-Hm?"

Himka and I rubbed our eyes repeatedly, but the fin didn't disappear. In fact, it looked like it was steadily getting closer.

"Is that a shark? A *shark?*"

It wasn't a dolphin or a sunfish. It was obviously a shark.

"Hey, Reflet! Perca! Mayday! Mayday, mayday!"

"Hm-hmmm!"

Himka and I cried out to them, but the two swimmers on a boat-hauling high didn't stop. They were heading towards the shark at full speed.

*Wait a second. There's still hope. Not all types of sharks attack people!*

Whale sharks and megamouth sharks ate plankton, and I had heard that even carnivorous sharks, who had a terrifying image, didn't actually attack people outside of extreme circumstances. The false image of sharks being man-eating creatures only became widespread due to a movie directed by a certain Mr. Spielberg. If the shark in front of us had been inherently dangerous, Reflet and



Perca would have probably stopped. In conclusion—the shark that fin was attached to must have been perfectly benign!

“Let’s see, we should be close enough to appraise it. And it’s...a *great white shark*?”

“Hmmm!”

“W-Wait, Himka. It’s not time to panic yet.”

“Hmmmm!”

I comforted Himka, who was clinging to my arm and trembling. There was still some distance between us and the shark, so if we just changed direction...

“Hum-hum!”

“Honk honk!”

*They’re not changing directions—they’re speeding up!*

The slow musical “duuuuh-dun” theme that was playing in my head started speeding up into more of a “duuuh-dun duuuh-dun duuuh-dun!”

Actually, I really *could* hear that “duuun dun” theme in the background! In unusual fashion, there was actual background music playing here. The heavy bass theme, which paid homage to that certain shark movie in a way that just barely skirted the line of copyright infringement, struck fear into our hearts. *Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit!*

“Dammit! If I need to, I’ll use magic—”

I started chanting a spell, but the shark didn’t attack us. It just passed by us.

“Huh?”

“Hm?”

Himka and I exchanged a look as we clung to each other. I appraised the creature again to be sure, but it really was named a great white shark. It was unmistakably that very shark that was the star of Spielberg’s movie.

I managed to figure it out by checking the menu—the great white shark was registered to my event encyclopedia. It must have been a part of the dangerous creatures series, like the man-of-war. Otherwise, instead of being a monster, it

might have been classified as a wild animal or even an object. In any case, the danger was behind us now. Or rather, we hadn't been in any danger to begin with.

"What should I do with this spell I prepared...? Well, there's nothing around us, so I'll just shoot it off randomly. Hydro Pressure!"

This was a spell I had learned just the other day, after reaching level 40 with my water magic. It was about what you'd expect: a typical water magic spell that unleashed a column of water. However, the moment I cast the spell, I started to lose balance. The force of the water shooting out from my palm made it impossible for me to stay upright.

"Ack! I'm gonna fall—!"

I wouldn't have had any issue if we were on land, but the kickback made me stagger on the unstable boat.

"Mm-mm!"

"Squeak squeak!"

"...!"

"O-Oh, thanks."

My monsters hastily caught me from behind and I was able to steady myself.

"Phew... Huh? Is the boat...moving faster?"

I thought it was just my imagination, but it really had sped up. And once my magic settled down, the boat noticeably slowed down again.

"Was it because of the spell...?"

It was possible. Jet Skis moved by expelling water, after all.

The spell consumed a lot of MP, so it wasn't one I could use willy-nilly, but it'd work for escaping in emergencies.

"I've found a pretty good acceleration method, huh!"

After ten minutes of an eventful boat trip, filled with fishing and more startling encounters with sharks, finally the time came for Reflet and Perca to

stop swimming. Positionally, we were to the northeast of Recreation Beach.

“We went pretty far north, huh? I kind of feel like a fish out of water.”

“...?”

“I-I wasn’t trying to make a lame joke or anything! Don’t think about it too hard!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Ahhh! Don’t give me that ‘Niiice’ reaction! Don’t praise me! It really was unintentional!”

*I really didn’t mean to make a joke! Jeez, why is this so embarrassing?*

“Mm-mmm.”

“Squeak squeak!”

“You don’t need to tell Drimo about it!”

While that was going on, Perca and Reflet got up onto the boat.

“Is there a fishing node here?” I asked.

“Hum.”

“Honk.”

Reflet and Perca shook their heads.

“Huh? There’s not?”

“Humm.”

“Honk honk.”

Reflet and Perca pointed farther north, though Perca just looked like he was flapping his flipper. They must have been saying it was a little farther ahead from here.

“So you’re just taking a break now?”

“Hum.”

“What do you mean you’re not?”

“Honk.”

Apparently, they weren't taking a break either. So why did they stop? Sensing my question, Perca leaped off the boat using Penguin Highway.

"Honk honk hooonk!"

He soared in an arc from the front of the boat.

*Flop!*

Then he just fell straight into the water. He didn't even start swimming, instead floating face up on the surface of the water. What was he trying to do?

While I was watching over Perca, something strange happened. Even though he wasn't swimming at all, he started to return towards the boat at a considerable speed.

"What happened?"

"Honk honk honk."

This time, he started swimming by kicking his feet. But despite his powerful kicks, he wasn't making any headway. That was when it clicked.

"Oh! Is a current or something pushing you back?"

"Hum!"

Reflet pointed right at me and gave me a big nod. Apparently, that was the right answer. *I see, so they didn't stop to take a break. The current is stopping them from going any farther.*

Wait—since they were still insistent on pushing farther, that meant there was a way to pass through it, didn't it?

"You want to keep moving forward, right?"

"Honk!"

"Do you think there's a way we could get past it without any items?"

"Hum!"

As I suspected, there *was* some way to progress through traditional methods. But our boat had been going pretty dang fast thanks to Perca and Reflet, so we should have had a decent amount of momentum. Even if it wasn't as fast as a

motorboat, it was several times faster than a swan boat at least. If we couldn't get past the current at our current speed, it was going to be pretty difficult.

"Is it speed we need? I can try using my magic to give us a quick boost."

The plan was simple. While Reflet and Perca pulled the boat, I would make us accelerate using Hydro Pressure. And naturally we had to have Drimo on the oars.

"Let's goooo!"

"Hum-humm!"

"Honk hooonk!"

"Squeak squeeek!"

We sped along faster than ever before, which let us move forward ten whole meters. And yet...

"Dang, no good."

"Honk..."

"Hum..."

In the end, the current pushed us back to where we had started. Reflet and Perca both looked frustrated.

"Maybe we *don't* actually have enough momentum? But I have no idea how we'd go any faster."

"Humm..."

"Honk..."

"Aw, don't get so down. Just give me a sec. I'll think of another way."

Building up our momentum probably wasn't the way to go. At the moment, I couldn't think of a way to accelerate, beyond using magic like I just had. In that case, maybe there was a way to lower the water resistance instead? If I could just temporarily nullify the flow of the current...

My experiment was to have Reflet and I unleash water magic on the current, with the thought being we could suppress its momentum.

“Hraaaaah!”

“Hum-hummm!”

“Whoa! Did the current get weaker? We can do this!”

*No good!* Just like before, we were pushed back to our starting point. Our method worked for a short amount of time, but we couldn’t do it forever. If we kept it up for too long, we would fully exhaust our MP.

Next up was the underwater tugboat plan. The idea was for Reflet and Perca to drag the boat while submerged underwater where the current seemed weaker... But of course things weren’t that simple. The ocean current was blocking the way underwater too.

“Humm.”

“Honk.”

After being repelled back, Reflet and Perca looked at each other and groaned, as if saying “Whatever shall we do?”

My next plan was to fling Perca as far as possible across the current, where he could then pull us across with a rope.

“You ready, Olto?”

“Mm!”

“Here we go, Perca! Flap those wings!”

“Honk!”

Perca, held aloft above Olto’s head, deftly saluted me with his flipper. Even though he was about to get launched, he was full of determination.

“Olto Catapult, fire!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Hyonk?!”

Perca must have been expecting to go flying in a cool, heroic way, but Olto flubbed the angle of his throw a bit, so Perca went spinning horizontally like a throwing star before falling into the water. I suppose he couldn’t have used

Penguin Highway in that state. Plus, the current covered a wider area than I had imagined, so he wasn't able to clear it.

"Okay then, how about this?! Go, Perca, Reflet!"

"Hooonk!"

"Hum!"

This was a somewhat improved version of the plan from earlier: Perca's Triple Jump plan.

I accelerated the boat with water magic until the halfway point, and when we couldn't go any farther, Reflet jumped while holding Perca. Then, Reflet used her water magic to further their trajectory, and at the end, Perca jumped forward using Penguin Highway.

"Hyaaaah!"

"Hummm!"

"Honk hooonk!"

It was the farthest they'd flown yet. And yet...

"Still no dice, huh?"

"Hum..."

I saw Reflet get dragged into the current and pushed back out towards the boat. Was it even possible to get over this current? *For now, once Perca gets back—*

"Hyooonk!"

"Ah, a man-of-war..."

"Honk..."

Reflet and Perca withdrew to the boat for the time being so Perca could recover. Well, the man-of-war venom would be healed quickly, so we could just think of this as a nice break.

"Are you okay, Perca?"

"Honk."

“Are you disappointed? It’s okay! Just trust in my plan!”

“Honk?”

“We’ve had a lot of trial and error, but our efforts haven’t been for nothing! Lend me your strength!”

*Heh heh heh. I’ve learned from our mistakes. Now I’ve got the ultimate plan in mind!*

“Humm!”

“Honk honk!”

“That’s what I like to see! I’m not exaggerating when I say the outcome of this plan depends on you two! I’m counting on you!”

“Hum!”

“Honk honk!”

Reflet and Perca snapped to a salute and then took up positions. Reflet remained on the boat, while Perca was on standby in the water. I took up position at the stern, with Olto and Himka supporting my back.

“Mm-mm.”

“Hm.”

“All right, all systems are go!”

Well, if this failed, that would mean a brute force approach was impossible and I would compliantly look for another method. There was probably somewhere that the current was weak or the water was shallow. It probably wouldn’t be difficult for me to look for a sandbar with my Water Exploration skill, though it would be time-consuming.

“Let’s do it!”

“Huuuummm!”

“Honk hooonk!”

First, Perca and Reflet swam their hardest into the current, pulling the boat behind them. But as usual, they barely moved forward five meters before they



started getting pushed back. That was the cue.

“Squeak!”

“Humm...”

“Honk honk!”

Drimo grabbed Reflet by the collar and pulled her back up onto the boat while Perca activated Penguin Highway at the same time. A rail of light stretched out from the front of the boat, drawing an arc in the air.

“Honk honk honk hooonk!”

Riding that rail, Perca soared into the sky at a super high speed, pulling the boat and us up into the air with him. This was my “If the Current Is Going to Push Us Back, We’ll Just Go Where There Is No Current” plan!

*We did it—we made the boat fly!*

There was *one* thing I didn’t account for, though.

“Rooooaar!”

“Huh? Is that a monster?”

To my surprise, something appeared from underwater. At first, I thought it was a long, thin sea snake or something, but I was wrong. It was a giant, translucent tentacle. It moved in a winding fashion, blocking our path.

*Oh no! It’s going to knock us down!* So I feared, but Perca’s fighting power was stronger than I had expected. As he soared in front of the boat, his beak shone a bluish-white—

“Honk!”

“Roaaar!”

Even though the tentacle looked very much like it might have been part of a boss enemy’s body, Perca drove it back with his charge. I had been under the impression this whole time that Penguin Highway was a movement technique, but was it actually an offensive technique? Perca used his Peck, Dash Attack Up, Ice Cloak, and Triangle Attack skills to boost his charge forward. By combining those with Penguin Highway, which allowed him to move at a high speed, he

was able to exhibit some tremendous power.

*Verification comes later!*

“It’s coming! Brace yourselves!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Hm!”

“...!”

Right before the boat made contact with the water, Sakura activated her magic. It was a spell called Ivy Wall, which produced a barricade of ivy. This time she produced a wall that covered the surface of the water. Since we weren’t on solid ground, its effect duration would be extremely short, but all we needed was a few seconds.

The boat touched down on the ivy and slid across it, propelling us even farther. If we had dropped onto the water, we would have lost a lot of our driving force. The wall of ivy was meant to prevent that.

It was then that I activated Hydro Pressure.

“Make sure I don’t fall!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Hm!”

“Hyaaaaaah!”

The boat steadily accelerated with the force of the water even in the face of the current, but it quickly started to lose speed. My momentary spell wasn’t enough to keep it accelerating for long. However, Reflet followed up my spell with her own water magic. She couldn’t use her magic for attacking, but she did have a spell that released a stream of water to use for watering plants and cleaning. That helped us move forward just a little bit more...

At the very, very end, Reflet, Perca, and Drimo made one last push. Drimo poured all his strength into rowing the boat, while Reflet and Perca dived back into the water and swam against the current as hard as they could, pulling the boat with them.

“Squeak squeak squeak squeeeeak!”

“Hum-hum-hum-huuum!”

“Honk honk honk honk honk!”

And the result was—

“The boat’s not being pushed back... We made it through!”

“Hum-huuum!!!”

“Honk hooonk!”

We had broken through the current.

“We did it!” I cheered, the joy pouring from deep down in my soul.

“...!”

“Hmmmm!”

My monsters started celebrating on the boat in response. For a long time. A *really* long time.

But we had succeeded.

“Hip-hip-hooray!”

“Mm-mmm! Mm-mmm!”

“Squeak squeak! Squeak squeak!”

I couldn’t help but cheer again. That was how happy I was.

*Jeez, that was rough.* Other parties would probably need four more Water Mages if they wanted to brute force their way through it the way we had, not to mention a way to counter the tentacle. It wasn’t impossible, but it would be fairly difficult.

“Okay, now where are we— Huh? What in the...? What’s that?!”

I had turned around to ask Reflet and Perca where we were headed, but I let out a cry of surprise at what I saw.

“A-An island?”

*Yup. That’s an island all right.* We were still some distance away from it, but it

was without a doubt a small island.

“Mm.”

“...?”

Olto and Sakura had brought their hands to their foreheads, looking in the distance. Their gazes were definitely directed towards the island. They could see it too.

“It’s an island, isn’t it?”

“Mm!”

“...”

But why did it just suddenly come into view? After all, it hadn’t been visible at all until just now. Even though we had passed over the current, we had only moved forward thirty meters at most. Was that really enough for the island to suddenly come into view? Or no, maybe the island wasn’t visible until we made it across the current?

“Hey, were you two trying to take us to that island?”

“Hum? Hum-hum.”

“Huh? You weren’t?”

“Honk.”

“Ah, I see. So this area of the ocean itself is a new fishing spot?”

“Honk honk!”

Apparently, Reflet and Perca’s goal had just been to cross over the ocean current. They picked up the fishing rods and were tilting their heads, asking if we were going to fish.

“R-Right. You brought us all the way over here, after all.”

Honestly, I was *very* interested in that island, but I would feel bad disregarding Reflet and Perca’s thoughtfulness. Well, the island wasn’t going anywhere, so we could head there after doing some fishing.

“All right, let’s fish first.”

“Honk!”

Then, once we started fishing, for some strange reason I completely forgot about the island.

“Ahh, this is nice.”

“Humm.”

As the boat rocked gently on the waves, I even felt like I was starting to get a little sleepy, despite this being a game.

“Man, it’s great to just kick back and fish like this.”

“Mmm...”

“...”

“This is the life.”

It felt nice to be cradled in the boat, and the fish just kept on biting.

That’s right, the fishing itself was also going smoothly. The fish that inhabited these waters were different—besides the horse mackerel and mackerel I had become acquainted with, we were also catching new fish like Begini Skipjack Tuna, and Begini Saury. And we were reeling in a huge haul. All thanks to the skill-granting fishing rods.

“Nice, nice. Salt-grilled saury and seared skipjack tuna... I can’t wait to try both! I’d really like some seasonings for the tuna, though...”

*Do I have to wait until after the event for that?* I wondered, when suddenly, Reflet and Perca started freaking out.

“H-Hum-humm!”

“Honk hooonk!”

“What’s up with you two?”

They hastily dived into the water and then started swimming with the boat in tow. Since they set off so abruptly, those of us on the boat lost balance and had to sit down.

“Just what the heck is—”

“Gshaaaaaaa!”

As soon as I was about to ask Perca and Reflet what was going on, a high-pitched howl assailed my ears. I whipped around to look.

“Aaargh!” I cried.

A gigantic *something* was behind us. Sharp fangs protruded from its huge mouth and it had a long neck. That neck plunged into the spot our boat had just been in a second ago, churning up large waves.

It was clear just how heavy the neck was as I watched the massive spray of water that it produced, as if a giant hammer had hit the water. Reflet and Perca must have sensed that thing approaching and had gotten us out of there on the double.

But just what *was* that thing? Since it was already underwater, I had missed the opportunity to appraise it. Was it a moray eel? A sea snake? I saw that it was long and slithery... Was it the same creature that had blocked us at the ocean current?

“Hum-hum-humm!”

“Honk honk honk hooonk!”

Reflet and Perca were still fleeing at full speed. *Ah, we’re being chased here, aren’t we?*

“Swim to the island! You can do this!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Hm-hmm!”

All of us on the boat cheered on the underwater duo pulling the boat. Maybe our cheers actually had an effect—we managed to escape from our mysterious assailant.

After swimming nonstop to the island, Reflet and Perca flopped down onto the sandy beach, utterly exhausted. Even though they hadn’t shown a hint of fatigue even after pulling the boat for over an hour, unsurprisingly they now looked wiped.

“Now then...just what sort of island is this?”

This wasn't the sort of island crawling with super strong monsters, was it? If it was, we were done for after all. Also, what would happen to the boat when our rental time was up? We'd lose our means of getting back if the boat returned on its own.

But also, since we made it all the way here, we couldn't *not* explore the island.

“Well, I guess I'll look around this beach until Reflet and Perca recover.”

We couldn't go back in the ocean in this state, anyway.

“This rocky beach seems normal.”

“Mm-mm.”

After a quick look around, I was able to find some starfish and acorn barnacles. It looked like this island had a similar ecosystem to the rocky shore near the village. There were also some windmill palm trees around. Based on those things alone, this place really didn't seem much different from Recreation Beach or the area around the East Fishing Village.

“Are these ferns over here?”

There was a forested area just past the beach, the undergrowth lush with ferns. The trees around them were labeled as Tree Ferns. If the image doesn't immediately come to mind, just think of old-growth forests in Australia and New Zealand. Or just imagine the forest you'd see in the background of a certain dinosaur movie franchise.

The atmosphere was overflowing with a sense of wildness that I wasn't often able to see in Japan. It was the exact sort of atmosphere that made me think some giant lizard or snake would pop out at any moment. Seriously, was this forest safe?

“Squeak?”

“...”

Drimo and Sakura were peering into the ancient-looking forest along with me. These two were both the coolheaded types, though. They didn't look scared or

frightened. Seeing them like that calmed me down.

“All right, looks like Reflet and Perca are good to go, so let’s embark into the for—”

*“Hmm!”*

“Wh-What’s wrong, Himka?”

“Hm! Hm-hm!”

Himka cut off my words with a loud shout. He looked even more startled than when he almost fell out of the boat. I looked in the direction where Himka was frantically pointing, which was near the entrance of the forest.

“Ugh! What is that?”

“Hm...”

There, perched on a leaf of a fern, was a giant insect. Was that a dragonfly? It was much bigger than any of the dragonflies I’d seen, though. It was probably bigger than a raven. I appraised it and learned it was called a Meganeura. Apparently, they were the largest dragonflies in history and lived during the Paleozoic era. It wasn’t a monster, but an event-limited insect. It had no marker and it wasn’t coming to attack us. Naturally, it wasn’t gearing up to steal Godzilla’s energy and become a giant kaiju either.

If venomous creatures and sharks were part of a warning about dangerous creatures, then was this part of the summer break research project? But wouldn’t someone who hated bugs be traumatized seeing something like that? Even I was a bit put off from seeing a dragonfly that big, and I typically had no problem with bugs.

“Mm-mmm?”

“Hum?”

Even Olto and Reflet were just observing it from afar, apparently uninterested in chasing after it.

“You know, now that I got a good look at it, it’s pretty cool, isn’t it?”

“Hmm?”



“Himka, you hate bugs...?”

Himka was looking at me in disbelief after hearing me mutter. He didn’t like water or insects—he was surprisingly delicate. *He must be more of a city boy.*

“I kind of want to catch it.”

“Squeak!”

“Honk honk!”

My beast-type monsters, on the other hand, weren’t scared at all. In fact, they looked determined.

“It’ll be interesting to own, and maybe I can sell it.”

After all, if I saw that giant dragonfly for sale, I’d definitely buy it!

“I’ve got a Bug-Catching Net and a Terrarium, which I bought for catching rhinoceros beetles. Let’s use them to catch this!”

The Bazaar and beach market had several different products in stock, and these had seemed like useful items.

“Let’s go!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Don’t you dare fly away!”

“Honk hooonk!”

Then, after ten minutes of chasing the giant dragonfly around the beach and entrance to the forest, I successfully caught it with the Bug-Catching Net.

“We got it!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Great job, Olto!”

*Okay, okay, Olto was the one who caught it.*

The Bug-Catching Net we used was a large type used by experts. It could even catch something the size of a medium-sized dog. If we had been using a small net made for kids, the dragonfly’s wings would have been jutting out.

The gigantic dragonfly exuded a raw power as it beat its wings wildly in resistance within the net. *Heck yeah, this is so exciting!*

“Ha-haaa! It’s huge!”

“Mmm.”

“Okay, keep it covered with the net, got it?”

“Mm!”

While Olto held the net down in place for me, I gently moved my hand inside it. That was when I was struck with a worry.

“Uh, you think it’ll bite me?”

“Mmm?”

Its head and jaws were huge, after all. Its bite was sure to be powerful.

“...Come on, I’ve come too far to get scared now! A man is judged by his courage!”

And so, I grabbed the giant dragonfly— I mean, the Meganeura by its torso, and swiftly pulled it out from the net.

*Bzz bzz bzz bzz bzz bzz!*

Its wings were convulsing like a phone on vibrate. Its body was also squirming like crazy, but there was no chance of escape for it anymore. Oh, and it didn’t bite me. That was good.

“Olto, get the cage ready!”

“Mmm!”

“Great, now I’ll just put it in and...close the lid!”

“Mm-mm!”

Capture complete. It was inside a Large Terrarium. I had spread out some dirt and placed ferns and branches inside the Terrarium, which was the largest size available. Inside there, the Meganeura was resting its wings. The largest Terrarium was about the size of a tank for tropical fish. I should have expected from the start that there would be correspondingly large critters to catch based

on the fact that these giant nets and Terrariums were being sold.

I had been worried about what to do if the dragonfly thrashed around in its cage, but it looked like being in the Terrarium calmed it down. Far from going on a rampage, it was barely moving, simply showing off its impressive figure. The Terrarium was doing its job.

“Man, it’s so cool.”

“Mmm.”

I lifted up the Terrarium, and Olto and I peered into it together. *Dang, I really do feel like a kid again. I guess it’s because it’s been a while since I went bug catching?* I was reminded of when my friends and I would catch cicadas and grasshoppers when we were kids.

“Can I store this in my inventory? Yup, I can. That’s good. I can carry it with me too.”

“Mmm!”

“All right, keep looking for more. We can catch a whole bunch!”

“Mm!”

And so, we walked along the beach in search of more giant dragonflies. The sandy part of the beach wasn’t very wide, and it had steep cliffs on either side of it. As I walked from one end to the other, I ran into something strange. It wasn’t a dragonfly. It wasn’t even a living creature. It sat, dignified and serene, at the border between the beach and the forest.

“A stone monument? I don’t see an inscription...but it’s definitely man-made.”

“...?”

“Mmm?”

It was a rectangular pillar that reached to about the height of my chest. Each side looked to be about thirty centimeters. It was probably originally made of white stone, but it was now a charcoal black, dark enough that you could have assumed the stones were gray to begin with, and its bottom half was covered in thick moss. It looked like it had been left here for a long time. At the very top of

the pillar was a round indentation, as if something was meant to be placed there. From a gaming perspective, I probably had to place a key item here to progress an event. But I had no clue what that would be. I hadn't obtained any round items in this event.

"There aren't any more dragonflies, so I guess we have to go into the forest. Besides, we need to search for clues about this blatantly event-related pedestal."

"...!"

"Squeak squeak!"

*Everyone's onboard. They've always got my back!*

"All right, into the woo—"

"Hum-humm!"

Just as Himka had earlier, someone interrupted my proclamation with a shout.

"Reflet, what's up? Is there another Meganeura?"

"Humm! Hum!"

"The ocean?"

Reflet was pointing incessantly towards the water. But there was nothi— No, yeah, there was a huge shadow beneath the waves. It didn't seem to be heading towards us but was instead leisurely swimming along the shore. Could it have been the mysterious monster that attacked us earlier?

I held my breath as I watched the shadow. Suddenly it grew darker. It must have gotten closer to the surface of the water. Then, as we watched, the water in front of us swelled, and the giant shadow burst through the surface, revealing itself.

"Gshaaaa!"

"Whaaaaat? Are you serious?!"

"Hum-humm!"

At a glance, it looked like a giant sea snake had sprung out of the water. But

that wasn't what it was. This thing's massive body looked more like a sea lion's, and it was from that blubbery torso that its long, snakelike neck grew.

"A Plesiosaur?"

That's right. The creature before me was unmistakably a Plesiosaur, a marine reptile. I managed to appraise it in time and identified it as an Event Plesio. Also, it had an enemy marker. This was undoubtedly the mystery monster that had attacked our boat.

"W-Wow. A real, live Plesiosaur!"

I was actually a bit of a dinosaur fan. Plesiosaurs were a pretty popular genus, so I couldn't *not* geek out. I had never taken a faster screenshot. I moved even faster than I typically did when taking cute pics of my monsters.

*Man, I'm so glad I'm playing this game. Who knew I'd get up close and personal with a Plesiosaur?!*

"Wait, does that mean this fern forest..."

I had called it an ancient-looking forest on a whim, but was it really exactly that? Considering there was a Meganeura, there was a high possibility that it was.

"...Is there going to be a T. rex in there?"

*That'd be terrifying. But I'd also kill to see it!* I would just have to explore accepting I might die. I mean, these were *dinosaurs* we were talking about.

"Heck yeah, I'm getting pumped!"

*I'll find those dinosaurs! And I'll take lots of screenshots!*

"Onwaaard!"

"Mm, mm-mm!"

*Yeeaaaah! Wait for me, dinosaurs!*

With that enthusiasm, I stepped foot into the forest, but my energy petered out quickly. Could you blame me? The forest was scary. All the more so with the possibility of there being dinosaurs lurking about.

"Hmm. There might really be dinosaurs in this forest. It's got that sort of

vibe.”

“Mmm...”

My monsters and I progressed slowly through the Jurassic forest, vigilant of our surroundings all the while. It now seemed highly possible a dinosaur might at any moment jump out from between the trees with its giant mouth wide open. There was no such thing as being too cautious here.

“Squeak.”

“Oh, another mining node?”

“Squeak!”

We didn’t encounter any monsters, but there were other successes to be had. There was a decent number of mining, gathering, and logging nodes around, so I was able to acquire Iron and Silver Ores, Medicinal Herbs and Poison Hemlock, as well as string and wood. And they were all high-quality items. Obtaining those was enough to make visiting this island worthwhile.

“Now all we need is for a dinosaur to appear.”

“Hm?”

“Don’t give me that look. It might be scary, but I really want to see one!”

“Hm...”



*He sighed! You city boys, always putting your own safety over your sense of adventure!*

“Dinosaurs! Come out, come out wherever you are!”

“Mm!”

“Squeak!”

As I nonchalantly looked around, in front of me Olto and Drimo had braced themselves, their gazes locked on a thicket up ahead.

“Is this it?”

“...!”

“Honk!”

My monsters were totally prepared for a fight. Then, after a few seconds...

*Rustle rustle.*

The thicket began to shake, then a creature appeared from between the trees.

“Whoa! They *are* here! There’re dinosaurs! Screenshot, screenshot!”

The creature had two thick legs that stepped firmly on the ground and a long tail for balance. Its two front legs were surprisingly small, but the sharp claws growing out of them meant we couldn’t let our guard down. Its mouth was hard and pointed like a beak. More than a bird, it looked sort of like a kappa, but the top of its head was shaped more like a helmet rather than a dish—smooth, hard-looking, and oval-shaped. Although its overall silhouette resembled a raptor’s—a well-known carnivorous dinosaur—this one wasn’t a meat-eater.

“Kraagh!”

“A Pachycephalosaurus! Not bad! Not bad at all!”

Any dinosaur fan like myself would be familiar with this beast, but it was probably one of the lesser-known ones in the general population. I wondered if I could tame it...but I could not.

“Dammit! Fine! I’ll just take screenshots galore, then!”



When I appraised it, I saw it was named Event Pachycephalo. If this dinosaur had the same abilities as the creature it was based on, then...

“Kraaaaagh!”

“Oh, crap! This is *not* the time to be taking screenshots! I-It’s coming this way! Olto, Drimo! Get ready!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak squeak!”

The Event Pachycephalo was rushing forward, its hard, dense skull aimed straight at us. *I knew it! It’s going to headbutt us!* It must have been around six meters in length from its head to the tip of its tail. If it stood at its full height, it would probably be about three meters tall. However, right now, it had its tail out straight, its body parallel to the ground, and its head thrust forward. In this position, its head was at exactly the height of a person’s upper body.

“Mm-mmm?”

“Kraaaaagh!”

*That headbutt sent Olto flying with one hit?! That dinosaur must have a powerful Blow Away ability! Olto was able to stop its charge, though!*

“This is our chance! Let’s attack it together!”

“...!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Honk honk!”

Between my and Sakura’s spells, plus Drimo’s pickax and Perca’s charge attack, we were able to land simultaneous direct hits on the defenseless Event Pachycephalo.

“Urgh! What’s it made out of, solid rock?!”

“Squeak...!”

Even though we were striking its back and other parts of its body where it seemed like it would take the most damage, its HP had only decreased by ten percent.

Wait...was this actually a super high-level monster?

“Kraaagh!”

“Mm-mm!”

*It's still targeting Olto?!*

“We can chip away at it now! Let's give it our all!”

“...!”

“Honk!”

While Olto took on the brunt of the dinosaur's attacks, we pelted it with our own. It wasn't turning towards us at all, so I wondered if it was particularly susceptible to skills that had a Provoke effect. Was this going to be an easy win for us?

...No, there was no way things would be that easy. Once we halved its HP, its behavior changed.

“Kraaaaaaaaagh!”

It let out a deafening roar and a red aura enveloped its body. Then, the Event Pachycephalo looked away from Olto. *I'm pretty sure it's staring right at me now...*

“Kraaaaagh!”

“Ahhh! It's coming this way!”

“Squeak squeeeak!”

*It really did shift its target to me! I must have used too much magic and drawn its hate!* The Event Pachycephalo's egg-shaped head came closing in with terrifying momentum.

“Squeak squeak!”

“Drimo!”

Drimo stepped in front of me, but one hit took out half his HP. On the other hand, Sakura's and Perca's attacks were doing more damage. That red aura was proof that the beast was enraged. In exchange for higher attack power, its

defenses were weakened. Plus, it ignored status effects like Provoke, and just targeted whoever had dealt it the most damage. That was very valuable information. The next time I fought one, I'd have to take that into consideration and adjust our strategy.

"Kra-kraaaaagh!"

*That is, if we can survive this battle!*

"Hnyaaaah!"

"Squeak squeeeeak!"

Then, after two minutes... Two *very long* minutes...

"Kraaagh..."

"We defeated it, somehow."

"Squeak."

That was a real close call. The Event Pachycephalo's rabid phase secret move was incredibly powerful. Even though my Guard had been successful, Olto almost died. If Olto hadn't stopped the dinosaur's charge attack, even those of us in the rear guard would have gotten hit, and our party would have been toast.

"You saved us, Olto."

"Mm-mm!"

Olto thrust his hoe enthusiastically up into the air and let out a triumphant cry. Nearly dying hadn't crushed his fighting spirit, it seemed. For a monster that couldn't fight, Olto actually didn't dislike the battlefield.

"All right, let's see what it dropped... Oho!"

There were some exciting item names listed in my inventory. *Dinosaur Scale, Dinosaur Meat, and Bone-In Dinosaur Meat?!*

"We got double meat!"

Even if I acquired some great materials to use for armor in this event, I was going to sell most of it anyway. That was why I preferred to get ingredients, which were more useful to me. I could eat these, or I could cook and sell them.

“And as for evets, I got...five hundred? Wow. We only took down one enemy. So this island really isn’t a beginner-friendly hunting ground, huh?”

This had to be some battle-centric playing field prepared for top players specialized in combat. It was only natural we’d struggle against the enemies here, if that was the case.

“Hmm, maybe we should turn back instead of doing anything reckless.”

“Hm!”

*Himka agrees. Actually, I bet he just doesn’t want to be in this insect-infested forest anymore.*

“All right, let’s head ba—”

“Groooooaar!”

“Mm-mm?”

“Huh? Did that, like, sound super close to you guys?”

That roar obviously belonged to a carnivorous—and not to mention *big*—creature. I stayed vigilant of our surroundings. Suddenly, I noticed the ground tremble, a trembling which gradually grew more violent.

“Where’s it coming from?”

“...!”

Sakura tugged on my robe, looking behind us.

“Kraaaaagh!”

“Groooooaarrr!”

*It’s here!* From a cluster of thickets about fifty meters away, an Event Pachycephalo appeared. Then, following after it, an even larger figure jumped out. I had thought the Event Pachycephalo was big, but this other beast was several times its size. *Well, yeah. Of course it is.*

“I-It’s a T. reeex! It’s really here!”

*And it doesn’t have feathers! The devs get it!*

Recent research stated that *Tyrannosaurus rex* had probably had feathers, but

that was just an inference made without definite proof. The idea was basically that since their close relatives had feathers, then they probably did too. The research would probably reach a conclusion eventually, but I definitely preferred featherless, scaly dinosaurs. Why, you ask? Because they looked cooler that way, dammit!

Evidently, the devs felt the same. There was not a single feather on the giant carnivorous dinosaur, whose body length surpassed ten meters.

“Groooooaaarrr!”

“Kragh...”

“I-It’s attacking it?”

To my surprise, the T. rex bit the Event Pachycephalo and brought it down. It then continued to bite it repeatedly. There was no mistaking it—it was eating the other dinosaur. As we watched, the Event Pachycephalo gleamed brightly and then disappeared—unsurprisingly, since it had taken damage from the T. rex.

Then, the T. rex looked over at us.

“Groar...”

“Uh, not good.”

*This isn’t the time to be sitting back and watching!*

“Groooooaaar!”

“R-Run!”

“...!”

“Humm!”

*We should’ve run away sooner!*

But this was a *Tyrannosaurus rex*, you know? A *T. rex*. Aka the *Tyrant*? It was a must-see for dinosaur lovers!

“Groooooaaaar!”

“Dang, it’s ferocious! And fast!”

We ran as fast as we could, but the distance between us and the T. rex started to close before I knew it. Its stride was as massive as its size. It had already closed half the distance between us, so I was close enough to appraise it. *At least I know its name now, though!*

“An Event Tyranno! Of course! Man, it’s so cool!”

“Hm-hmm!”

“S-Sorry. My bad.”

“Hm!”

“I-I know, okay?! I’m running for real, so don’t push me!”

Himka got mad at me because I kept turning around to take screenshots. *I’ll run seriously now. I’m recording, anyway.*

“But it’s definitely going to catch up to us at this rate!”

I doubted we could beat it in a fight, and it would get us eventually if we just kept running. Was there any way we could outrun it? Like if there were somewhere it couldn’t follow...?

“Let’s head where the trees are more dense!”

“Mm-mm!”

“...!”

With Olto and Sakura leading the way, we went down the path that took us into the deepest, densest part of the forest, which I had been avoiding earlier for fear of running into dinosaurs. The scariest one was already chasing after us right now, after all, so there was no more reason to fear it.

“Groooooaaaaaar!”

“Nice! The trees are slowing it down!”

“Hum-humm!”

I felt a rush of relief thinking we’d be able to get away, when I heard Reflet scream.

“Agh! They’re in front too!”

I hurriedly faced forward, where I saw a new figure. It looked to be about eight meters in length—smaller than the T. rex, but still plenty huge. It was walking slowly on four legs. Its head was free of spikes or horns, and looked more like a turtle's or an iguana's. Its body was short and stout, like a rhino or a hippo, so its appearance was amusing in a way. Despite that, it didn't look weak at all. The tip of its long tail was covered in several long spikes about a meter in length each, and countless giant, diamond-shaped plates lined its back.

"An Event Stego! Damn! I wish I could examine it, but this isn't the time for that!"

Behind us was the Tyranno. Before us was the Stego. We were in a very dangerous situation. I decided to gamble on our last sliver of hope.

"Let's run past the Stego!"

"Hum!"

"Honk!"

It was much better than facing the Tyranno.

And so, we ran as fast as we could for about ten seconds. It felt like we were running forever, but my gamble paid off.

My plan was to pass by the Stego before it could attack us and run away as fast as we could from that one too. But the Stego didn't even look at us in the first place. It seemed like it was one of those monsters that didn't attack unless attacked first. And that wasn't all.

"Groooooaaar!"

"Bmuuurrrr!"

Believe it or not, the Tyranno and the Stego started fighting each other. We had succeeded in shifting the T. rex's focus onto the Stego by chance.

"Nice! Now we can escape!"

"Honk honk!"

"...!"

“How long has it been since we entered the forest? Like an hour?”

“Mmm.”

“We did well surviving for this long.”

“Hm...”

Everything was thanks to this forest’s natural order—or should I say, the game mechanics. It was apparent that the carnivores and herbivores of this prehistoric forest were battling for existence. If they encountered each other for whatever reason, they would ignore players and fight each other.

So far during our meandering, we had run into five different types of dinosaurs: Event Pachycephalo, Event Tyranno, Event Stego, Event Raptor, and Event Tricera. The herbivorous dinosaurs were the Pachycephalo, Stego, and Tricera. The Tricera looked a bit like a rhinoceros, but it was almost eight meters in length as well and on its head was a helmetlike frill and three horns. The Stego and Tricera didn’t attack us unprovoked, so they were perfect for distracting the carnivorous dinosaurs.

The carnivores were the Tyranno and the Raptor. Even though the Raptor shared the same body type as the Tyranno, it was a smaller, two-meter-tall carnivorous dinosaur. They were likely familiar to a lot of people since they were the ones that chased around the protagonists in a certain Jurassic movie franchise. They always moved in packs of three or more and were a huge nuisance. Their ostrichlike feet meant they were fast and practically spring-loaded. They also had a short turning radius.

So far we had run into them three times. The first time we foisted them onto a Tricera, the second time they got wind of a Tyranno’s scent and ran away, and the last time we succeeded in driving them back.

However, during that one fight, I used up Drimo’s Dragon Blood Awakening and all my Medicinal Herbs, so most of our fighting power was used up. But even after all that, we didn’t crush them but only drove them back. Since we had taken two out of the three down, the last one ran away. If we had continued fighting, we probably would have died. Incidentally, all the dinosaurs I had run into so far were not monsters that could be tamed...



*And why not?! I want a dinosaur! Not even a T. rex, just a Raptor or a Pachycephalo would be enough!*

“Fine, I’ll take screenshots galore, then!”

“...?”

“Oh, nothing. I was just thinking, I wish we could get out of this forest.”

“...”

As it so happened, we had gone into the very depths of the forest. I understood our general direction to an extent thanks to my map, so we weren’t completely lost, but to make it to the beach where our boat was, we would have to go through the Event Raptors’ territory. The reason we had gotten this deep into the forest in the first place was because we kept making wide detours while trying to avoid the Raptors.

Yes, incidentally we had already discovered how to spot the carnivorous dinosaurs’ territory. It wasn’t me who discovered it, though—it was Himka.

The trees that marked the carnivores’ territory had some very noticeable claw marks about one meter high, where players would be able to see them easily. The Tyrannos’ claw marks had been about three meters up the trees. The time I failed to notice those, we ran into a Tyranno and had fully accepted we would die. *To that pack of Pachycephalos that appeared before us then—thank you for your service. Rest in peace.*

“Should we try to get to the mountain soon?”

Near the center of the island was a mountain that looked to open up into a plateau. *Should we head there now? Or no, is that too much of a desperate move?* Of course, if we had a low chance of making it back safely, then maybe we could at least gather some information, fully accepting we’d die and respawn. I’d be happy to get any data on the terrain, see the monsters that appeared, and gather some special items.

*Ding-dong.*

*“It is now time to return your boat. However, it is currently impossible for your boat to be returned. Until you have arrived at your boat or returned to the*

*registered return point, you will be charged a late fee of two hundred evets per hour."*

"Are you kidding me?!"

I was grateful it wouldn't just go back without us, but two hundred evets an hour was double the normal rental fee!

"We can't keep wandering around aimlessly like this..."

We had no other choice. We had to get back to the boat by any means—

"Groooooaaar!"

"Argh! A Tyranno! Why..."

*We aren't even in its territory!* As I was trying to figure out what was going on, a small figure ran ahead of the Tyranno.

"Graa-graaaaaaa!"

"Raptors! Damn youuu!"

"Graa-graaa!"

The Raptors must have been attacked by the Tyranno inside their turf and then run all the way here. Their expressions looked frantic.

"Let's run!"

"Mm-mm!"

"Hmm!"

We dashed off once again. *This is all we've been doing since we got to this island!*

*One hour later...*

"Ahh, we ended up coming here anyway..."

"Humm."

"Honk."

I sat down, totally exhausted. Beside me, my monsters were looking up at the

steep cliff. This was the first time Perca had seen something like this, so it must have been fascinating to him.

After running from the Tyranno and the Raptors and then straying off course, we arrived at the foot of the tableland that was in the center of the island. Naturally, I hadn't actually planned on coming here.

The tableland was surrounded by a treeless wasteland. Reddish-brown rocks were scattered across dirt of the same color, creating a scene that could be perfectly described as desolate. I had seen television programs about Ayers Rock and the Grand Canyon, and I felt like this area looked similar to those.

I kept a watch on our surroundings, but I didn't see any dinosaurs. Was this considered a safety zone? That'd be great if it were true... No, the moment I let my guard down, we'd die. I had to stay alert.

Scaling the slope of this mountain was going to be incredibly difficult, far more so than regular hills. Of course, if we just had to climb it, we could manage if Olto created some footholds for us...but we would have to make it over the obstacles in our way.

"Ka-kaaaw!"

"Ka-kaw-kaaaw!"

"Those are Pteranodons, no doubt about it."

"Hm..."

They were too far away for me to appraise, but I'd bet they were called Event Pteras. They were a type of pterosaur with wingspans that stretched five meters. Looking up from below like this, I could see at least ten of them flocked together near the top of the cliff. If we wanted to climb this cliff, we would have to do something to get past those flying dinosaurs too.

"I don't think we'll be able to force our way past with Olto's earth magic, so for now let's just look around the mountain."

There was probably a path up the mountain somewhere. Right now, we were on the southwest side. I decided to explore while moving counterclockwise. There was no real reason for it; I just wanted to follow the left-hand rule.

“I hope we find something good.”

“Mm-mmm.”

And so, we walked along the mountain. Soon, we found a marker.

“A mining spot!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Ooh, wonder what we’ll get?”

“Squeak squeak.”

Olto, Drimo, and I had been gathering as we went, but we hadn’t obtained anything that particularly stood out. I could sell Iron Ores anywhere, but they weren’t anything new. But even from our current spot, I could see another mining node ahead.

“There are so many spots to mine!”

“Mm!”

“Squeak!”

Should we go crazy? I could even earn a decent number of evets if I had a lot of Iron Ores to sell. But we couldn’t forget to be cautious too. We didn’t know when a dinosaur might pop out of the old-growth forest that encircled the tableland.

“Let’s move slow and steady.”

“Honk honk.”

So I said, but after some time I couldn’t stop myself from exclaiming,  
“Yeeaaaah! Keep digging!”

“Mmm!”

“Squeak squeak!”

Olto and Drimo raised their spoils above their heads. All right, look—we had been walking a little more quietly just a second ago. But digging up something like this? Well...

Name: Fossil (Ammonite)

Rarity: 3 / Quality: 2 ★

Effect: None. For decoration. Can be sold.

“I can’t believe we can get fossils here!”

I pulled out the ammonite fossil I just mined and took a good look at it. It was probably five centimeters in size and fit in my palm. In the real world, there were few ammonites that were this well shaped. Although ammonite was sold at museums and mineral shows, most of them were chipped and dull in color.

“Guess that’s just a perk of this being a game.”

Considering that I hadn’t been able to obtain these when mining in the forest, that must have meant they were only minable around this tableland.

“Looks like I can sell it, but...”

I wanted to hold on to it if I could. *For the spirit of adventure!*

The thing was, I wasn’t sure if I could keep event items after the end of the event. Well, I could probably mine some more, so maybe I would keep a few and sell the rest.

“All right, let’s rock and roll!”

We continued walking for five more minutes. I estimated we had walked about a quarter of the perimeter of the mountain when we finally came across something new. Sakura and Himka were the first to notice it.

“...!”

“Hm-hm!”

“Hmm? What’s up, guys?”

They had been walking ahead of me while I was absorbed in mining, and now they were beckoning me over.

“Hold on, I’m checking out my mining spoils... Hmm, no fossils, huh?”

As expected, they had a low drop rate. Counting the first one I had mined, I

had only obtained a total of three of them. But still, I continued mining in search of the fossils.

“Man, if I could get more of these...”

Name: Fossil (Ammonite)

Rarity: 3 / Quality: 4 ★

Effect: None. For decoration. Can be sold.

Evidently, fossils of the same type differed in size based on their quality. This one was almost twice the size of the other ammonite. It was really magnificent. I could stare at it forever.

Name: Fossil (Carnivorous Dinosaur Fang)

Rarity: 3 / Quality: 3 ★

Effect: None. For decoration. Can be sold.

Then there was this one. It was about the size of a Raptor’s fang and was cool just to look at. What if I found a fang of higher quality and bigger size? That could very well be the size of a Tyranno’s fang. I would kill to have one of those to decorate my home with. I had no choice now but to put some effort into mining too.

“...!”

“Hmmm!”

“Oops, sorry!”

I had left my monsters hanging for about two minutes, so of course they’d be irked. *Whoops*. Ever since coming to this island, I’d been way too giddy and as a result, useless. *Huh? What do you mean that’s nothing new? Okay, maybe that’s true, but now it’s even more true. I need to rein myself in and get focused.*

“Okay, what’s going on?”

“...”

“Is that...a crevice? Wait, can we go inside it?”

“Hm!”

Sakura and Himka had found a five-meter-wide crevice. I stood before it and could see that there was an upward slope leading deep inside. Since it curved at some point, I couldn't tell for certain, but it must have been a fairly long path.

“Does this lead to the top of the mountain?”

“...!”

“All right, should we go in?”

“Hm.”

My monsters and I got into formation and walked up the slope with the same caution we would when entering a dungeon.

There were no traps and no dinosaurs. In fact, there were some high-quality gathering and mining nodes along the way, so we were able to obtain some great materials. We even got some more fossils. If anything, the place was loaded with one-and two-star quality fossils. Just as I thought, this tableland was a fossil treasure house. And if that was true for our climb up the mountain, how would things be at the top? Would I be able to get a humongous ammonite or a dinosaur skeleton?

“We need to get to the top no matter what!” I exclaimed, resolute. However, my ambition was quickly crushed.

“Oh no,” I groaned. “That's a boss, isn't it?”

After a laborious journey up the slope, we made it to a wide clearing. It was a round, open space about fifty meters in diameter. Countless small waterfalls flowed down the steep walls, the streaming water making the ground beneath our feet swampy. There was a flying Meganeura, the giant dragonfly that I had first hunted for, as well as reedlike plants and gathering nodes. I almost wanted to hang out here for a while.

But that couldn't happen, because a most fiendish monster was also positioned here. It looked like a Tyranno from far away, but when I took a closer

look, I knew it was something else entirely. Its face was much longer and slimmer, almost like a crocodile's, its body twice the size of a Tyranno's. But where it differed the most was its distinctive spine. It had a semicircular fin on its back, which dinosaur enthusiasts called a "sail." The several dozen bones along the sail, which gave it its fan shape, were covered in a membrane that looked like the webbing some birds had, but sturdier.

"A Spinosaurus..."

From its appearance, I could tell that was what it was—a secretly popular carnivorous dinosaur. Honestly, I was a huge fan of them, but my dismay currently outweighed my excitement.

"We can't win against that. It's obviously a boss."

"Humm..."

"Honk honk..."

The underwater duo, peering cautiously at the clearing from the entrance with me, looked like they were about to cry. *Relax, we're definitely not taking that on.*

"Let's go back."

"Hum."

"Honk."

But now, I was certain.

"It looks like something *is* at the top of the tableland after all."

It was a spot that would be impossible to reach without overcoming the boss. Something important to the event was definitely up there. *We're sure as hell not getting there, though!*

"It sucks, but we can't go this way. Let's try to find a different path."

"...!"

We returned to the foot of the mountain, where we continued exploring around the perimeter. We moved north as I searched for another possible crevice.



“We could probably go up this way with Olto’s earth magic...”

“Ka-kaaaw!”

“Or not.”

Apparently, the Event Pteras inhabited every part of the tableland’s cliff. Even when I found a spot on the cliff that didn’t look as steep, the cry of those monstrous birds crushed our motivation. Was there no way to fully ascend the tableland without defeating the Event Spino? I wasn’t sure what would be easier—defeating dozens of Pteras while scaling the cliff or beating the Spino. Either way was probably impossible for us.

After we had walked for a little while, Reflet and Perca reacted to something.

“Huum!”

“Honk honk!”

They hopped up and down around me with smiles filling their faces. If these two were both reacting this way, did that mean there was water ahead? I went ahead and continued forward, following their lead. Then, as I had expected, a large waterfall came into view.

“Oh, cool!”

It was a giant curtain of water, which looked to be flowing down from the top of the tableland and was around twenty meters wide.

In the real world, there was a famous waterfall plateau known as Angel Falls, though unlike that one, this one here had a basin, and the waterfall itself was much shorter. There were rocks jutting out of the cliff here and there, interrupting the flow of water and producing a white spray that added to the elegance.

As I approached, I saw something interesting. Through a gap in the streaming water, I could see that the area behind the waterfall looked as if it had been hollowed out. Basically, there was a spacious cave behind the waterfall.

“Could we get up by climbing the rocky wall behind the waterfall? The stream will block the Event Pteras from getting us.”

“Hum!”

“Honk!”

It was clearly a gimmick to be used to climb up the tableland. For our party, having that many footholds was enough for us to climb up without a problem. Though there was an obstacle we’d have to take care of before that.

“There’s a lake at the bottom of the waterfall... We’ll have to figure out how to cross that first.”

The plunge basin that collected the water from the fall was fairly wide, forming a circular lake roughly one hundred meters in diameter.

“All right, we’ll have to try and swi—”

“Hum!”

“Honk!”

As we walked towards the lake, Reflet’s and Perca’s faces abruptly fell and they stopped in their tracks.

“Honk...!”

Perca stopped me with his fin, his sharp gaze directed at the lake.

*A serious face on a penguin...*

“Cute.”

“Honk?”

“Oh, nothing. Is there something in the lake?”

“Honk!”

Immediately after Perca nodded in response, the center of the lake started to bubble. Then, in that very spot, something huge broke the surface of the water.

“Groooooogh!”

“It’s big!”

It burst out of the water like a performing orca, then disappeared back underwater with a great big splash. I only caught a glimpse, but I was able to see what the strange creature looked like perfectly. It was like an earless seal covered in crocodile scales, with a reptilian head and tail.

Its name was “Event Mosa”—a monster based on a Mosasaurus.

“Massive, even.”

It might not have been as big as ten meters, but it had seemed pretty close to that.

“I guess we have to deal with that if we want to go behind the waterfall.”

“Humm...”

Whether via the waterfall or the sloped path in the crevice, a boss monster blocked our way to the tableland. Making it to the top was starting to seem like a lost cause...

“Okay, let’s finish our loop around the mountain and just gather some info.”

“Honk.”

“We’ll bypass this lake for now.”

“Hum.”

We put some distance between ourselves and the lake so the Event Mosa wouldn’t notice us, then continued on. We would have to go into the forest, but that was better than walking around the bank of the lake.

“Hum?”

“Find something, Reflet?”

“Honk!”

The underwater duo dashed off once again. Did they discover something else water-related? When I followed them, I found I was right.

“A river!”

“Hum!”

The water flowing from the lake turned into a river that crossed through the forest. The river wasn’t very wide, so the Event Mosa wouldn’t be able to swim all the way out here.

“Can we cross this?” I wondered aloud.

“Honk!”

“Oh, right. Perca, maybe we can have you cross to the other side and stretch a rope across!”

“Honk hooonk!”

Perca used Penguin Highway and flew clear across to the other side of the river. Then, he tied the ivy Sakura had produced to a suitable tree. We then had to tie the other end of the ivy to a tree on our side of the river, which required us to get creative.

“Mmm-mm!”

Olto made a staircase, which I then climbed to tie the ivy up high in a tree, much higher than where Perca tied it on his side. Now all I had to do was grab onto the rope, and...

“Wahooo!”

Gravity did its work and I slid down the rope. It was super easy since I didn’t have to do anything but let myself dangle. Or so I thought.

“Jeez, it’s hot!” I exclaimed.

*My palms are on fire!* Instead of pain, players were made aware of any physical abnormalities through slight sensations and heat. Which meant that right now, I was taking damage to my palms. After I let go of the rope, I saw that my palms had turned bright red. They looked like they were burning.

“Oof, I really am taking damage!”

It looked like the frictional heat had inflicted damage on me. It really had seemed like a good idea at the time...

“How should my monsters get across?”

Should I have them use the same method as me, knowing they would take damage? Or should I adjust the height of the rope so they wouldn’t slide down?

“Mm-mm!”

“Hmm!”

*Wait, Olto! Himka! You decided too quickly!* They seemed to have decided they could handle a little pain. Olto and Himka, acting very macho, did as I had

and grabbed onto the ivy with their bare hands, sliding down it. Sure enough, it hurt them. They were blowing on their palms. Did they really have to make this part realistic?

My other monsters, however, seemed not to want to endure the pain and refused to follow suit.

“What should we do?”

As I was thinking it over, my monsters came up with their own solution. Sakura produced more ivy, and they all slid across the rope while holding on to that, aka the zip line method. *Hmm, I’ve been outsmarted by my own monsters...*

“Well, let’s just keep moving forward.”

“Hm...”

“Mm-mm...”

Afterwards, as we traveled, by some good fortune we only came across Event Stegos and Event Tricerats. There really were fewer carnivorous dinosaurs around the tableland. Had the devs arranged the layout to make it so players didn’t exhaust themselves right before a boss fight?

After we successfully bypassed the lake, we continued walking around the tableland. Right now, we were in the northwest section. We started from the southwest and went counterclockwise, so we were close to making a full circle.

“I want to do a little investigating here first, though.”

“Mmm!”

“Squeak!”

In front of us was another crevice, this one ten meters wide. It looked similar to the crevice we found in the southeast part of the mountain, which led to the clearing where the Spinosaurus was. It even had the same upward slope. However, this one had a wider path. Did that mean this was like the front entrance? Or was this for Tamers and other command classes who had large monsters with them? That seemed the likely case when I thought about it. We Tamers would be hard-pressed if we couldn’t bring our monsters in with us.

“I’m sure there’s a boss down this way too. Don’t rush ahead, okay?”

“Mm!”

“Squeak!”

Convinced there was a boss ahead, we ascended the slope even more cautiously. Then, after ten or so minutes, we reached the end of the path, which was shorter than I thought it’d be. There, we came face-to-face with what I had expected— No, actually, I couldn’t have imagined what we would find here.

“A large boss for large tamed monsters, huh?!”

“...”

We had arrived in a round clearing with rocks larger than us scattered about. Weeds grew under our feet and what appeared to be palm trees stood in certain spots. But what caught our attention wasn’t the countless giant rocks or the unusual plants, but the enormous dinosaur, taller than a palm tree, that stood in the middle of the clearing munching on a tree branch. It had a long neck similar to an Event Plesio, but it had four legs for walking on land. Although its torso and legs were thick like an elephant’s, this dinosaur was a much larger creature. That’s right. It was even bigger than an elephant, the largest living land animal.

“An Event Brachio!”

It was an Event Brachio, based on the Brachiosaur. From its feet to the top of its head, it was easily over ten meters, and its body length was close to twenty. It was a mega-huge dinosaur, even bigger than the Tyranno or the Spino. I had absolutely no intention of fighting something this gigantic.

“But man, a Brachiosaur, huh...?”

As was clear from it chewing on a plant, no matter how massive the creature was, it was an herbivore. Maybe it wouldn’t attack us as long as we didn’t attack first? Though it *was* a boss. Was there no way to avoid fighting it? But even if we just tested it out, we’d be done for once it attacked us. We couldn’t approach this haphazardly.

Well, if we wanted to get through here, I'd take the Brachio over the Spino.

"We saw what's here, so let's retreat for now."

"..."

If we were going to challenge this, it would have to be the last thing we did. For now, I wanted to complete the map. We went back down the path we took and finished our full circle around the tableland, but we didn't find anything else worthy of note.

"All right, here we are again."

"Honk honk."

"Mm-mmm."

From the entrance of the clearing, we peered at the Event Brachio. It really seemed like getting past the Brachio was our only option. The Spino and Mosa would definitely attack us, and we had no way to go up against the flocks of Pteras building nests on the cliff.

If we wanted to reach the top of the mountain, this was our only choice. I just had to pray that the plant-eating Event Brachio wouldn't initiate an attack. Obviously, we weren't just going to rush into it right now. First, we had to do some observing.

"Okay, if we hide behind the rocks, we can probably pass it without it seeing us."

"Mm!"

"Also, we should do this at night. It'll be harder for it to notice us then."

"Honk!"

Our plan was simple. By using the cover of darkness and the obstacles in the clearing, we could move forward while mostly hiding. If it found us, we'd sprint for the exit. If we got closed in by a boss wall, then we'd just have to fight to our honorable deaths.

"I'm kind of worried about the late fee on the boat, but let's wait for nighttime. Survival comes first."

“Mm.”

It was already the evening, after all, so our surroundings should be completely dark in about an hour. We would just kill time doing whatever until then.

“How about we walk through the forest and look for some gathering nodes?”

“Mm!”

“But we won’t go in too deep. Just somewhere we can escape quickly. Sound good?”

“Mm-mmm!”



## Chapter Three: Tyrant and Thunder

After we finished gathering items in the old-growth forest, we sat chatting around a fire. We were in front of the hill that led to the Event Brachio.

“We’ve got some ingredients now too, so let’s start with a meal!”

“Hum!”

“Squeak squeak!”

Right now, I had a decent stock of ingredients. I had fish, of course, but I also had the dinosaur meat and fruits I had obtained on this island. Since I also had condiments, I could make a pretty extravagant meal.

“Should I start with making sashimi?”

“Humm!”

“Honk!”

Reflet and Perca threw their arms up in celebration. They were so gleeful that I thought maybe I should throw in something extra. I had a lot of fish, so I could grill some with salt too!

After I made some fruit juice and snacks for everyone else, I finally made a main dish for myself.

“Dinosaur meat on the bone!”

It was *dinosaur* meat! I didn’t care if it was just game data, I was stoked. I wondered what it would taste like.

“I think I’d better make something that brings out the flavor of the ingredients, instead of trying to get too creative.”

Not that I could make anything too spectacular, even if I tried.

I heated up a frying pan on the fire and then placed the meat on top. The meat made a delicious sizzling sound as it cooked, my anticipation growing as the aroma tickled my nostrils. *Yeesh, I’m already drooling!* I suppressed the urge

to sample as I cooked as best as I could as I finished up all the meals.

“It’s ready!” I called out.

“Squeak squeak!”

“Hmmm!”

Hearing my shout, my monsters, who had been playing around the fire, came gathering in. Though it was just as likely they’d been dancing in excitement for the food as playing. They all lined up and I passed out the food to them. I felt like a cafeteria worker.

*Man, eating by an outdoor fire is so fun. It’s like we’re camping.*

“All right, let’s dig in!”

“Hum-humm!”

“Honk hooonk!”

With sashimi and grilled fish in front of them, Reflet and Perca were bouncing off the walls. I myself was also eating in style. Not only did I have sashimi and grilled fish as well, but I also had fruit juice. And my main dish was a giant hunk of meat.

“Th-This looks so good...”

I lifted up the dinosaur meat on the bone—it was super heavy. It was twice the size of my head, like a jumbo, oversized chicken leg. Though thinking about it, it was pretty small compared to the Event Pachycephalo that I had gotten it from. I guess that was just a gaming convention.

Name: Grilled Bone-In Dinosaur Meat

Rarity: 4 / Quality: 6 ★

Effect: Recovers 90% of hunger status.

This item would fully restore my hunger, but what I was really curious about was its flavor. Curbing my enthusiasm, I sank my teeth into the meat and chewed.

“...Mm! It’s great!”

If I had to compare it to something, it’d probably be a juicy chicken breast. I felt like I could eat it forever. It was similar to the ostrich meat I tried once at an Australian restaurant, but maybe more tender and less greasy. It was seriously delicious.

“Man, I want more dinosaur meat.”

*Jeez, surprised I’m not full yet.* Leave it to the game to let me down this huge piece of meat that I could have never finished in real life. I was already more than halfway through it.

However, our pleasant meal was unfortunately interrupted. While I was wolfing down the dinosaur meat, completely in my own world, my monsters stood up all at once.

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak!”

Olto had his hoe and Drimo his pickax in hand, both totally prepared for combat.

“Huh? What? Aw, come on!”

*There’s an enemy coming this way, isn’t there?* I hurriedly put away the food I hadn’t eaten yet into my inventory and readied my staff. My monsters and I waited a tense ten seconds for the creature we had sensed.

Multiple shadows appeared from the darkness, drawing in close and surrounding us. The figures of our uninvited visitors were illuminated in the flames of our open-air fire.

“Grrrr...”

“Grawr!”

“Seriously, a *swarm* of Raptors?!”

There were seven of them, the largest pack I had seen today.

“This blows!”

But why did they come for us? We hadn’t been attacked by dinosaurs at the

foot of the plateau until now. That was why I had figured this area was a safety zone...

What had we done wrong? Was it the smell? This *was* the first time I had grilled meat today. Or was it the time? Did the dinosaurs become more active at night and cover a wider area? Both explanations seemed possible. In any case, what was important was getting out of this mess!

“Let’s focus on the one in the front and try to push past. We don’t need to beat them. We’ll just startle them a little and then make a break for it. Got it?”

“...”

“Squeak.”

“All right! First I’ll—”

“Groooooaaaaaar!”

I had been just about to cast a water magic spell when I heard a deep, menacing roar that did not belong to the Event Raptors. We had heard this roar before. We had been chased to the ends of the earth by the very beast that made that roar, after all. There was no way we could have forgotten it.

“There’s a Tyranno too?!”

There was definitely a Tyranno somewhere in the darkness. In fact, I could tell it was approaching with considerable momentum. The tremors that accompanied its footsteps were getting increasingly stronger. Then, the enormous carnivore emerged from the darkness.

“GROOOOOAAAAARRR!”

“Shit, it’s right in front of us!”

We were in the worst possible position right now. We had three intimidating Raptors on either side of us, blocking off our escape route. There was one Raptor in front of us, and behind it, the Tyranno was closing in. We were completely surrounded, with only one direction left for us to run.

“Everyone! Go up the hill!”

“Mm!”

“Squeak!”

We all dashed up the hill, not worrying about our formation. We just kept running as fast as we could.

“Grrrrr!”

“Dammit! They’re chasing us?!”

I had thought maybe they wouldn’t be able to trespass into the mountain, but they had no problem running in after us. However, it wasn’t all bad.

“Groooooaar!”

“Graawr!”

The Tyranno and the Raptors started to fight. It seemed like they had both just happened to approach us after noticing our presence at the same time, rather than them somehow working together. Thanks to that, we now only had two Raptors chasing after us.

“This path is pretty tight... The Brachio might react if we go into the clearing! We need to fight the Raptors here! Let’s immobilize them first! Sakura, you’re up!”

“...!”

As commanded, Sakura activated her earth magic. She didn’t attack but instead used a skill that allowed her to produce and manipulate vines, with which she set countless traps along the hilly road.

She laid out loops of vine to ensnare the Raptors’ feet. These were only simple traps, but since it was currently nighttime, it was hard to see what lay underfoot. And the Raptors, whose eyes were trained solely on the backs of their prey, didn’t see the traps at all.

“Grawr?”

“Graaawr!”

The two Raptors fell easily into the traps and pitched forward onto the ground. They didn’t take much damage, but we had stopped them.

I took that brief opportunity to rearrange our formation in preparation for

battle. Olto, Drimo, and Himka would be our vanguards, while the rest of us would support them from the rear guard. Perca was still low-leveled, so he would focus on hit-and-run attacks. Reflet would be our healer, while Sakura and I would attack with spells.

The narrow, sloped path surrounded by walls granted us an advantage too—the Raptors weren't able to show off their trademark agility. Even though we took a good bit of damage in the process, we managed to bring them down. They had been far weaker than when we had to fight them in the forest, which was a huge help.

“The terrain really helped us out this time.”

“Mmm.”

“Hm!”

Plus, the narrow playing field let me see just how incredibly strong Himka was. Since he had his Counterattacker skill activated, he was able to stay in front of the enemy at all times. And thanks to the skill's added Provoke effect, the Raptors were forced to attack Himka. Naturally, Himka took some damage, but we had Reflet, our healer, with us. Himka was an unsinkable battleship in the face of the Raptors' attacks, counterattacking all the while. That fight consumed a lot of our MP, though, so going another round would be out of the question.

“Okay, what's going on down—”

“Groooooaar!”

“Oh, give me a break!”

*The Tyranno came up here! Why couldn't it have just been satisfied eating the other Raptors and gone home?!*

The Tyranno seemed to be able to just barely fit through this passageway.

“R-Run!”

“Hm!”

“Hum-humm!”

“All we’ve been doing since we got here is running!”

We ran at full speed, jumping and pivoting as we went. Unfortunately, we weren’t able to shake off the Tyranno. I could hear the sound of its heavy, thumping footfalls right behind us.

“Groooooaaar!”

“Dammit! It’s still chasing us!”

However, the twisting slope was difficult for the dinosaur to run up, so it wasn’t really gaining on us. That was our one saving grace. Still, what the heck were we going to do? Even if we reached the top of the hill, we would just end up in the clearing where the Event Brachio was waiting.

In front of us was the Brachio. Behind us, the Tyranno. Either path led to certain death. *No, hold on. Maybe since they’re a carnivore and a herbivore...*

“Groooooaaar!”

“Ack!”

*Something just whooshed right past me!* I looked at what had fallen a little farther ahead of me—it was a pile of rocks.

“Since when can it do that?!”

The Tyranno used its forelimbs to strike against the rock wall, sending a fragment of it flying past me with great force.

“We have no choice! Let’s keep running into the clearing!”

“Mm?”

“We have to pick a direction!”

*We’ll wing it. We’ll leave it to chance. We’ll just do what we can! And if that doesn’t work out, we’ll die! Then my late fee for the boat will stop ticking up, so that actually suits me just fine!*

I wasn’t *really* interested in dying a scary death, though, whether that meant being gulped down by the Tyranno or stomped on by the Brachio’s boulder-like legs. Either one was a hard pass for me.

“Once we get to the clearing, we can hide behind the rocks!”

“Hum!”

What was going to happen? In the ideal scenario, the Tyranno and the Brachio would crush each other. In the worst-case scenario, we’d be chased by both of them. It would also suck if this turned into a boss battle and we were trapped inside.

“I see it! There’s the clearing!”

“Mm-mmm!”

“Honk!”

We summoned the last remaining bits of our strength and rushed headfirst into the clearing. We then continued running to a nearby rock and hid ourselves behind it. Between ragged breaths, I asked, “What’s the situation?”

“...”

“Humm.”

As I regained control of my breathing, I took a peek at the Tyranno.

“Grrrr...”

Did it lose sight of us? It was standing at the entrance of the clearing and looking around intently. Judging by its twitching nose, it was probably smelling something...

“Groaaar!”

“Gah! Did it find us?”

The Tyranno faced our direction, then immediately broke into a dash. We had been completely found out. Clearly, it had an excellent sense of smell.

“Run, run! Charge towards the Brachio!”

“Honk!”

“Squeak!”

“Oh, but we’re not going to attack it, okay? We’re going to make the Tyranno fight it!”

“Hmm!”



We leaped out from behind the rock and, making one last gamble, ran as fast as we could.

“Groooooaar!”

“Aagh! It’s all warm and gross!”

“Hmm!”

I felt the Tyranno’s nasty breath against my back as I ran for the place where the Brachio had been this afternoon. I wasn’t the only one who looked frenetic—my monsters did too.

“Groar!”

“Ahhh! I heard a snapping sound!”

Was that what it sounded like? Was that the sound of it snapping its teeth together?! *That came from right behind us!*

In a mad rush, we started running in a zigzag. As we ran, weaving between the rocks, we managed to evade the Tyranno’s pursuit. But we wouldn’t be able to keep this up for long...

“There it is! It’s sleeping!”

Just as my spirit was about to break, we came upon the dinosaur we’d been looking for. It had a ginormous, mountain-like figure. At a glance, it looked like a giant, gray rock. *Yup, there’s no mistaking it. That’s our Event Brachio.*

The Brachio was sitting in the middle of the clearing, not making the slightest movement. Was this our chance? Even if it did notice us in that state, it would take time for it to get up and start chasing after us. The exit of the clearing wasn’t that far from where we were now.

“Run straight for the exit!”

“...!”

We passed by the soundly sleeping massive dinosaur and headed for the path that would lead us to the top of the tableland. It seemed Lady Luck was on our side.

“Groooooar!”

“Bmuuurrr?”

The Tyranno switched targets and attacked the Brachio. It sank its huge teeth into the Brachio’s long neck, which was curled along its body.

*If we can just make it out of the clearing...*

But Lady Luck was still a fickle mistress. As soon as I thought we were saved, she threw us right back into the fray!

“Why’s there a wall here now?!”

“Squeak squeak!”

We were only a few meters away from the exit of the clearing when our way forward was intercepted. A translucent wall had suddenly appeared, blocking the exit.

“Squeak!”

Drimo pounded on it with his pickax, but the wall didn’t so much as tremble. I turned around to check the other side where I could see the entrance was likewise sealed by a wall. I had seen this dimly glowing, semitranslucent wall before. It was the field partition that appeared during boss fights, aka a boss wall...

...which meant we were now in a boss fight. *Why?!*

“Is it because the Brachio woke up?”

“Bmuuurrr!”

“Groooaar!”

The vibrations caused by the two gigantic fighting dinosaurs shook the ground beneath our feet. If we got caught up in their fight, that’d be the end of the line for us. We were in serious danger of being annihilated here, weren’t we?

“G-Guys! Let’s get as far away as we can! Don’t get between them!”

“Squeak!”

“Humm!”

In a great haste, we put some distance between ourselves and the fighting

dinosaurs. However, the clearing wasn't very spacious. Even moving to the farthest wall only put at most forty meters between us, not very far a distance at all for those beasts. We were not yet in the clear.

Was it better to shift to fighting and be prepared to die? Of course, when I saw the Tyranno and Brachio raging against each other and making the earth itself shake, my courage to do so wilted. I doubted our attacks would even be effective, and any damage we did inflict would just be a drop in the bucket.

"Let's just try to survive and watch the fight play out."

Actually, I just realized that I could record one hell of a video right now. I decided to at least try doing so for as long as I could manage. Then I would get to watch a video of fighting dinosaurs later over some snacks and drinks!

"Got it, everyone? Don't even think about fighting. Just focus on surviving."

"Squeak!"

"Honk!"

It'd been a while since my monsters saluted me so dutifully. They must have also understood that we had no chance of winning.

From there, our fight began. And by that I meant, we did our best to keep our distance from the dinosaurs as much as possible. We continued to run away from them as I filmed their fight. Sometimes we'd run as fast as we could, sometimes we'd hide behind a rock, and sometimes we'd lie flat on the ground. We managed to evade them for much longer than I thought we could.

"We've already been trapped here for forty minutes..."

I was already recording my fifth video.

Normal battles were forcibly ended after thirty minutes, but that wasn't the case with boss fights. Plus, this seemed like a special boss fight.

The Event Brachio and Event Tyranno were still locked in a violent struggle. The Tyranno snapped at the Brachio with its massive jaws while the Brachio used its long neck to strike with its head like a hammer.

"This is exactly like the Great Dinosaur Battle."

“Mmm.”

None of us had died yet, but we had some close calls. Even though we had spent the whole time running away, there was nowhere that was really safe. We couldn't relax for a second.

“Bmmuuuuuurrr!”

“Incoming! Olto!”

“Mm!”

The Event Brachio turned on the spot and fiercely swung its thick, whiplike tail out horizontally, sending the Event Tyranno flying and dealing it significant damage. That sort of tail attack would absolutely destroy us.

The tail itself wasn't the worrisome part, though. After all, it would pass right over our heads. The terrifying part for us came next.

*Thud thud thud thud thud!*

The Brachio's long tail knocked over trees and rocks, the debris of which came pelting towards us like buckshot. We would have been fine if we had been hiding behind a rock, but while we were in the middle of moving, as we currently were, it couldn't have been worse.

“Mm-mmm!”

Olto was our only hope right now. He activated his Guardian skill and moved in front to shield our party. *He may be tiny, but he sure is dependable.*

The rest of us weren't entirely useless either. Sakura and I cast our respective spells and boosted Olto's defense. Reflet used her Healer skill to continuously recover Olto's HP, while Himka and Drimo supported Olto from behind.

“Honk hooonk!”

As for Perca, he was our cheering squad. His level was too low, after all, so he'd die even if he made one little slip.

“Mm-mmm!”

Olto blocked the rocks that came flying in with his hoe and his own body. The damage he sustained brought him down to one knee.

“Mm...”

“Olto! Are you okay?!”

“Mmm-mm!”

Olto gave me a thumbs-up to show he was fine, his expression cool and aloof. *Drimo is totally rubbing off on him.* But Drimo looked cool when he did that. Olto looked more like a little kid trying to act like an adult, which was just adorable more than anything.

Well anyway, it was good that he had the leeway to even do that.

“Let’s move away from them!”

“Mmm!”

Olto still looked in good spirits, so I felt I could continue to leave his healing to Reflet. The real problem lay elsewhere.

“Grooaar...”

“Bmmuuuuuurrrrrrr!”

The Event Tyranno was about to lose. I guessed even as a carnivore fighting an herbivore, it stood little chance against a boss enemy, and the Tyranno was much smaller than the Brachio to begin with.

The Tyranno only had twenty percent of its HP remaining, while the Brachio was closer to sixty percent. If the Tyranno lost, we’d be the Brachio’s next targets. We had no way of completely outrunning something as massive as the Event Brachio in this boss field, so we’d definitely die. But if the Tyranno won, that would end the boss fight and give us a slight chance of escaping...

“Groar...”

“Bmuuuuuurrrr!”

It still hadn’t given up its will to fight, perhaps spurred on by its pride as the king of the dinosaurs. But it was definitely on its last legs. Even now, it got blown back by another one of the Event Brachio’s attacks. If we didn’t do anything, this battle would be decided in fewer than five minutes.

“The path to our survival is...”

“...?”

I was struck with a terrifying idea. But if this worked, we would have a chance of surviving. Although our chances of success might have been close to none, I didn't want to die without doing anything. I wanted to make every effort I could.

“Let's support the Tyranno! Our only hope is to help it win!”

“H-Honk?”

“I understand your concern, but this is the only way!”

“H-Hm!”

“Humm!”

“All right, let's do this!”

And so from there, our real fight began.

Our party hit the Event Brachio with attacks to slow it down at least a little while we simultaneously healed and buffed the Tyranno.

We didn't have to worry about drawing its hate. Both dinosaurs were dealing a lot of damage to each other, so the meager amount we dealt wasn't enough to shift its target to us. What we *did* have to watch out for was stray debris and making sure we didn't get dragged into their fighting. One mistake and we were dead. Our participation in this battle was more nerve-racking than anything else we had done.

But unsurprisingly, the minor help we provided wasn't enough to make a difference.

The Brachio was steadily backing the Tyranno into a corner, eventually pulling out an entirely new move. It was doing a similar motion to its tail attack, but its tail was positioned much lower. It was clearly grazing against the ground.

“Wait, is that—”

*It's trying to attack us too?!*

Its hate wasn't directed towards us. Did it see us as slight annoyances or something? It seemed to be trying to include us in its strike against the Tyranno

by doing a wide-range attack. With a low bellow, it swung out its monstrous tail.

“Bmmuuuuuur!”

The sight of the Brachio’s tail rushing towards us as it skimmed the surface of the ground was like watching a rock wall closing in. *Ah, we’re dead*, I thought in resignation, when suddenly—

“Hmmm!”

“Huh?”

An adorable yet valiant cry rang out. I turned to look, and right before my eyes, out leaped Himka, his body surrounded by the aura of his Counterattacker skill. He was heading straight for the dinosaur’s tail.

*It’s useless!* But before I could cry out to stop him, Himka and the tail collided with each other.

“H-Himkaaa!”

“Hmmmm!” Himka cried as the Brachio’s tail sent him flying ten meters into the air.

Of course, there was no way his HP bar would survive that. Right as we met eyes, Himka turned into polygons and disappeared, giving me a thumbs-up as he vanished.

“Hm...”

But Himka’s death hadn’t been in vain. Counterattacker was a counter skill, meaning that the stronger the enemy’s attack was, the stronger the counterattack.

“Bmuuur?”

After taking extensive damage to its tail, the Event Brachio lost balance. Not only was its tail attack interrupted, but the dinosaur even fell down on the spot.

“Himka, you saved us!”

*We won’t waste this extra time you gained us!* I vowed internally to Himka. Then, I used a Tamed Monster’s Orb.

“Come out, Fau!”

“Aye-aye!”

Fau appeared on the scene full of energy. But she quickly noticed the nearby giant dinosaur and her mouth dropped open.

“Aye...?”

*Sorry for summoning you to this crazy battlefield!*

“Fau! Boost our speed! After you do that, give that Event Tyranno over there every buff you can!”

“A-Aye?”

“That’s right! We’re helping that scary dinosaur!”

“Aye?”

“Please!”

“Yuh-aye!”

She didn’t seem to have fully grasped the situation yet, but she followed my orders and started singing straightaway.

“La-di-daaa! ♪”

I was going about this a bit haphazardly, but Himka had shown us such chivalry. We were going to see this through to the end! We’d struggle and strive for as long as we had to!

Even though the Tyranno couldn’t have understood our intentions, it underwent a dramatic change. It had originally been surrounded by a black aura from its berserk status, which was a status effect that gradually decreased the target’s HP while boosting their attack. It was an effect often seen with large bosses when they were in dire straits. The Event Tyranno had reached this berserk state once its HP fell below twenty percent.

That aura that enveloped the Tyranno started to change from black to red. This was also a state often seen with bosses, but it boosted their attack power even more than berserk, and it even made it possible for them to be unaffected by things like hate. The Tyranno’s HP had fallen past ten percent from sustaining self-inflicted chip damage from its berserk state, bringing it into a



rabid state.

The Tyranno completely focused all its strength on attacking the Brachio and didn't once look our way. It was now ignoring any aggro and was just attacking the enemy dealing it the most damage. That was obviously the Event Brachio in this case. On the surface, it seemed things hadn't changed. However, under these conditions, no matter how much healing we did, it was unlikely that the Tyranno would attack us. Being able to fight without having to worry about the aggro we were drawing was very helpful.

Also, it was common in rabid states for the target's defense to be lowered in exchange for more ferocious attacks and higher attack power. They would also start using daring moves in an attempt to turn the tables. And in front of the rabid Event Tyranno shrouded in its red aura lay the Event Brachio with its flank exposed. It was a sitting duck.

"ROOOAAARRRGH!"

"Whoa!"

"Mm-mm!"

"Squeak!"

The Tyranno let out a deafening roar, which seemed to have a stun effect—my and my monsters' bodies went stiff. We would have been doomed if we had been the ones who put the Event Tyranno in its predicament, but right now, that wasn't an issue—the Tyranno's eyes were perfectly locked onto the Brachio. The herbivore tried to rise but just tumbled over again. That was when the Tyranno rushed towards it.

"GROOOOAAAAAR!"

"BMMMMUUUUUUR!"

That must have been the Tyranno's special move. It sprang up high in the air and did a front somersault, a move way too agile for an actual dinosaur. Then, using the momentum of its flip, it pierced the Event Brachio's abdomen with its fangs. The Tyranno didn't soften its own fall, its body slamming against the ground and its HP decreasing with the self-inflicted damage. Our surroundings shook with an intensity that made it impossible to stand.

“Ahhh! Is everyone all right?!”

“Mm, mm-mm!”

Even Olto, who had excellent lower body strength, could only withstand the shaking on his knees. That was just how powerful the tremors were.

“Aye!”



“Th-Thanks. But you don’t have to pull me like that. I’m fine.”

“Aye?”

Fau was pulling on my hair, trying to help me stand. Thankfully, it didn’t hurt. I guess she hadn’t pulled any hairs out.

“Groooooaar!”

“Bmurr...”

The Event Brachio’s HP had dropped an unbelievable amount. It had just been at fifty percent HP, but now it was at twenty-five percent. That was all the result of the Tyranno’s berserk and rabid statuses, its special attack, plus an added attack aimed at the Brachio’s weak point that ended up being a critical hit.

The Event Brachio’s groan echoed feebly. It had seemed so strong earlier, but it was clearly in a weakened state now.

And that wasn’t the end of the Tyranno’s attack. It hit the Brachio with another powerful strike while the latter was still unable to stand.

“Groooooaaaar!”

“Bmmmmmmuuuur!”

The Brachio’s roar now sounded entirely like it was shrieking.

“We need to seize this chance! Let’s attack too!”

“Squeak squeeeak!”

“...!”

*Now’s our only chance to win!*

With that resolve, we went all out as we attacked the Brachio together. Fifty minutes into the battle, and finally we had a glimmer of hope. We inflicted such little damage that it was hard to tell if we were actually bringing its HP down, but still, we had to persevere.

However, our opportunity was brought to a swift end.

“Groooooaar...”

“Oh no! Mr. Tyrannooo!”

Ultimately, the Event Tyranno exhausted all its strength, the fault of its self-inflicted damage. It slowly collapsed on the ground, turned into particles of light, and then vanished. That was the final moment of the prehistoric tyrant who had fought such a fierce battle.

“Mm-mmm!”

“Honk honk!”

My monsters sent off their comrade in arms with a final salute. Drimo gave a thumbs-up. *He never changes.*

I mean, that was a nice scene and all, but I doubted the dinosaur held any sort of feelings of friendship towards us. Moreover, this wasn't the end. If anything, it was just the beginning.

“Bmmmuuur!”

“The Event Brachio's still here, and it's in its rabid state! Not good!”

Then, the raging Event Brachio, enveloped in a red light, shifted its target towards...

“Bmuuurrr!”

“Meee?!”

*I guess this is what I get for poking it with water spells!*

“Bmuuuurrr!”

“Dammiiit!”

All I could do now was run while praying that my monsters would finish off the Event Brachio before it hit me with an attack. However, even though our enemy had less than ten percent of its HP left, it was still a colossal dinosaur in a rabid state boasting massive strength. Its remaining HP was probably several times more than a Raptor's full HP. Would my monsters be able to take it down...?

“Ahhh! Something just touched my back!”

“Bmuuuurrr!”

Its massive appearance made it seem like it'd be slow, but since it had a long

stride, it was basically as fast as a Tyranno when moving in a straight line. When I realized it couldn't make sharp turns, I started running in a zigzag while also using the boulders occasionally to hide behind. Somehow, I managed to outrun it for a bit by doing that. However...

"Bmmuuurrr!"

"Ack! It destroyed a rock in one hit! Aahhhh!"

"Humm?!"

The Brachio charged into a boulder, destroying it, the fragments raining down around us and landing some not insignificant damage on me. Reflet unfortunately didn't have enough MP remaining to keep up with healing me.

Plus, since the Brachio was destroying the rocks, I was starting to have fewer and fewer places to hide. There had been over thirty boulders at the start, and now there were fewer than five. In this now wide-open space, the Brachio's piercing gaze was trained right on me.

"Wh-What should I dooo?!"

"Honk honk!"

As I was desperately running away from the incoming Brachio, I heard a courageous shout in my ear. When I turned around, I saw a lone penguin heading boldly for the Brachio. He was shrouded in a light and charging towards the Brachio in a straight line.

"P-Percaaaa?!"

"Hooonk!"

Perca had used Penguin Highway to rush right at the Brachio's head. Though considering their difference in size, I might as well just call it a suicide mission.

"Honk hooonk!"

Despite the fact that Perca's self-sacrificing attack didn't look like it had dealt much damage, he didn't give up.

"H-Honk honk..."

"Bmuuur?"

After colliding with the Event Brachio's head, Perca held on tight and started shimmying. He was heading for its eyes. That's right, Perca was going for the enemy's weak point.

"H-Honk..."

"Just a little more!"

"Bmmuuuuuurr!"

The Event Brachio, noticing what Perca was up to, unleashed an angry roar. Unsurprisingly, it didn't want to sustain a direct attack to its eyes. But the dinosaur had no hands. So what would it do if it wanted to get rid of an insect stuck to its face?

"BMMMUUUUUUUURRRRR!"

"Percaaa!"

"Honk hooonk!"

"Hang in there!"

The Event Brachio started whipping its head around, trying to shake off Perca. But Perca kept clinging, showing off an astounding tenacity.

"Hooonk!"

"Bmmmuuur!"

After ten or so seconds, the Event Brachio suddenly started stumbling. Then, it slowly collapsed sideways to the ground. It hadn't been defeated. It had just fallen over all of a sudden.

"Huh? What's going on?"

I appraised the Event Brachio and saw it was inflicted with Dizzy.

"Did it swing its head around too much?"

It was probably the same effect as when people got dizzy after headbanging too much, right? *Wait, I don't have time to be thinking about that.*

"W-We've got an opening! Everyone, attaaack!"

Together, we began attacking the collapsed Event Brachio. Well, Olto and

Reflet couldn't join in on the attack since they had no way to do so.

"We need to prioritize efficient damage output! We can't think about healing! Olto, Reflet, return! Come out, Rick and Bear Bear!"

"Growl grooowl!"

"Chirp chiiirp!"

"You two! Our target's that giant thing over there! Hit it with all you've got!"

"G-Growl!"

"Ch-Chirp!"

Like Fau, Bear Bear and Rick hesitated for a moment in the face of the Event Brachio's imposing form, but they started attacking soon after. They looked a little desperate, but they quickly adapted to the battle. I didn't expect any less from this wild pair.

"Sakura, can you use Divine Blessing?"

"...♪"

Divine Blessing could only be used when our party was in a crisis, but it looked like she would be able to use it with no problem. Even though we hadn't taken that much damage ourselves, the game must have judged that we were, in fact, in a dangerous situation since we were up against a strong enemy.

"Use it on Bear Bear!"

"...!"

"Growl growl!"

With Divine Blessing powering up their stats, Bear Bear was radiating light and posing in such a way that I half expected their hair to stand on end and start turning even more yellow than usual.

"Growl growl growl grooowl!"

"S-So fast!"

Bear Bear, who was the slowest one of our crew, was moving at lightning speed, so fast that I felt like I could actually hear them zooming. They



approached the fallen Brachio in no time and began pummeling it with both clawed hands, with such vigor I thought I could see their afterimages.

The Brachio's health bar noticeably decreased, and in the midst of despair, I started to see hope.

"I'll help too! Aqua Lance!"

"...!"

"Growl growl growl growl growl!"

"Chirp chirp!"

We kept up our all-out attack, but we failed to make full use of our opening.

"Bmmuur...!"

"It's moving already?!"

Eventually, the Event Brachio recovered from its dizziness. It slowly rose, maintaining a steady glare in our direction. Three percent of its HP still remained. Though that was practically nothing, that amount was monumental for us. It would take at least another fierce attack to defeat it.

"R-Retreat! Retreeeat!" I cried, and we tried to distance ourselves from the beast. As if having no intention of letting us escape, the Brachio used the absolutely worst move.

"Bmmuuuuuuur!"

"I-It's going to use an AoE attack?!"

I could see the Event Brachio stand up on its hind legs. I saw it use this move against the Tyranno once. *Oh hell no. Don't you dare use a brutal move like that against us weaklings!*

The Brachio looked like a giant wielding a hammer as it swung its front legs up high above its head. It was impressive, to say the least.

"Bmmmmuuuuuuurrr!"

Then, along with its threatening roar, the Event Brachio brought its front legs down and slammed them against the ground. It didn't attack us directly, but this was no time to go feeling secure. The tremendous impact of its legs

produced a raging blast of wind and made our surroundings shake dreadfully. And the attack wasn't even over yet.

Starting from the sunken spot of earth where the Event Brachio's feet landed, the ground began to bulge. It warped and crumbled, and deep cracks spread all around. Then, the ground started to rise.

From afar, it looked like dozens of stone spires were sprouting from the earth. But I didn't have the time to admire what it looked like. As soon as I was rendered immobile from the vibrations, I saw the oncoming wave of stone spires. If I could only run a little farther, I'd be out of range!

The ground shifted under my feet, a sign that the stone spires were about to burst out below me. *I'm too late!* There was no way I could dodge this.

But then, something suddenly pulled me backwards.

"...!"

"Sakura!"

"...♪"

I watched in shock as Sakura was engulfed by the rocks, her ever-present smile never falling. She had saved me by pulling me back by my robe, sacrificing herself in my place. She wouldn't have had to do that if I had only moved a few more steps.

However, this was not the time to lose control because I was angry at myself.

"Dammit! All my monsters are just too damn cool!"

*Himka, Sakura...you two are the greatest tamed monsters!*

"I'll make sure we win!"

The only way that was going to happen was if we made the Event Brachio fall over again. But could we replicate what we had done before? Bear Bear's Divine Blessing had already worn off too. *Do we really have a chance at winning...?*

No, it didn't matter if we did or not. We had to try despite all odds. I summoned another monster to take Sakura's place.

"Come out, Eine!"

“Tra-la-laaa!”

*We'll settle this with our aerial pair, Perca and Eine!* If they both grabbed hold of that giant jerk's head, then they could probably make it fall again.

“Eine! It's up to you and Perca!”

“Tra-la!”

*What a superstar.* Eine spiritedly flew towards the dinosaur, unflinching even in the face of its massive physique. The scene at a glance just looked like a little flying girl challenging a giant beast. It looked hopeless.

But Eine and Perca pulled through.

“Traaa-laaa!”

“Honk hooonk!”

Even though the Brachio whipped its head around, Perca and Eine held on tight, fighting against the centrifugal force.

“Bmmmmuuuuuuuuurrr!”

“Tra-la-laaa!”

“Hooonk!”

“E-Eiine! Percaaa!”

*Brachio, you bastard! You banged your head against a tree on purpose! Are you trying to force them off?!* The Brachio didn't even let up after one time either. It kept going and going and going. Eine and Perca were rammed against the branches and trunk of the tree, taking more and more damage. But despite that, they held on.

“T-Tra-la!”

“Honk...!”

Their HP was rapidly decreasing and they were already in the critical zone. I resisted the urge to scream “Enough already!” and instead cheered both of them on.

“You can do it! Come on, guys!”

“Bmmuuuuuuuuuur!”

The Brachio’s irritation seemed to have reached its peak—it started swinging its head even faster, probably faster than an amusement park ride. I wouldn’t have lasted a second. Perca and Eine, however, still refused to loosen their grips.

“Bmmuuur?”

“They did it!”

The Brachio fell for the third time today. This time was really our final chance.

“Everyone! Let’s gooo!”

“Honk hooonk!”

“Aye-aye!”

“Tra-la-la!”

Perca flew using Penguin Highway, Fau used Fire Summoning to produce a ball of fire, Eine pounded on the dinosaur with her fists, and I fired off my most powerful spells in quick succession. This was no time to be worrying about wasting my MP.

Bear Bear, Rick, and Drimo also charged in. Bear Bear, who was usually more calm and carefree, looked super heroic at the moment. Rick and Drimo were also in full “We got this” mode. They must have understood that if we didn’t defeat the Brachio here, then we’d inevitably be wiped out by it.

“Growl growl grooowl!”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Squeak squeak!”

My three animal-type monsters focused their attacks on the dinosaur’s head, and perhaps thanks to their attacking its weak point, the Brachio’s HP dropped dramatically. We kept attacking it, and eventually the Brachio let out a weak, scream-like roar.

“Bmmuurrr...”

It didn’t get up again, and its HP bar was completely depleted. Meaning...

“We won, we really won!” I couldn’t stop myself from shouting triumphantly. As I cheered, the Event Brachio’s body was enveloped in light and then slowly disappeared. It was a beautiful scene, as if it was meant to make us forget that crude, violent battle we just had. Once the dinosaur’s massive form had vanished completely, I could finally relax.

“...We actually won?”

“Honk?”

“Perca... You did amazing out there.”

“Honk honk!”

If Perca hadn’t discovered the way to make the Event Brachio fall over, we wouldn’t have won. I picked him up and lifted him up high over my head.

“Hooray for Perca! You did it!”

“Honk honk!”

“Tra-la-la!”

“Oh yeah, you were great too, Eine!”

Eine had helped topple the boss at the end too, which was probably the key to our victory.

“Tra-la!”

I caught Eine, who came flying towards me, and lifted her up high along with Perca. They were both so light I was able to hold each up in one hand.

“We did it, we did it!”

“Honk!”

“Tra-la-la!”

Both were squealing with laughter and happily flapping their hands and feet.

“You all did an awesome job too!”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Growl!”

“Squeak!”

“Aye!”

Rick, Bear Bear, and Drimo had dealt the final blows, and Fau had been casting buffs and debuffs without rest. We couldn’t have won without any one of them.

“Man, I can’t believe it. We actually took down that enormous dinosaur.”

The realization of what we had achieved still hadn’t quite sunk in when I heard the sound of a chime signaling the end of the battle and saw the boss wall that had been sealing the entrance and exit vanish. We really *had* won.

“Wait, victory means prizes, doesn’t it?”

*Yessss! Now that’s what I’m talking about!* I’d definitely get some great items from this. It might not have been a raid boss, but it had been a powerful foe. With that thought, I opened up my item window. However, before I was able to check my items, I noticed something else.

“Whoa, I leveled up a lot.”

My base level had shot up by six, and my job level had gone up by nine.

“And my stats got a boost too! My HP and MP are both over one hundred!”

Now even I could truly be called a mid-leveled player. *Man, this is awesome!* Leave it to a crazy strong boss to give a crazy amount of XP.

“Oh, I even learned a new skill.”

I had learned the skill Morale Boost for becoming a level 20 Commander Tamer. It was a skill that boosted your party members’ resistance to status ailments that affected mental states.

“Wow, my monsters all went up by four to six levels too!”

Thanks to me switching out our party members with my Tamed Monsters’ Orbs, I’d made it so everyone got a share of the XP without even planning to. Olto, Sakura, Rick, Bear Bear, Reflet, Fau, and Perca had all leveled up without learning any new skills or evolving, but they all got a boost to their stats, which would raise our party’s fighting power by a lot. The ones who did undergo some

changes were Drimo, Himka, and Eine. First, Drimo learned the skill Fortify and Himka learned the skill Shaping.

Fortify increased the user's strength and endurance for a short amount of time at the expense of decreased agility. That was perfect for a vanguard fighter like Drimo. Shaping allowed the user to alter the appearance of certain products. As the user leveled up the skill, on top of being able to completely change what the item looked like, they would even be able to change the abilities of the items. It sounded like an interesting skill. I kind of wished I had it. *I'll have Himka show it to me later.*

Lastly, the one with the most dramatic change was Eine.

"Eine, you can evolve!"

"Tra-la!"

Eine had reached level twenty-six and could now evolve. Ecstatic, I checked out what her possible evolution routes were.

"Looks like you have three options, Eine."

The first on the list was the standard evolution, Sylph Tailor. The second one was a Silkie, which came with some fighting ability. Last on the list was the unique evolution, Sylph Idol.

"So if you become a Tailor, your Yarn Spinning and Weaving will become advanced skills. Also, your air magic would become specialized to be used only for crafting, and you would learn Sewing. Plus I can pick another skill for you to learn."

She'd have no combat ability, but her crafting ability would increase considerably. On the other hand, Silkie was pretty interesting.

"Your Air Magic and Collect would become advanced skills, and your Float skill would turn into Flight. Also, you would learn House Management and Bo Staff Skills?"

Oh yeah, weren't Silkies those spirits that did chores around the house? In any case, it was a strange assortment of skills. House management, fighting, collecting... Eine's abilities would become pretty diversified. Was the combat

ability necessary for defending a home?

“This one’s caught my eye, though.”

Sylph Idol would make Eine’s Air Magic specialized for crafting, Yarn Spinning would become an advanced skill, and Float would become Flight. She’d gain a new skill called Cheerleader, and I’d be able to choose one more skill besides that.

Cheerleader was a skill that gave buffs to party members. Though we already had Fau on that front, I was always happy to have more buffers. Also, this fight made me realize how important the ability to fly was.

Eine wouldn’t gain any fighting skills with this option, but I felt like the unique evolution was the way to go. Also, I could have her learn Sewing for the remaining skill slot. This way, between her and Himka, we’d be able to make all our own equipment. I was pretty happy about that too. Of course, there was also the level and materials to think about, so for the time being the equipment being sold at shops would be better. Someday, though, the day would come where I’d be able to equip myself fully with gear made by those two.

“All right, it’s time for you to evolve!”

“Tra-la!”

“Eine, you shall now be a Sylph Idol!”

“Traaa-la!”

There was the usual flash of light, and Eine’s evolution was complete. Despite the flashy effects, her appearance didn’t change much. Her short stature and long, white hair stayed the same, and her clothing had become a touch more elaborate. Her blouse was now decorated with green embroidery and she wore a hair ornament. I guess that could be called a headband, right? But was there a reason she was wearing it backwards? To keep her long hair in place? The headband was elegantly designed, with its slim, silver frame and two small, green jewels adorning the headband at the spots just above her ears.

“Tra-la?” Eine said questioningly with a tilt of her head, seemingly unaware of the change in her appearance. She ran her hands along the headband from above her ears to the back of her head.



“Yup, you look even cuter than before.”

“Tra-la-la!”

Anyway, that was about it for our stats check. As I held Eine, who had come flying to me, I opened up my status window again.

“Next up, let’s check our drops.”

*All right, just what sort of great items did we get?* I wondered, when I noticed something else. Something displayed at the edge of the screen caught my eye.

“What’s this? ‘Now Streaming’...? Huh?”

I did a double take, but it really did say “Now Streaming.”

The great battle between the Brachio and the Tyranno—I had been recording so I could enjoy watching it on my own later...but somehow, I had, in fact, been live streaming it.

“H-How’d that happen?”

I hadn’t meant to stream it at all, and I certainly didn’t remember enabling that feature!

I quickly looked into things and found out this was caused by Mamori’s Diary. Diary was one of the abilities of my Zashiki-Warashi mascot that allowed her to automatically upload videos she recorded for public viewing. I received rewards depending on video view counts, so I was just letting it happen... Ever since I’d approved those permissions to her Diary skill, she’d been immediately uploading videos.

Maybe, among the several questions that popped up when I started recording, there had also been something like “Upload Recording”? Then I, in the midst of battle and barely paying attention, had probably selected “Yes” without realizing.

“Well, let me go ahead and end this... Hmm, I’ve really done it now, haven’t I?”

Had I leaked the entirety of the Brachio versus Tyranno showdown? Yeah, I messed up—wait, or maybe not? Thinking about it, maybe this wasn’t such a bad thing. After all, I had nothing about my fighting technique that I wanted to

hide. In fact, I kind of wanted to share that high-intensity battle with other players.

“Oh well, I can’t take it back now. Now, back to the item drops—”

*Ding-dong.*

“Huh? An announcement?”

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

*“Yuto, for being the first player to defeat the Event Brachio, you will be awarded an event exchange ticket.”*

Damn, I couldn’t believe that had been a boss that would warrant a server-wide announcement! My victory had really only been thanks to a combination of luck and happenstance, though...

The ocean current the announcement mentioned had to be that area we forced our way through, right? So did that mean it had become easier for other players to come to this island? In that case, maybe I had contributed to progressing the event.

Wait, this wasn’t a co-op event, though, so maybe I had just helped out my competition?

“Oh well, I don’t really mind.”

It wasn’t like I was aiming for first place anyway!

Apparently, this event exchange ticket I had received could be exchanged for a special item at the end of the event. The items the tickets could be exchanged for would be kept secret until that time came. That was fine; I’d just have to wait patiently.

“Okay, *now* I’ll take a look at my drops.”

I pulled myself together and opened my inventory. There, I saw an abundance of new items. *Are these all from the boss?*

“Seventeen Dinosaur Meats. Twelve Bone-In Dinosaur Meats. And five High-Grade Bone-In Dinosaur Meats.”

*Nice, it's a meat party. I won't have to worry about food for a while.* If I could hold on to these after the end of the event, it would be nice to try cooking them properly at my home base.

"I also got scales and hide..."

I had gotten Dinosaur Scales and Dinosaur Hide from the Raptors and other dinosaurs. I also got Dinosaur Great Scales and Dinosaur Great Hide, which must have been drops from the boss. I had been expecting stuff like this.

"This Dinosaur Bone...is huge!"

I thought I could use it to make broth, but it was unbelievably huge. When I took it out, I saw it was around 150 centimeters long and was shaped like a femur. It looked like the sort of item that could be made into a weapon.

Same with the Dinosaur Great Bone. This one was black and way too heavy to carry. It could definitely be used to make an amazing hammer or something. Not that I would be able to use it!

I had also received Thunder Dinosaur's Thick Hide and Thunder Dinosaur's Tailbone, as well as Thunder Dinosaur Marbled Meat and Thunder Dinosaur's Pointed Tailbone, which all must have been from the boss. I think I recalled the brachiosaurus also being called the thunder lizard, so Thunder Dinosaur must have referred to the Event Brachio.

And that wasn't all.

I also received the items Large Dinosaur Fang, Large Dinosaur Claw, Tyrant Dinosaur's Saber Tooth, Tyrant Dinosaur's Inverted Scale, and Tyrant Dinosaur's Skull. These had to be drops from the Event Tyranno. Apparently, we were considered to have defeated the Tyranno too, not just the Brachio. That would explain all the EXP we got. It made sense why we leveled up as much as we did.

"Holy crap, that's a lot of evets."

I was shocked to see I had earned sixty thousand evets. That was like defeating 120 Event Pachycephalos. *A suitable payout for a boss!*

"Dang, I can't believe this..."

I had thought we were all going to die, and Himka and Sakura actually *had*.

But at least our rewards matched the effort we had put in. I decided that next time I summoned those two, I'd give them lots of praise and spoil them rotten. Without both of their sacrifices, I definitely would have died. Even now, the moment when they vanished remained burned in my memory.

"..."

"Honk?"

"Aye?"

*Ah, snap out of it.* If I beat myself up over it too much, my other monsters would worry. I had been trying not to get too down about it...

"Growl?"

"Chirp?"

"I'm fine. It's nothing. I'm finished up here, so let's keep moving forward!"

"Squeak!"

"Tra-la-la!"

Right, our party formation was totally different now. In the vanguard, we had Drimo and Bear Bear. For our hit-and-run attackers, we had Rick and Perca, and Fau and Eine were our support. That left me as the only healer. We had an attack-oriented formation for once, which was unusual for us.

Since we didn't have Himka with us, who was a reliable asset in a confined space like this, we would have to move even more cautiously going forward. This was unexplored territory, after all. The summit of a plateau, just like the lost world—though I guess we had already run into dinosaurs.

We left the clearing and stepped onto the path that would take us even higher.

Honestly, I was hesitant.

During the event, after a certain amount of time passed, players had to sleep for at least six hours. It was already nighttime, so we had to sleep somewhere...but there was no guarantee that there would be a safety zone at the top of the mountain. Actually, there might even be some super strong

monsters that would prevent us from even reaching the safety zone.

If we wanted to go somewhere we *knew* was safe, then it would be better to head back down to the foot of the plateau. But that carried the risk of the boss respawning in that time. I didn't know how often the Event Brachio respawned, but there was a possibility of our path forward getting blocked again even after we had already gone through the ordeal of beating it.

We couldn't count on the method of using a Tyranno against the Brachio to work that well again. Truthfully, it had been a miracle that it had worked at all this time. There was no way we'd be able to pull it off again.

But if either option was a gamble, then going forward was probably the better of the two. And so, we slowly followed the winding incline up the mountain until finally, we successfully reached the top. We didn't run into any enemies or traps, though, so it really hadn't been dangerous at all. I was extremely grateful that we had some respite after that boss fight. Unfortunately, though, there was no safety zone in sight.

"Hmm, another forest?"

"Growl."

"Can't really tell if there's a safety zone in there, huh?"

"Chirp."

I peered inside the forest from the entrance, but I couldn't spot anything.

"Not much choice but to look around. If it turns out there are monsters, we'll retreat back to the mountain path."

"Squeak."

As I already found out earlier with the Tyranno, dinosaurs could trespass onto that path, but fighting there would still be better than fighting in the forest. Thus, we walked around the forest for ten minutes in search of a safety zone.

"Found it!"

"Honk honk!"

"Tra-la-la!"

Hearing my call, my monsters broke into a sprint. I couldn't help myself from doing the same. After all, we'd finally found it!

"Hell yeaah! I did it! I caught it!"

"Aye!"

"Tra-la!"

I lifted the rhinoceros beetle I had just captured high above my head and showed it off to my monsters. They all looked pleased too.

*Oh man, this is the best. I can't believe I found a rhinoceros beetle this big! Oh, and don't go thinking I forgot about looking for the safety zone. I haven't!*

It was just, we had yet to see a single monster in this forest, so I gradually started letting my guard down.

And this forest wasn't just monster-free—it was an insect heaven. Not only was it filled with regular butterflies and dragonflies, but even Meganeuras like I had seen by the beach, and giant rhinoceros beetles, which I was now seeing for the first time. Everywhere you looked you could see them resting on the trees. It was a bug-catching paradise.

"Shoot, I don't think I have enough cages!"

"Growl!"

"Chirp chirp!"

Rick and Bear Bear were observing the rhinoceros beetle in its Terrarium with stars in their eyes. Those two must have had the heart of a young boy, just like me. They'd been bursting with excitement this entire time.

"Squeak squeak."

"What's up, Drimo?"

"Squeak."

He looked like he was saying something like, "Good grief." But, why?

**Alyssa's POV**

Yuto disappeared.

He was supposed to have been hanging out near Recreation Beach, but at some point, he was just gone. He wasn't in the town, and he wasn't seen on the field either. Reports of that nature came flying in left and right.

The anguish from fans of his monsters was especially pronounced. Amelia and Ashihana, who are acquaintances of mine, looked ghastly as they lamented, "I-I didn't get enough of my Olto fix!" and "Bear Bear, where are you...?"

There were probably many other players who felt the same. There were probably also a lot of people bitter over missing the chance to pick up his scraps.

We Quick-Eared Cats were currently looking for Yuto. But even with our clan's intelligence network, we were unable to find out where he was. I mean, even though Yuto and I were friends, it wasn't like I was in constant communication with him, you know? But still, people keep coming to me for information about him.

I had to fend off and blacklist people who were making ridiculous claims like that we were hiding information or that we alone were trying to reap the benefits of his intel. I mean, jeez, his whereabouts were *personal information*, so even if I did know, it wasn't like I would tell people. Though I really didn't know. Besides, my clan was very preoccupied with other problems right now, so we didn't even have the time for all this.

The reason for that was also because of Yuto, though...

To be frank, we were worried we wouldn't have enough evets for when Yuto came to us with some great information. At the start of the event, all players were given the same number of evets. So what would happen if Yuto came to me with some bombshell news? I'd definitely be too short on evets.

But we informants were a stubborn bunch. There was no way I could admit that a piece of information was so amazing that I couldn't afford to pay for it.

I was sure Yuto would be fine with waiting for payment or telling me it was okay to split the payments into installments. He'd probably even tell me I could pay him after the event was over. But we were currently in the middle of the

event. Therefore, I felt I ought to pay him in evets.

And so, our entire clan was desperately scraping together as many evets as we could. I was also doing my part to complete quests, but I didn't know if what we had would be enough... *It's impossible even for Yuto to make a shocking discovery each and every time, right? Don't be so naive! That's exactly the sort of thinking that keeps landing me in hot water!*

Once I heard that Yuto had disappeared, I just knew. I knew he was up to something. It was that conviction that kicked me into gear.

Also, that video.

Seriously, the shriek I let out was probably my loudest one yet. How did he get himself into that situation only a few hours into the event? He made it to an unexplored island that apparently had *dinosaurs*, got involved in a fight between some insane boss monsters, and then ended up *winning*? Was he even playing the same game as everyone else?

Anyhow, our clan started receiving thirty times our usual inquiries. Yuto *had* to sell us his information, at all costs. I didn't know if I could call it a blessing, but that video leaked a lot of info about the boss that would have probably been the most expensive.

We still didn't know information about monsters on the island and the materials that could be gathered there, but our clan should be able to afford just that with the evets we had on hand. At least so I hoped...

"Let me try contacting Yuto."

*This time, I won't embarrass myself! I'll just say, all cool and composed, "Huh, that's some pretty good info you got there. I'll pay you a lot for it." I swear!*

## **Management's POV**

"Bwaaah ha ha ha!"

"This is no laughing matter, Chief!"

"Quite the contrary! All we can *do* is laugh! Just look at this video!"



“This is troublesome indeed... It’s doing unthinkable numbers.”

“Looks like the cat’s out of the bag now.”

“It sure is... This video doesn’t reveal everything, but anyone who sees this video will understand exactly how to pit the Event Tyranno against the Event Brachio.”

“There are some specific conditions for it to happen...but now they know that it’s possible, everyone will try it.”

“Yes, if enough people try to verify it, they’ll identify the required conditions pretty quick.”

“There were four conditions, weren’t there?”

“That is right. First, they mustn’t counterattack the pursuing Tyranno that they encounter in the outskirts. Next, after encountering a Tyranno at least two more times, they must lead it to the entrance of the field where the Brachio is. Also, they have to cook dinosaur meat at night. Lastly, they need to have a team that is made up of no more than two parties. Otherwise, if you have a team of three parties or more, the Brachio becomes a raid boss. If they do all that and are able to successfully escape all the way to the Brachio, the two dinosaurs will start to fight.”

“But first off, I didn’t think anyone would find the Prehistoric Island on day one. I really wasn’t expecting someone to be able to force their way through like that. Highway Penguin, huh...?”

“The skill’s Blow Away resistance effect ended up blowing back any and all enemies... It almost feels like a bug.”

“Well, it’s not like he exploited that on purpose, and we’re currently in the middle of an event. We can’t roll that back.”

“Shall we modify the Blow Away resistance specs during overnight maintenance?”

“You fool. If we do that, it’ll look like we gave favorable treatment to Silver-Haired! We’d be preventing anyone else from potentially getting over it using the same method. Besides, the ocean current has already weakened, so it’d be

pointless now.”

“Man... I would’ve been fine if people just became aware of the island’s existence, but I really thought the strategy for defeating the Brachio wouldn’t become common knowledge until the event was almost over... That was the strongest boss of this event, you know.”

“I suppose those items we prepared have become less valuable now? The Ancient Manuscript and the Dinosaur Field Guide, among others...”

“Less valuable...? That Ancient Manuscript is nothing more than scraps of paper at this point! They might as well just hang it up as decoration!”

“All it explains is how to lure the Tyranno, after all...”

“What should we do?”

“I think things will work out. The manuscripts on how to defeat the Spino and the Mosa are still worth something.”

“We’ll make some adjustments to the price.”

“Yes, good plan. Also, let’s implement *that*. You know, what we prepared in case of emergencies.”

“*That*? I never thought we would actually implement that...”

“We shelved it since it would make the event too difficult, but it’s our only option.”

“Ah, right. I suppose we really do have no other choice. At this rate, we’ve no way of knowing how many tens of thousands of players will reach the depths of the island.”

“Ugh... Well, we’ve gained a lot of content for official videos, so it’s not all a bust.”

“This has probably increased players’ motivation too...”

“Very true... Silver-Haired really did it again.”

“We’ve verified in the logs that he hasn’t used any illicit methods... I guess we have another all-nighter to look forward to, thanks to Silver-Haired...”

“Oh, give it up!”

“Chief, didn’t you say your wife wasn’t speaking to you lately? How has that been working out?”

“Daaah ha ha ha ha ha...”

“All right, I understand! Just please stop laughing while crying!”

“Ha ha ha ha... Hah...”

# Online Forum [The Master Celebrity] Silver-Haired, Amazing as Always, Part 20

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.

---

115: Takashima

Gah! What the hell?!

That video had me mesmerized! Forty minutes flew by before I knew it! The crimson king erased time for me!

I mean, wow! That's all I can say!

---

116: Cho

Yup. Wow indeed.

---

117: Tomato Mato

Damn, that was crazy.

The craziest part is that while the video was streaming, most of the players in town were completely absorbed in watching it. It wasn't just you, Takashima.

There was just a crowd of people not moving from their spot.

I wonder if the shops had a slump in sales when that happened?

---

118: Tetsu

Holy crap! No really, what the heck was that video?!

An out-of-this-world crazy powerful battle between a Brachiosaurus and a Tyrannosaurus rex?!

*And Silver-Haired's monsters graced the screen!*

---

119: Tundra

That video sure was unreal.

It was insane seeing things from Silver-Haired's POV, and we got some insight on strategy against an unknown boss.

Plus seeing the monsters' precious expressions that they don't show to other players... Sakura's smiling face at the end was just too much...!

And the part where Silver-Haired screamed her name in anguish. And seeing him freeze, dumbfounded, for just a moment.

Jeez...it brings tears to my eyes!

---

120: Takashima

That's only natural. Even I couldn't stop my eyes from sweating!

I want a tamed monster so badly now after watching that scene.

I acquired the Tame and Command skills on the spot.

I don't even need a girl monster! I just want to develop a deep bond with a tamed monster!

---

121: Cho

I want a girl monster!

I'll treat her with love and affection! From an appropriate distance, of course!

---

122: Tundra

It's refreshing how you stay so true to yourself.

But anyway, this video is a gold mine.

Silver-Haired's unreal for streaming it live.

Oof, I'm too stoked to think of any better words.

---

123: Takashima

You're right. Silver-Haired could've charged evets for watching his video.

If he collected even just a hundred evets from each player, he'd have an overwhelming lead.

Though I don't think the game has a system for that.

---

124: Tundra

His video reached the top of the view count charts immediately.

Mamori's latest video is in second place, so Silver-Haired really has both second and first place.

Oh, speaking of, you can't watch live streamed videos outside of the event. You just end up watching a recording of it.

Time moves faster in the event, so I guess otherwise it'd be all sped up.

---

125: Cho

But even without his tamed monsters there, the video's worth watching.

It's impressive as hell. I already saved it.

It's a masterpiece for any dinosaur fan. Now I can watch it as many times as I want.

---

---

126: Tomato Mato

Okay, but it's not just all rainbows!

Each time his monsters almost got stomped on, my heart...!

I couldn't breathe. I was having palpitations! I couldn't take it!

---

127: Tetsu

Ah yeah, you fans of his monsters...

Some of my party members collapsed into tears after the tree nymph died. That was kinda cringe. I mean, really?

Even Silver-Haired was able to tough it out and keep fighting.

---

128: Cho

Well, based on what we could hear from Silver-Haired's monologuing, it sounded like he was expecting them to get annihilated from the start.

So he was probably already prepared for that possibility.

---

129: Tomato Mato

Well, it dealt huge damage to us, who didn't know it was coming!

A critical hit to the heart!

I knew they couldn't hear me, but I couldn't stop myself from screaming "Run!" and "Don't go there!"

---

130: Tundra

Kinda like when you're watching characters in a horror movie?

I get what you mean.

So I guess the ones screaming were his cute monster fans? Some people were collapsing back at some impressive angles.

---

131: Tomato Mato

I swear, this game has taken years off my life...!

---

132: Takashima

Yeah, the Bazaar shook when Silver-Haired's monsters died.

And I don't mean that figuratively.

That was just how loud the Defenders and monster fans who were watching the stream were wailing.

---

133: Tundra

Oh, so that's what that was!

I started watching the video late, so when I heard those screams, I panicked wondering what happened.

Their screams literally shook the earth.

---

134: Tetsu

Never mind dropping a bomb, he actually made an earthquake happen from a remote island lololol

Something only Silver-Haired could do.

---

135: Tomato Mato

I have a feeling giving a thumbs-up is going to become a trend soon. Himka's last thumbs-up... That was awesome! So moving!

Ah, I'm getting emotional!

---



136: Tundra

I know what you mean! I can't stop myself from giving thumbs-ups to everyone now too! IDK why!

I'm actually at the Bazaar now doing some shopping. There's a bunch of players here giving me thumbs-ups.

---

137: Cho

I for one would like to see some dinosaurs with my own eyes. Where are they exactly?

Didn't the announcement say something about a prehistoric island?

So there's another island besides this one?

---

138: Takashima

I think it's probably northeast of Recreation Beach.

---

139: Cho

There's an island over there?

---

140: Takashima

The server-wide announcement said that the ocean current got weaker.

There's an area of the ocean to the northeast that's blocked by a current. No one has gotten past it yet, or so people have been saying...

Apparently, someone did. Silver-Haired, unsurprisingly.

---

141: Tomato Mato

My party couldn't get past that at all either. We even had three people using water spells...

Halfway across and we got attacked by some weird

tentacle. We capsized.

...Aaand we died.

---

142: Tetsu

Same here.

That's why I thought some special event had to be triggered before we could pass over it...

Wasn't Silver-Haired just playing casually? Did he have time to trigger an event?

---

143: Takashima

People saw him just playing around with his monsters at Recreation Beach.

Though he did disappear afterwards, which caused a bit of a stir.

Then all of a sudden, we get this live stream...

Silver-Haired, what the heck are you doing?!

---

144: Tundra

So he went to that prehistoric island alone?

---

145: Tomato Mato

But since chances are slim that he triggered any event, does that mean he just brute-forced his way over the current?

How'd he manage that?

---

146: Cho

I mean, he's Silver-Haired...

---

147: Takashima

Ah... Right, he's Silver-Haired!

---

148: Tetsu

That's right! Did you forget the title of this thread?  
lololol

---

149: Tomato Mato

"Because he's Silver-Haired."

It's like the most powerful spell.

No matter what happens, you have no choice but to accept it.

---

150: Tundra

Right! In the meantime, I'm going to rewatch "The Great Battle on the Remote Island in the South Seas: Brachio versus Tyranno versus Silver-Haired."

---

151: Cho

Me too! I'm going to rewatch "Silver-Haired on the Prehistoric Island!"

---

152: Tomato Mato

Good luck, Himka.

I can't wait to see more of Himka x Silver-Haired!

---

153: Takashima

I vote for "Silver-Haired and the Lost World."

---

154: Tetsu

Himka x Silver-Haired isn't a thing. Don't forget about Sakura!

Though I won't allow Silver-Haired x Sakura!

---

155: Tundra

Yeah! Agreed!

But I'll tolerate Silver-Haired x Reflet!

---

156: Cho

No, no, no, no, no!

Silver-Haired x Reflet? *Hell* no!

Make do with Silver-Haired x Olto!

---

157: Takashima

...I feel like Silver-Haired is more like a guardian, though.

If I had to say, he's kinda like a father figure?

---

158: Tomato Mato

That makes it all the more moving to see his monsters looking out for him!

---

## [Second Wave Event] A Discussion Thread for the Ongoing Second Wave Celebration Event, Part 3

Please post information regarding the event.

Info not related to strategy is permitted.

Feel free to ask any and all questions.

---

662: Mimura

All right, I think I've got a basic summary of the facts we now know thanks to the ultra large king-sized bomb Silver-Haired just dropped.

There's an island with dinosaurs. It's called the Prehistoric Island.

It's probably past the ocean current. Unclear how to get over it, but there was a server-wide announcement saying the current got weaker, so it seems like getting over that is the way to get to the island.

Even Silver-Haired, who's not much of a fighter, had the means to beat the boss. Meaning, players can probably use the same method to beat it. The average first-wave player should likely be able to do it.

The announcement said the Brachio was the boss, so it seems like his method was leading the Tyranno to the Brachio and having them fight each other.

Most of the Event Brachio's fighting pattern has been established after reviewing the vid.

Effective strategy against the Brachio also established.

We also got a lot of info on the Tyranno.

---

663: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Oh, is that all?

There's so much information, I can't stop laughing.

Even those work-obsessed freaks in the verification team were looking teary-eyed.

---

664: Mimura

Did I miss anything?

---

665: Marca

Yes, you left out the most important part!

We reconfirmed how cute his monsters are!!!

---

666: Baa\_Baa

The Sylph's unique evolution has been identified!

You left that out too!

The Tamer thread is going wild!

---

667: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Well, that's everywhere, not just the Tamer thread.

---

668: Mimura

Same with the crafting thread.

They're all ravenous for dinosaur materials.

People are all up in arms again because Silver-Haired isn't responding to any calls or messages. Is he okay?

---

669: Marca

That's right! He won't pick up my calls!

Why nooooooot?!

---

670: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

M-Maybe he just doesn't want to?

I'm sure everyone who was able to tried to get in contact with him.

I know I would ignore them.

---

671: Marca

I-I guess so...

He does seem like the type to forget about stuff he doesn't want to deal with in favor of doing what he wants to in the moment...

Sorry for bothering you, Silver-Haired...

---

672: Murakage

Well now, I haven't received a reply from him either! We'll have to just wait patiently!

More importantly:

The importance of using covert skills to hide oneself from the Brachio and the Tyranno.

That should also go on the list!

---

673: Mimura

Yeah, not happening, ninja.

---

674: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Don't try to force yourself in, ninja.

---

675: Murakage

Hmph...

But ninjas don't fight dinosaurs! How else am I supposed

to be involved...?

---

676: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

What if you were some campy movie ninja?

Just imagine: “NINJA VS DINOSAUR”

---

677: Murakage

Oho! I see!

“NINJA VS T-REX” could also work!

---

678: Mimura

No, no, that would be “NINJA VS REPTILIAN”!

An aerial battle between ninjas and humanoid reptiles!

Man, I can see it now! Just the type of B-rate movie I love!

---

679: Baa\_Baa

No one cares. I really couldn't care less.

Never mind that. Have people figured out how to get to the Prehistoric Island?

---

680: Murakage

“N-No one cares”...?

So must I really be a different type of ninja...?

---

681: Marca

Ninja this, ninja that, let it go!

We're talking about Silver-Haired right now!

Where is he now? Or rather, where's the Prehistoric Island?

---



682: MurderLicenseBaki

Hey guys. Been a while.

Looks like I came in at just the right time. I've more or less figured out how to get to the island.

---

683: Baa\_Baa

A-A strong person has appeared!

---

684: Marca

They're just a crafter who's part of the verification team. They're not that strong at all.

---

685: Baa\_Baa

Huh? With a name like that?

---

686: MurderLicenseBaki

Oh, my name's just based on my favorite manga.

---

687: Mimura

You're as enigmatic as ever...

---

688: MurderLicenseBaki

Anyway, about that island.

As of now, three—no, four possible routes have been discovered.

That's counting Silver-Haired's method, which is bulldozing your way through.

---

689: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Huh, so that's how Silver-Haired did it.

---

690: MurderLicenseBaki

As a matter of fact, there were some people who saw Silver-Haired charge into the current from afar.

But then he immediately vanished, so they assumed he drowned.

---

691: Mimura

But in reality, he made it over the current and landed on the Prehistoric Island.

So the reason he vanished is because he moved to a different instance?

---

692: MurderLicenseBaki

You hit the nail on the head.

Once you get halfway across the current, the map changes and you can see the island.

We were able to confirm that players on either side of the current couldn't see each other.

---

693: Marca

What are the other ways over the current?

---

694: MurderLicenseBaki

The second one is the underwater route.

The ocean floor there is pretty uneven, and there's actually a tunnelliike passage that leads to the other side of the current.

Underwater Breathing is essential for that route.

I couldn't hold my breath for long enough, so I died!

But there's no boss down there, so getting through it is just a matter of holding your breath.

---

695: Baa\_Baa

That way is probably the best bet for my party.

---

696: MurderLicenseBaki

If you're worried about fighting, then yeah.

The third way is the sandbar route. If you look hard enough, you'll find a narrow sandbar that you can use to walk across.

But there's a giant jellyfish boss that way. It's that boss's tentacle that gets in the way of the bulldoze-your-way-through route.

It's not a raid boss, but it's pretty tough.

And even though you're on a sandbar, your feet are submerged underwater and the path is pretty narrow, so it's really hard to fight.

I died there too.

---

697: Murakage

That may be quite difficult for those of us who rely on our agility.

The underwater route it is, then?

---

698: MurderLicenseBaki

The fourth route is going over the weaker part of the current by boat.

The jellyfish tentacle will try to stop you, but as long as you can handle that, you'll make it through.

It wrapped around me and dragged me underwater, though, so I died!

---

699: Mimura

Dude, how many times are you going to die?

You died on every route!

---

700: MurderLicenseBaki

Well yeah, every route has its pitfalls!

---

701: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

You were soloing it, weren't you?

So basically you need to be in a party to get over the current.

---

702: Murakage

In that case, what do you say about joining my party?

We still have space left for more people.

---

703: MurderLicenseBaki

Ehhh, IDK about ninjas...

---

704: Murakage

Wh-Why?!

D-Do you dislike the masks?

---

705: MurderLicenseBaki

Look, I just don't think I can take being all alone next to a super lovey-dovey married ninja couple...

---

706: Mimura

Ah, rumors of the married ninjas have traveled far and wide, I see.

Yeah, that would be painful. Enough to make you puke rainbows.

---

707: Marca

If you're gonna be all over each other, just do that IRL.

---

708: Baa\_Baa

A married couple playing the same game together just makes me jealous.

---

709: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

By the way, he was trying to casually slip in the fact that he'd make you wear a mask.

---

710: MurderLicenseBaki

Oh, right! I forgot something important!

Even if you get over the current, that doesn't mean you're safe.

It looks like there's a Plesiosaurus circling around the island. It killed a bunch of players in the verification team.

---

711: Mimura

Well dang, Silver-Haired did a great job making it all the way to the island.

---

712: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Well, that's because...he's Silver-Haired.

---

713: Murakage

But he made it through the ocean, escaped the plesiosaur, survived the island, made it to the boss, and then won?

I don't think good luck alone can explain all of that...

---

714: Baa\_Baa

But since the devs aren't doing anything, that must mean he's not cheating, right?

I'm sure they've looked into him, considering how much he stands out.

---

715: Murakage

I'm not suspecting him of any misconduct. Rather, I'm leaning towards the belief that he has some extraordinary, special power.

Perhaps he is actually a superhuman descendant of a ninja with heightened dynamic visual acuity and reaction speed!

---

716: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Silver-Haired, a modern-day ninja?

I think him being something like a cyborg is more believable.

Maybe Silver-Haired is actually a miserable cyber newtype created by an evil organization!

Go, Silver-Haired!

---

717: MurderLicenseBaki

What if he's a martial artist who's trained so much he's like one of those superhuman fighters that show up in manga?

He's been hiding it, but he's actually a pro!

I bet Silver-Haired's ripped IRL...

---

718: Mimura

Even if he was, I still don't think it explains how often he triggers events.

Clearly, he's an artificial intelligence that only exists

in cyberspace!

One day, he developed individuality. Then, in search of friends, he stealthily sneaked into LJO! That's how he has such an easy time understanding all triggers in the game.

---

719: Marca

You know, I heard that Silver-Haired is a god. His soul is a malevolent god that was sealed away many, many years ago.

That's why he has the power to change all of creation to suit his convenience.

But that godlike power is too much for his human body. That's why sometimes he goes out of control.

The only thing that can soothe him is the sound of Olto singing, "Mm-mm..."

---

720: Baa\_Baa

In that case, I support the theory that Olto is actually a god!

Inside Olto is a fallen god who escaped from their own world after losing a war, and is now secretly guiding Silver-Haired, the hero.

---

721: Marca

Okay then, Bear Bear can be a god too!

---

722: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Can you imagine if Silver-Haired established a religion in this game?

I foresee a lot of money being moved around.

---

723: Murakage

Silver-Hairedism?

---

724: Baa\_Baa

Olto is the deity!

---

725: Marca

No, it's Bear Bear!

---

726: MurderLicenseBaki

I'd consider joining if Mamori was the god...

---

727: Rokuro\_Mochizuki

Oh, so we've got people supporting mascots and yokai too, huh?

I can already foresee this religion having a schism and ending up splitting up into different sects.

---

728: Mimura

Anyway, I'm sure a lot of money could be made just by making a regular old fan club and charging an admission fee.

Though I doubt Silver-Haired could be bothered to do something like that...

---



# [New Discoveries Galore!] A Discussion Thread for New Discoveries Made in LJO, Part 38

Feel free to report anything you've noticed, however trivial.

Don't make things up.

Don't assume others are lying.

If possible, include a screenshot as proof.

---

886: Heartman

Man, I hope they keep selling the Terrariums after the event.

---

887: Formaggio

Looks like you still can't bring them out of the event, so we've only got the facts on creatures inside it.

But if this is going to be anything like the last event, then we might be able to teleport to the Bazaar even after it's over.

---

888: Heartman

I already bought twenty of them.

Goodbye, hard-earned evets...

---

889: Hiruma

I guess you could say you traded your nest egg for a different kind of nest?

---

890: Heartman

I've always dreamed of owning a rhinoceros beetle, ever

since I was a kid. I never see any in my neighborhood.

---

891: Hendrickson

Damn you, city boy!

There are beetles everywhere you look where I'm at in the countryside!

---

892: Heartman

Really? I'm jealous.

---

893: Hiruma

Psh, typical city kid!

---

894: Heartman

Hey, I'm not near the city at all, okay?

It takes me over an hour to get to Shinjuku by train.

---

895: Formaggio

That is the city! If you're even mentioning Shinjuku, you're from the city!

And Saitama, which always gets made fun of! And Chiba, which is rural except for around a certain mouse's "land"! And North Kanto! They're all cities to me!

---

896: Hiruma

Yeah, you said it! He says he's never seen a rhinoceros beetle?

If I go to a convenience store in the middle of the night, they practically rain down on me!

---

897: Hendrickson

What?! A convenience store open in the middle of the

night?

If you can bike to a twenty-four-hour convenience store in under fifteen minutes, then you better believe you're in a city!

---

898: Hiruma

O-Oh, is that so...?

So my town is a city? Even though I'm surrounded by rice fields?!

---

899: Fuka

Okay, I feel like we've gotten really offtrack.

You can't put ingredients in the terrariums, can you?

Like ocean fish?

---

900: Formaggio

So far, twenty have been confirmed: Giant water bug, diving beetle, white-tailed skimmer, cabbage butterfly, swallowtail butterfly, pill bug, Japanese honeybee, Joro spider, rhinoceros beetle, stag beetle, white-spotted longhorn beetle, migratory locust, stick insect, large brown cicada, praying mantis, centipede, killifish, crucian carp, pond snail, and freshwater crab.

Since fish turn into food once you catch them, I don't think it's been verified yet whether you can keep them in a tank.

---

901: Hiruma

Where do you find killifish?

They're not in the ocean, are they?

---

902: Formaggio

They're in the forest to the west of the Bazaar.

Everyone migrated east towards the beach, so the west hasn't been explored much. But there are small rivers and ponds there.

It's pretty crowded now with people collecting rhinoceros beetles though.

---

903: Fuka

Butterflies are pretty, but I can't really get behind centipedes and pill bugs...

Anyway, people are catching rhinoceros beetles?

Can't you just buy them at the store...?

---

904: Hendrickson

Guess not a lot of female players would be interested in that.

But among the guys, and especially those who love bugs, rhinoceros beetles are already being sold at a high price.

And the ones you can find on the field are a little bigger than the ones you can buy.

---

905: Formaggio

Yeah, each individual one is a slightly different size.

The ones that are over eight centimeters are pretty rare, so those fetch a high price.

---

906: Hamakaze

Hey, some new products hit the shops!

There's a giant dragonfly called a Meganeura, and a Hercules beetle!

---

907: Heartman

What?! Are you serious?!

---

908: Hamakaze

Dead serious. Probably because Silver-Haired unlocked the Prehistoric Island...

Dang it, he did it again! I still can't catch up to him!

---

909: Hiruma

Are you still working at that?

---

910: Hamakaze

Of course I am! I can't turn away from a path I've already decided on! That's my gaming way!

---

911: Fuka

But you've been getting some attention too, haven't you, Hamakaze?

You found the village on the southwestern area of the island, and that weird area near there.

---

912: Hamakaze

Ah, the Marine Mammal Forest. The area of the ocean that has a dense forest of giant kelp.

As of now, that's the only place where sea otters can be found.

And it's probably got some other secrets.

---

913: Hendrickson

That's a pretty significant discovery, I'd say.

---

914: Hamakaze

That's what I thought too!

Until I saw that video!

---

915: Hiruma

Your opponent's just too strong.

---

916: Heartman

It is Silver-Haired, after all.

---

917: Hendrickson

I think you should actually take pride in the fact that you're one of the few success stories of people who try to imitate Silver-Haired.

---

918: Fuka

Yeah, and there are fewer people trying to do that now.

I have high hopes for the second-wave players.

---

919: Formaggio

I'd say good luck, but seeing what just happened...

They don't stand a chance, do they?

---

920: Hamakaze

Grrrr...

Just wait! Someday people will be saying "Hamakaze's done it again!"

Hama MVP! That's my goal!

---

921: Heartman

I feel like the fact that you can say that is a Hama MVP moment.

---

## Chapter Four: Kicking Back after the Fight

“Man, this forest is awesome.”

First off, there wasn't a single monster in sight, and I had registered a lot of plants and creatures to my encyclopedia. I was able to find a lot of different types of insects, starting with common ones like white-tailed skimmers and rhinoceros beetles, as well as some clearly rare bugs like Hercules beetles and morpho butterflies. I must have found over ten new species.

And this place wasn't just an insect paradise either. There were many different types of plants and animals inhabiting this forest. Curiously, there were even animals here named after places, like the Iriomote cat, the Okinawa rail, and the galapagos tortoise, which I wondered about, but I guess they just included a bunch of rare animals. I wished I could have played this game when I was a kid, but it was too late to worry about that. It was still plenty fun now.

I had filled out about eighty percent of the Insects section of the event encyclopedia, and over fifty percent of the Animals and Plants sections. And yeah, I used up almost all of my Terrariums.

It looked like I could use them to house reptiles, small animals, and plants in addition to insects, so I also caught a goliath frog and a pika. These were animals I couldn't have ever owned in real life, after all.

There was also a giant wētā, a type of giant cricket insect that was about the size of a small dog, but I really didn't want to catch that... It was even creepier than the Meganeura. If someone who hated bugs were to see it, they'd probably faint and be forcibly logged out.

“All right, I'd like to keep going deeper into the forest after our break, but...”

Before that, I needed to deal with a little problem.

“What should I do about all these calls and messages?”

I had turned off notifications for when I was in battle, but afterwards they came in nonstop. I automatically turned notifications back off to escape from

reality for a bit. After all, even as I was deciding whom to call back, more and more new calls just kept flooding in. Now, an hour later, things finally seemed to have settled down.

“I got like three hundred notifications...”

Not only did I receive calls and messages from close friends like Alyssa and Amelia, but also from people whose faces I couldn't recall just by seeing their name. We must have exchanged friend codes somewhere or other.

*I guess I should've expected this.* If someone I knew uploaded a video of them fighting dinosaurs, I wouldn't think twice about contacting them too. I'd probably bombard them with calls and messages.

“Maybe I should call Alyssa before I go to sleep.”

I was kinda scared, though.

I gave her a call, and she picked up after one ring. Had she been waiting for me? Nah, no way. Alyssa was a busy person. I probably just caught her at the right time.

“Hello?”

“Oh, hey, Alyssa. It's me. Um, did you call me?”

*“Did I call you? Don't give me that! What the heck was that live stream about?! You've really done it now! People are in an uproar!”*

“An uproar...?”

“Well, things have died down a little bit.”

“Oh, phew. Is that right?”

“Yeah, that's right! Mr. Carefree!”

The Quick-Eared Cats probably had a whole bunch of people asking for information about the dinosaurs, which meant they were likely in even more of a message hell than I was. I guess I couldn't blame her for being as on edge as she was. It was sort of my fault, so I needed to make sure to tell her everything I could about the dinosaurs.

“I figure I might as well ask, but you *are* playing LJO, aren't you?” Alyssa asked



me.

“Huh? Well, yeah. Of course I am.”

What was that about? She wouldn't have been able to contact me if I was playing a different game.

“Ah, right you are... A-Anyway, can I assume that since you called me, you have some information to sell me?”

I felt relieved when I heard her say that. Now I knew she would buy information from me even during the event. Regular currency held no value here, so I thought maybe the Cats wouldn't be buying and selling info. Then, after I asked for more details, Alyssa told me she would pay me in evets as much as she could. *Nice, that's good to hear.*

“For now, I'll tell you what I can share verbally,” I said.

“That'd be great.”

I couldn't show her my encyclopedia over the phone, but I told her everything about what I'd been doing since getting to the island, in addition to the enemies and materials I found along the way. Alyssa was shocked at first, but she eventually just started listening quietly. She was so quiet, in fact, that I once had to check to make sure the call didn't drop. Well, it *was* a lot of information, so she must have just stopped being able to react to each and every thing.

“That's all,” I said in conclusion.

“Wah...”

“Alyssa?”

“WAAAAH! I don't have nearly enough!”

“Gah!”

*She just screamed out of nowhere—my ears are ringing! That scared the crap out of me!*

“Alyssa? Wh-What's wrong?” I asked, worried. This time, she responded in a super quiet voice. That *was* Alyssa speaking, wasn't it?

After a pause, she asked, “Can the payment wait until you come back here?”

“Y-Yes.”

*Now she’s calm again?! These mood swings are too much! I’m scared!*

I had questions, but I was too intimidated to press her any further.

“I’ll go ahead and run the numbers and then send you a message later,” Alyssa told me.

“U-Understood.”

“Okay, see you later, then.”

Things got kind of weird at the end there, but I could assume she was going to buy my information, right? Yeah, it seemed like it. All right, let the evets flow in! Together with the winnings I got for beating the Brachio and the Tyranno, I’d have myself a pretty hefty sum. *Now I can buy even more Terrariums! I’m going to catch even more rare plants and animals!*

However, before that, I had to deal with something.

“What about my other friends?”

Just seeing all my missed calls and messages was enough to want to make me ignore them all. But that wouldn’t be right. Not that I had the time to talk to *everyone*... For now, I would just send a mass message telling everyone not to worry, and to go ask the Quick-Eared Cats for any dinosaur information.

“Oh, but maybe I’ll give Sawyer a call.”

Sawyer, the youthful Elf Alchemist, had sent me a message with the subject line: *Everything okay?* He also seemed like the type to be interested in insects and dinosaurs.

“Hey, Sawyer? Been a while.”

“Oh, hi, Yuto. I saw your live stream. Things looked rough over there. Are you okay?”

“Oh yeah, I managed to make it out fine.”

“That’s good to hear.”

*Yup, that’s Sawyer for you. First thing he does is express concern for me. What a nice guy.* If our positions had been reversed, I was sure the first words out of

my mouth would have been, “Tell me about the dinosaurs, please!”

After our initial greetings, Sawyer and I exchanged some various information. Obviously, I told him about the Prehistoric Island. I knew Sawyer would understand if I asked him not to leak the info to others since I had sold it to the Quick-Eared Cats. I didn’t have to worry about him. In exchange, Sawyer told me about the western side of the island—which I hadn’t visited yet—about a pond in a forest, and about something called the “Marine Mammal Forest” on the western shore. He also told me about the deserted village near there.

Sawyer even told me about the plants and animals I hadn’t yet registered to my encyclopedia, so all in all our call had been a great use of time.

“All right, it doesn’t look like any monsters are going to show up in this forest, so let’s take a quick rest.”

My surroundings were fairly visible thanks to the light of the moon and the stars, but it was already the middle of the night. It was the perfect time for catching bugs, but exploration was better done when it was light outside. Beyond where we currently were was the heart of the plateau, which was also the exact center of the island. I wanted to explore it in top condition.

“What’s in there?” I wondered aloud. I was really looking forward to it. And so, I went to sleep under a large tree. I shut my eyes, then selected the option to log out.

I felt a light floating sensation, then a heaviness suddenly returned to my body.

“Whew. I’m strangely tired even though I spent less time in the game than usual...”

That was just how action-packed the time I had spent had been. I had gotten tangled up in a fight between two dinosaurs and fought hard for the first time in a while. It wasn’t a surprise that I was mentally tired.

“Let me make sure I run to the bathroom. I only have ten minutes.”

Since time in the event moved dozens of times faster than normal, that meant ten minutes in the real world equaled seven hours in the game world.

After I finished up in the bathroom, I decided to do a little research on dinosaurs. I gathered some intel on the actual dinosaurs the Event Mosa and Event Ptera, both of whom I hadn't fought yet, were based on. I wasn't sure to what extent their characteristics would be recreated in the game, but they were sure to have some similarities.

"Mm-hmm. I see, I see."

As I was doing so, the time passed quickly by. *Uh-oh*. Even if I was late by just one minute, a lot of time would pass in the event. I hurriedly put on my headset and logged back into the game.

"Made it!"

"Squeak?"

"Morning, Drimo, Bear Bear."

"Growl!"

Drimo and Bear Bear were both looking at me wonderingly as I woke up in a fluster. I patted both their heads as I stood up. *Mm-hmm. There's no better way to wake up! I'm glad I wasn't late!*

I took a look around and made sure nothing was amiss.

"Looks like we weren't attacked in the night. There really aren't any enemies here on the plateau."

I had slept under the cover of a tree just in case, but there were no signs that any monsters had even gotten close to us. There was also no record in my log stating that anything had approached. I could probably assume that absolutely no monsters would show up here.

"The calls and messages have pretty much stopped now too."

I had only gotten a few messages from Amelia, Ursula, and Ashihana asking about the well-being of Olto and Bear Bear. Alyssa had said people were in an uproar, so I thought I'd get bombarded with more messages, but apparently not. I figured there'd be at least one or two people badgering me a little more persistently... I guess that meant LJO was filled with players who understood

good etiquette.

“Aye.”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Tra-la-la.”

After I finished checking my messages, my tiny monsters, who had been playing nearby, came over to me. They clung to my feet, trying to get my attention.

“Hey wait, where’s Perca?”

“Aye.”

“Hmm? He’s up in the tree?!”

I looked to where Fau had flown off to, and I saw that Perca had climbed to the top of a tall tree and was looking out in the distance. A penguin standing on a tree branch with a faraway look...it was kind of surreal, but also strangely picturesque.

“Do you see something, Perca?”

“Honk!”

“Hmm...?”

I looked in the direction Perca pointed his flipper, but I couldn’t see well with all the trees blocking my view. Did I have to climb up there too?

“Honk hooonk.”

Perca seemed to be calling for me to join him.

“Well, all right. I guess I’ll come up too.”

“Growl!”

“Squeak!”

“Huh? Wait, what are you two doing?”

Bear Bear and Drimo picked me up from either side. They put my arms around their necks and put their hands under my thighs.

*Hey, don't spread my legs! If I were a girl, this would be very inappropriate!*

This was a humiliating pose if anything. Considering how they were holding me, were they about to do what I thought they were going to do?

"Grooowl, grooowl."

"Squeeeeak, squeeeeak."

The two of them started rocking me back and forth, synchronizing their breathing. They were gonna heave me up there, weren't they? Well, with my nonexistent strength, it would've been really hard to climb up to where Perca was anyway!

"...Fine! This is the only way! I'm ready! Do it, guys!"

"Growl growl!"

"Squeak squeak!"

"Aaahhhhh!"

*I-I'm so high up! But this is even cooler than I imagined!* Bear Bear and Drimo launched me three meters straight up in the air, and I used that momentum to grab hold of the trunk of the tree.

"Hraaagh!"

*Nice! Not far to go now!*

"Hngh! Hrgh!"

The tree bark was bumpy and rough, like a sago palm, which gave me a lot of spots to grab onto. Even with my feeble stats, I somehow managed to climb up.

"Tra-la! Tra-la!"

"Aye, aye-aye!"

Moreover, Eine was pushing me up from below, while Fau was pulling on my hair, each trying to help me up at least a tiny amount. I couldn't feel any pain, but I wasn't going to lose any hair and go bald from this, was I?

And so, with the help of my monsters, I made it up to Perca. I was reminded once again that not having Olto's earth magic and Sakura's tree magic made

situations like this extremely difficult to deal with. Though seeing Drimo climbing up after me, I realized it was just a matter of ingenuity.

“It would’ve been nice if you’d hoisted *me* up like that.”

“Squeak?”

Drimo had tied a length of vine around his body and thrown the other end over a high branch, with Bear Bear holding it on the other side. Then, Bear Bear used their strength to pull the vine tight, lifting Drimo up without him having to do a thing. I supposed I should have used the vine that was available around me, even if Sakura wasn’t here.

“Oh well. Back to the matter at hand—Perca, what’re you pointing at?”

“Honk!”

“Oh, wow! Something’s sparkling... Is that water?”

“Squeak.”

Even through the gaps in the trees, I could see the light of the morning sun glinting off of a watery surface. I couldn’t tell if it was a spring or a river, but there was definitely water over there. It was likely the source of the waterfall that the mosasaurus was guarding. Considering how many rare plants and animals existed on this plateau, maybe that meant there were some unique fish there too? I couldn’t wait to find out.

“Guys! Our next destination is that water up ahead!”

“Aye!”

“Tra-la-la!”

Thus, we set out. After twenty minutes, without any grand adventure, we arrived at the source.

“Wow, it’s so pretty!”

“Tra-la.”

“Aye.”

What we found was a moderately large pond. It might’ve been a little narrower than a baseball field, but it was at least of comparable size. Short

vegetation grew around its perimeter, and right in the center of the pond was a small island. At first glance, it looked like the marshland where the spinosaurus had been blocking our way.

The difference was that there was an uncovered area of earth around the bank of the pond spanning a few meters where no grass grew, resembling a tidal flat. I saw something wriggling on the ground there and couldn't stop myself from exclaiming enthusiastically, "Hold up, that's a trilobite! Wow! This prehistoric island just keeps on giving!"

"Honk?"

"Tra-la?"

Perca and Eine were poking the trilobite, seemingly not understanding what I was so happy about. It wasn't anything pretty or cool-looking, after all.

"I know it looks weird, but trilobites are special for fossil enthusiasts. And the fact that it's moving makes it even better!"

"Honk?"

"Tra-la-la?"

They really didn't get it. They tilted their heads in confusion. But for me, this was a creature I'd always dreamed of seeing. It looked a bit like a horseshoe crab, but flatter and smaller, about the size of a sandal.

Could I capture this? I sneakily grabbed the trilobite and tried putting it in a Terrarium. I had run out of these earlier, so I had let go of some rhinoceros beetles and butterflies that could be obtained elsewhere besides this island. Thanks to that, I still had several empty containers. Though I wish I didn't have to have let those bugs go! I mean, that rhinoceros beetle was huge! But otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to catch even more valuable critters.

"Great, I can put it in a Terrarium! Which means I can keep it!"

"Growl."

"Squeak squeak."

Bear Bear and Drimo applauded me. Their expressions remained unchanged, though, so I guess they were just showing solidarity with me.



“All right, let’s keep this up and explore the pond! Time to go, squirrel rider!”

“Aye!”

“Chirp chirp!”

Fau gave a salute and nimbly sat astride Rick, who then lightly lifted his front paws like a rearing horse and dashed away. *I love how they always play along with me.*

The pair instantly sped away to where I couldn’t see them, but since there weren’t any monsters around here, I was fine with letting them run wild. Those two would probably pick up on things I wouldn’t, anyway.

Now, back to the large pond we had discovered, which had to be the very heart of the island. It was unthinkable for there to be no mysteries to uncover here. I was sure something special *had* to be here. Was it an object, an event, or a place? I walked around the edge of the pond as I thought of the possibilities when I came upon something strange.

“Hmm, is this the same thing that was at the beach?”

It was a rectangular pillar with each side around thirty centimeters wide, made of white stone. This one was also covered in moss and had the same round indentation at the top.

“Wonder what this— Whoa! Huh? What’d I do?”

I’d touched it without thinking, and a window suddenly popped up in front of me. The stone pillar at the beach hadn’t given me any sort of response like this!

*“Please offer a stone of hidden power.”*

“A-A stone?”

*“You may select an Amber or an Ammolite.”*

That was right, I had mined several gems along the way. Apparently, carrying either Amber or Ammolite was the trigger to activate the pillar. I checked the list of gems I could place in the pillar.

“It’s kind of a waste of an Ammolite, though.”

Ammolite was a shiny shell fossil that looked like a shiny, iridescent jewel. It

was shaped similarly to ammonite, but its color was a lustrous rainbow. I had mined several fossils, but I had only been able to mine one Ammolite. It had a rarity of six too, so it seemed pretty valuable.

Besides, the palm-sized, iridescent Ammolite was so pretty I felt I could look at it forever without getting tired of it. I was planning on displaying it in my house after the end of the event, so I didn't want to let go of it if I could help it.

"So that would mean using an Amber..."

There were only three types of Ambers displayed on the screen, but I thought I had been carrying more than that...

I stepped away from the stone pillar and checked my inventory, and sure enough, I had six Ambers, the result of mining several of them here at the summit of the plateau. So then why could I only offer three?

Checking the details gave me my answer. Among the six Ambers I had, three were unique. Evidently, these special Ambers were required to activate this stone pillar.

Name: Amber

Rarity: 4 / Quality: 4★

Effect: Ingredient. For decoration.

Name: Amber (Small Insect)

Rarity: 4 / Quality: 5★

Effect: Ingredient. For decoration.

Name: Amber (Plant)

Rarity: 4 / Quality: 6★

Effect: Ingredient. For decoration.

Name: Amber (Insect)

Rarity: 4 / Quality: 7★

Effect: Ingredient. For decoration.

It looked like if the Amber's quality was five or higher, it would include a bug or other organism sealed inside it. Just like the name "Small Insect" suggested, that one had a mosquito-like bug inside. The "Plant" one had what looked like a fern leaf, and the one labeled "Insect" had what looked like a honeybee. The Ambers themselves were about the size of my palm. I had to choose from one of these high-quality items to offer to the stone pillar.

"Seems like a waste, but I guess I have to..."

I selected the lowest-quality item I could—the five-star Amber. When I did, the stone pillar started to change. It emitted an intense light, and all the filth and accumulation that was covering the pillar was wiped cleanly away. The darkened, gray pillar became a brilliant white, looking as if it was made of gypsum. Also, a white sphere had been inserted in the open, fist-sized hole at the top of the pillar. Even though I had offered a red Amber, for some reason it had turned to a pure-white pearl-like sphere.

"Okay, well, I can definitely say I activated this mysterious device..."

I tried touching it again. Then, I heard another announcement.

*"Initiate teleportation? Below is a list of possible destinations."*

*Holy shit, it's a teleportation point!* As for my destination, I could choose my private room at the Bazaar.

"Does that mean I can come here whenever I want?! Sweet, now I can stock up on Terrariums!"

I did have one question, though. What would happen to my boat?

As that thought crossed my mind, I saw that there was a note written about that very thing. Once I teleported back to my room, my boat would automatically be returned to the boat rental shop. With one caveat—in the event my boat was being returned late, the late fee would be collected from me when the boat was returned, and if I couldn't afford to pay it, I'd go in the red.

Basically, I would accrue a debt. Lucky for me, I had just earned sixty thousand events for beating a boss. A late fee of two hundred events per hour wasn't going to break the bank.

There *was* something I was worried about way more than the late fee.

"Is this one-way teleportation...?"

I could teleport from here, but did that also mean I'd be able to teleport *back* here from my room? I didn't feel confident I'd be able to get past the ocean current and the Brachio again. It was probably fine, but I should be prepared for the worst-case scenario.

"Let me finish up what I want to do here first before I teleport."

I still wanted to explore the pond and mine more fossils. Maybe not the Mosa, but I wanted to defeat at least one Ptera and see what items it dropped. And lastly, I wanted to activate the stone pillar on the beach.

"All right, in that case—"

"Hyonk!"

Just as I was about to look up from my status window, Perca let out a loud whimper. Then, I heard the splashing sound of something striking against the surface of the pond.

"P-Perca! What's wrong?!"

"Honk honk!"

"Tra-la-la!"

"Aye-aye!"

Perca had his upper body above water and a look of desperation on his face as he reached his fins up above him—it almost looked like he was drowning. Eine and Fau had grabbed hold of him and were trying to pull him up, but Perca's thrashing was making it hard for them to do so.

"Tra-la-la!"

"Aye!"

"H-Hoonk!"

Had Eine and Fau talked him through something? Perca seemed to have remembered to use his own skill. Using Penguin Highway, Perca got himself out of his peril. After springing vigorously out of the pond, he landed on the shore and caught his breath.

However, that didn't mean this ordeal ended all happily ever after.

"Tra-la! Tra-la-la!"

"Aye! Aye-aye!"

Eine and Fau were infuriated after getting drenched with a generous splash of water. Meanwhile, Perca himself was paying no attention to those two as he rubbed and blew on his feet.

"H-Honk honk."

Something must have either bitten or caught hold of his legs.

"Come on, he didn't do it on purpose. Can't you let this slide?" I said to Fau and Eine, trying my best to pacify them as they began to close in on Perca.

"Tra-la."

"Aye."

The two of them shook their heads, annoyed, but they seemed to have given up on getting mad at Perca for now. *Good*. I could see their ensuing lecture taking a while.

"I appreciate it."

"Tra-la!"

"Aye!"

I patted Fau and Eine on the head as I asked Perca, "You all right?"

"Honk..."

"I didn't expect *you* to nearly drown. You're a penguin."

"Honk honk."

Perca tapped lightly on his own head as he gave an embarrassed chuckle. *Oh, you clown! Should I have let Fau and Eine get mad at you?*

In the midst of my exasperation, another clown tugged on my robe.

“Chirp chiiirp!”

“Yeah?”

“Chirp chirp!”

“What’s... Ah, it’s huge!”

I looked to where Rick was pointing and saw a giant silhouette of a fish swimming along the surface of the water. It had to have been over two meters long.

“Is that what bit your feet, Perca?”

“Honk!”

Perca had the expression of a man on fire. He must have wanted to get revenge.

I was honestly afraid of getting in the water, though. I knew there probably weren’t sharks in there, but who knew what sort of ferocious prehistoric fish there could be? Fortunately for us, though, we were experts in safely beating up fish monsters!

“All right, let’s reel that thing in! Once we get it on land, it’s ours!”

“Honk honk!”

“Chirp!”

Our regular method should work as long as it was a fish-type monster. The Fanged Groupers we defeated in the Water Elementals’ dungeon became much weaker after pulling them out of the water.

“Here we go!”

“Honk honk!”

Thirty minutes after we cast our fishing lines from the shore and...we were still fishing. Our initial goal had been to reel in the culprit who had bitten Perca, but halfway through we just started fishing normally. And no, that wasn’t our fault. It was the pond’s fault—it was making us some out-of-this-world creatures.

“Woo-hoo! Got another! What could it be this tiime? Wh-Whoa...!”

Once again, I reeled in something astounding.

“Squeak?”

“Ack, don’t touch it, Drimo! It could be dangerous!”

“Squeak.”

“J-Jeez, how are you holding it like that? You’ve got a vise grip on that thing. Even I’m too scared to do that, and I actually like them...”

“Squeak?”

What I had caught was not a fish. I mean, from afar, it might look like a type of catfish with thick scales or something. But a closer look would reveal that it wasn’t that.

It had an outer shell like a bug, with giant eyes on either side of its face. It was a bright, purplish color, and its two tentacle-like protrusions coming out from its front made it look freakish, like it couldn’t possibly be a normal living thing. If someone who didn’t know what it was were to look at it, they’d probably mistake it for some terrifying, alien life-form. But for someone like me, who had an interest in ancient creatures, there was no way I didn’t know what it was. When it came to prehistoric sea creatures, this one was particularly famous among a certain crowd.

“An Anomalocaris! Got you!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Ah! No need to hand it over to me! Really! Don’t give it to me!”

I couldn’t believe I got to see dinosaurs, trilobites, and now this! It was revolting as hell, but my enthusiasm was winning out. *Still don’t wanna hold it, though!*

“Drimo, put it inside here.”

“Squeak.”

“Phew... Still, it’s awesome, isn’t it?”

“Squeak squeak.”

“Blegh. It’s so creepy!”

“Squeak!”

Drimo gave me a strange look as I alternated between joy and revulsion. Sorry for being confusing. It really was gross! But it was also cool and exotic.

The Anomalocaris was now sitting motionless in a tanklike Terrarium filled with water. I prodded it from above, and wouldn’t you know, it started squirming.

“Whooooa! Gross!”

“Squeak.”

Drimo let out a sigh at my antics. Any more of this and I’d lose my dignity as a Tamer, so I decided that was enough playing around with the anomalocaris for now.

“This pond doesn’t seem to have anything to do with the ocean, so we can catch prehistoric creatures here.”

Before I caught the Anomalocaris, I had also caught trilobites and ammonites. Historically, they lived during totally different time periods, but seemed to be existing here all jumbled together. It was times like these that I was grateful for games putting fun over realism. What other sorts of creatures could be found here? What if there were even rarer specimens?

“Let’s go for something even bigger this time!”

“Chirp chirp!”

However, just as I was about to cast my line out again, I heard a shriek that sounded like a strangled parrot. I whipped around to find Rick flailing about.

“R-Rick? What d’you think you’re doing?!”

“Chiiirp chirp chiiirp!”

Rick was entangled in the ammonite’s tentacles and floundering wildly on the ground.

“Chirp!”





He must have poked his nose into the tank that housed the ammonite I'd just caught, and the ammonite had lashed out at him.

"Chirp!"

"Oh, come on! This is a disaster!"

The ammonite's multiple tentacles were coiled around Rick, covering him in mucus. Just who was this squirrel-tentacle play supposed to appeal to?! Rick struggled to free himself from the tentacles, which only covered him in even more mucus and mud. He looked like a rag after some intense spring cleaning.

"Okay, just hang on. I'll get you out of there."

"Chirp..."

"Hngh... Agh!"

I grabbed hold of the ammonite's tentacles and tried to peel them off of Rick, but I couldn't quite do it. Its suckers were clinging to him with an impressive amount of force.

"It won't let go...!"

"Ch-Chirp chirp!"

It wasn't just the suckers that were the issue—the tentacles themselves were pretty strong. Well, octopus and squid tentacles also had surprising strength, so I guess I couldn't underestimate even this frisbee-sized ammonite. The more I tried to forcibly pull the ammonite off, the harder its tentacles' suckers clung on. But if I tried peeling off each tentacle individually, they would just cling back onto Rick one after another. Was my only option to defeat the ammonite? I had caught a lot of them, and I could catch more even if I did defeat this one. Also, I knew that if I felled it, I would obtain an ingredient called Prehistoric Shellfish Meat.

"Well, but..."

This specific ammonite was the biggest one I had caught. That was why it was in a Terrarium in the first place. Honestly, killing it felt like a waste.

"Hmm..."

“Chirp...”

It wasn't like Rick would die just from being entangled in the ammonite's tentacles. As I was considering that, I saw Rick looking at me with tears in his eyes. He clasped his hands together in front of his chest in a crafty pose as if he were saying, “I'm just a poor little squirrel!” But that helped me make up my mind.

“Hm, just hold out for a little longer.”

“Chirp?!”

“Hey! I meant don't struggle! It'll only make things worse!”

“Chirp chirp!”

It took five minutes to save this mischievous little squirrel from the situation he'd gotten himself into, but I was finally able to get the tentacles off and free Rick. He was completely covered in a sticky substance and his fur was a mess.

“Ch-Chirp chirp chirp chirp!”

“Ahhh! Don't get water on me!”

I washed Rick off with water and he shook himself dry, right in front of me. *Why you little! So you're still holding it against me that I hesitated to save you, huh?!*

“It was your fault in the first place for messing around with it!”

“Chirp!”

Rick ignored me completely and glared at the ammonite. Had he still not learned his lesson?

“Stop it already.”

He had suffered a total defeat. The outcome of their fight could be described as: *Squirrel (L) versus Ammonite (W), round one, 1.8 seconds, taken down by one tentacle*. You could call it the fight of the century between the expert striker Rick and the master grappler, Ammonite. Honestly, if I saw a video with that title, I knew I'd watch it.

But I really didn't want the ammonite to get beat up. Whether Rick

understood my feelings or not, he drew closer to the ammonite. Was he really planning on fighting it again? He took on a boxer-like fighting pose and started circling around it with some fancy footwork. He jabbed at the air a few times, showing off how his fighting spirit was still alive and well. I felt like I had seen him do something like this before.

“You sure like shadowboxing, don’t you?”

“Chirp!”

Who was he, Muhammad A-Squirrel? Was his catchphrase “Dance like a squirrel and nibble like a squirrel?”

“Yeah, that would *not* be a strong boxer at all.”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Oh please, don’t act like you’d get it next time! Stop posing so triumphantly!”

*It doesn’t matter how much you flex your muscles! All you have are cute, teeny arms!*

“Chirp chiiirp chiiirp! ♪ Chirp chiiirp chiiirp! ♪”

“That’s not Ali, that’s Rocky!”

“Chiiirp chirp chiiirp! ♪ Chirp chiiirp chiiirp chirp! ♪”

“Now you’re doing the theme song from the third movie?! One of the devs is definitely a boxing movie fan! A squirrel can’t sing a song about a tiger! Look at your adorable, round eyes! You’re the furthest thing from a tiger!”

I felt completely drained for some reason. For now, I decided to just warn Rick against pestering creatures in Terrariums.

“Don’t bother it again, or else.”

“Chirp?”

“Oh, don’t play dumb. If you don’t do as I say, it’s only Honey Dumplings to eat for you.”

“Chirp!”

“And I’ll give you the lowest-quality ones that I skimmed on the ingredients for!”

“Chirp chirp!”

*You don’t need to be so dramatic.* He had fallen on both knees and was pounding his fists on the ground, but all he had to do was not pester the ammonite.

“Anyway, wonder what I’ll catch next?” I said as I left Rick as he was and went back to fishing.

“Squeak!”

“Growl!”

I cast out my line once again from the shore, along with Drimo and Bear Bear. I was excited at the prospect of all the things I could catch, and before I knew it, I got another bite.

“What is it this time? Another ammon— Wait no, what is this?!”

Something tugged lightly on my line, but then quickly started pulling with much more force. If I let up my grip at all, my fishing rod would have been pulled straight out of my hands.

“Urrrghhh! This has gotta be something big! It’s so strong!”

My excitement started to cool off and turn into fear. Considering the fact that there were prehistoric creatures here, it wouldn’t be too far off to think there were dinosaurs lurking underwater too. Did I possibly have some dangerous creature on my line?

“Ngh... Guys, help me out! I’m getting dragged in!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Growl growl!”

“Honk honk!”

“Chirp chirp!”

My monsters rushed to my aid as I was just on the brink of getting pulled into the water. Bear Bear grabbed me around my waist, and behind them was

Drimo, then Perca. At the very end was Rick, holding on to Perca's tail.

"Tra-la-la... ♪"

"La-di-da... ♪"

Eine and Fau were casting buffs, and perhaps thanks to them, I felt the force of the creature that was pulling on the line weaken abruptly.

"Nice! I can reel it in now!"

"Aye!"

"Hraaaaaaaah!"

"Grooowl!"

"Squeak squeak!"

Together as one, we all pulled on the fishing rod.

*A huge shadow's approaching! Just a little more!*

"Hrrrrnnnnnghhh!"

As we combined all our strength to yank up the pole, something gigantic came bursting out of the pond.

"Whooooa! No way...!"

"S-Squeak..."

It was a fish. It was over two meters long and made loud, thumping sounds each time it flopped up and down. It had to be pretty heavy. But its colossal size wasn't the only thing that shocked me.

"I-I can't believe it...!"

This particular fish was a very well-known one. I could tell by its size. This fish was perfectly capable of biting Perca and almost making him drown. There was no doubt it had been the culprit.

Most people knew about this fish, even if they weren't interested in dinosaurs or the distant past. Despite its notoriety, though, it was an elusive fish that very few people had spotted. This enormous fish had beautiful, white-speckled black scales and was referred to as a "living fossil."

“I-I-It’s a...a coelacanth!”

“Squeak?”

“How can you look so indifferent?! It’s a freaking coelacanth!”

“S-Squeak.”

Yup, the wriggling, impressive fish right before my eyes was unmistakably the superstar of the ancient fish world, a coelacanth. *I caught a deep-sea fish in a pond! LJO does it again!*

“Wait, back up. What am I supposed to do with this? It doesn’t have a red marker, so it’s not an enemy. Does that mean it’s just a normal fish?”

So could I keep the coelacanth as a pet? But I didn’t have a tank that could fit a fish this big. Even the biggest Terrarium I owned, which was currently housing the Meganeura, could probably only fit the coelacanth’s head.

“C-Can I make it fit? Dammit! I can’t!”

I was panicking, completely clueless about what to do, when a message played.

*“The coelacanth will now turn into an item due to not being stored within one minute.”*

“Huh?”

Immediately following the message, the coelacanth’s body turned into pixels and vanished. It was similar to how monsters disappeared after being defeated.

“Wait, did it just...”

I checked my inventory and found that I had ten items named Prehistoric White Fish Meat. Apparently, it turned into an item after a certain amount of time passed. This was a pretty common thing. Especially with fish, where not being able to breathe likely played a role, they would die about a minute after being brought on land. Then, they would turn into an item. I had known that, but...this time, I had been way too shocked to think straight.

“Ha, ha ha ha... The coelacanth turned into food...”

So coelacanths were white fish, huh? Thinking about that fact left me

dumbfounded for a while.

Anyway. So there was an announcement saying that the coelacanth turned into an item because I didn't store it, huh? If it was a creature that couldn't be kept in a tank, they wouldn't have gone through the trouble of even playing that sort of message. That meant there was a way to store it, which in turn meant there must have been a large enough tank to hold it.

"Now that I think about it, I haven't traveled to much else besides the Bazaar, Recreation Beach, and this island."

If I'd explored the main island more, I probably would've found an Extra Large Terrarium. There were also supposedly sea otters on the western part of the island, so it was looking like I'd have to go there too. Not that I had a problem with hanging out on this dreamlike island, but I had made the decision to participate in this event. I should take advantage of being in the event area and at least check out the main island.

"Guess that means we should teleport soon."

First, I had to get off of this island. I could do so instantaneously via the teleportation point, but I still had to boot up the one on the beach too. From there, I could return to my event home in the Bazaar, and then explore the western area from there.

"Oh, but before that, I need to see what that island's like."

I was talking about the islet in the middle of the pond. I called it an islet, but it was probably about ten meters in diameter. It was filled with several trees and a covering of lush undergrowth.

"It looks a little eerie, but I have to go. Perca, I'm counting on you."

"Honk honk!"

I clung on to Perca's back and he ferried me across the pond. Once we reached the opposite shore, I quickly hopped off onto the island.

"The plants here aren't that different, are they?"

"Honk."

The same could be said for the bugs flying around. I observed my



surroundings as I pushed through the fern leaves, searching for anything interesting. These ferns also looked the same as the ones on the opposite shore.

“Oh? Found something.”

Near the middle of the islet, I found something odd.

“Honk?”

“Look, over there.”

“Honk!”

I picked up Perca, who was tottering behind me, and showed him what was in front of me. There lay a mysterious clump of overlapping leaves before us. It was taller than me, and looked like a giant bud, or maybe even a massive napa cabbage. I appraised it; it displayed an interesting name.

“Titan arum...? Oh! I’ve heard of that! Wow, it really is huge!”

It was a flower native to the island of Sumatra. I only knew it by name, but I was sure this was the plant said to bloom the largest flower in the world. However, it only bloomed once every few years.

“Hmm... It didn’t get added to my encyclopedia even though I appraised it.”

It was such a distinctive plant that I couldn’t imagine it wasn’t an encyclopedia entry. The rafflesia and tropical pitcher plants I’d found on the way had been registered without a problem. Although, I did happen to remember seeing this same phenomenon elsewhere.

“This happened with the morning glories too.”

Even though I had appraised those and saw their name displayed as “Morning Glory,” for some reason they hadn’t been added to my encyclopedia. Even now, they still remained missing.

Never mind morning glories, it was undeniably odd for a super rare plant like a titan arum to not be added to the encyclopedia. There must have been some sort of requirement to register it. I thought about what a morning glory and a titan arum had in common. Then, something came to mind.

“Do they need to be in bloom?”

I had only appraised the bud and leaves of the morning glory too. I likely had to see flowering plants when they were in bloom.

“But titan arums only bloom every few years... Wait, this is a game. It’ll bloom when the devs want it to.”

Common sense told me that flowers would likely be blooming in various places during the event, which meant if I wanted to complete the encyclopedia, I couldn’t miss the moments they bloomed.

“Jeez, I’ve got a lot to do here now.”

I’d have to come back here frequently to check on it while I was making my way around the main island, so I couldn’t take it too easy.

We then resumed our preparations to return to the main island. First order of business was going back to the beach of the Prehistoric Island.

“...Hmm. Guess we have to get through the forest again.”

Just the thought of it was frightening, but I wanted to register the stone pillar on the beach.

“All right, let’s do this!”

“Chirp chirp!”

“Aye-aye!”

Together with my energetic crew of monsters, we dived back into the old forest. But this game wasn’t so kind as to have everything go smoothly for us. Yeah, okay sure, I did already know that there was no way we’d survive the forest on good vibes alone!

“Groooooaar!”

“Agh, I should’ve seen this coming!”

“Kraaagh!”

“Ahhhhh!”

Our little game of tag with the dinosaurs started up once again. Those Raptors

with their snapping jaws were scary no matter how many times I saw them. The strands of saliva inside their mouths were unusually graphic. Their large, sharp fangs and their tongues, writhing in their mouths like they were a separate creature entirely, were unusually terrifying.

“Don’t even think about biting meee!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Tra-la-la!”

We had several close calls as the dinosaurs hunted us down. If we hadn’t had Fau raising our agility with her buffing techniques, we’d have ended up surrounded. But in the end, we were able to make it halfway through the sea of trees without leaving behind a single party member. Of course, the closest call was what happened next!

“Tra-la-la!”

“Eine! Don’t push it!”

“Tra-la!”

Fau and Eine had been utilizing their ability to fly in order to distract the enemies and buy us some time to escape. Eine had been especially effective in provoking the dinosaurs by flying within inches of them, as if teasing them. I was worrying about her getting too close to them, though, and sure enough, my worries were not unfounded.

“Grawr!”

“T-Tra-la!”

“Eiiine!”

Eine was just a little too late in escaping, and a Raptor snapped at her hair. The dinosaur jerked Eine towards itself as she tried to fly away, throwing her off-balance. *It’s gonna knock her to the ground!* I turned around with the intent to shoot off some magic, but other figures had already jumped out.

“Growl grooowl!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Graaaaaaagh!”

Bear Bear and Drimo knocked the Raptor back with their claws and pickax respectively.

“Tra-la, tra-la-la!”

“Nicely done, you two!”

The Raptor opened its mouth to let out a shriek, at which point Eine made her escape. She hastily came flying over to my side.

“Oh, jeez. Your hair’s all sticky now.”

“Tra-la...”

I wanted to wash it off for her, but we were a little preoccupied with escaping right now. Even though the Raptor had sustained an attack from our strongest duo, it wasn’t going to go down that easily.

“Let’s run while we can!”

“Honk honk!”

Partly thanks to the sacrifice of Eine’s hair, we ended up managing to make a complete escape. *Oof, that really was a close one.* Once we stopped running into Raptors, I washed Eine’s hair with water.

“Tra-la!”

“Ack! Hey! Don’t you shake like a dog too!”

“Tra-la-la!”

Eine shook her head, sending water scattering all over the place. After I chided her, she just flew away, looking pleased for some reason. *You little rascal!*

“C’mere, you!”

“Tra-la-la!”

I chased after Eine, and not long after, we’d made it closer to the beach.

“Awesome, we’re back at the Shallows! Things should get a little easier from here.”

“Tra-la!”

“Aye!”

This was something I had figured out while we were making our mad escape through the dense trees. The old-growth forest might’ve appeared homogenous all throughout, but in reality, it was divided into two areas. There wasn’t much of a change in scenery between the two areas, but there was a definite difference in the number of dinosaur encounters. I visualized it as the Shallows, which was the entrance of the forest where only a few Pachycephalos appeared, and the Deeps, where we’d run into Tyrannos and Raptors.

The trees in the Shallows weren’t as dense, and there were far fewer gathering nodes, so if you paid attention you could distinguish the two areas. The Deeps were a little darker and had thicker undergrowth, which made it harder to move.

We exited the forest onto the beach, where I saw a few players here and there.

“Whoa, there’s other people now.”

“Growl.”

“Chirp.”

Bear Bear nodded. As did Rick, who was sitting on their head.

There were a few groups of players who I hadn’t seen in the forest. And I hadn’t seen them at all in the interior of the island. Had they just arrived? I watched the players exploring the beach out of the corner of my eye as I headed for the stone pillar. Then, suddenly a voice came calling me from behind.

“Silver-Haired, good to finally see you again!”

“Huh— Whoa!”

“Eep! Wh-What’s the matter?”

*“What’s the matter”?! Who wouldn’t be freaked after seeing that scary skeleton face?!*

The two hollow sockets in a skeleton's face were looking down at me. The eye parts were slightly slanted and emitting a reddish-black aura. Its threatening energy was way over the top.

Plus, it was huge!

It was clad in black armor that oozed evil and was clearly distinct from normal skeletons. I thought it might be an enemy, but when I took a closer look, I saw it had a tamed monster marker. Also, there was a pretty girl next to it. The girl had short, indigo-blue hair and white bunny ears. She wore a uniform-style costume similar to what pop idols who had a clean image would wear, and in her hand was a staff that looked like a magical girl's wand.

Well, no. I thought she was a pretty girl, but I was wrong.

"Chris?"

"Yep!"

It was Chris, the Necromancer who looked like a beautiful girl but was actually a feminine-looking dude.

"That skeleton's not a regular human skeleton, is it?" I asked.

"This little cutie is an ogre skeleton!" Chris said, giggling happily as he hugged the skeleton's arm tight.

*Ah, I see.* Now that he said it, I noticed that it did have sharp fangs and short horns on its forehead, and it was also almost two meters tall. Definitely looked like an ogre. He also had with him a green-skinned creature with long fangs protruding from its mouth, brimming with evil energy similar to a zombie. Apparently, it was a ghoul.

Chris's Undead subordinates looked more powerful than before. I refused to use a filter as much as I could because it broke the immersion, but I'd be scared out of my mind if these things popped out as enemies... Though maybe I'd be fine now that I knew about them. I was prepared.

"You look well," I said.

"Yes! I've made lots of friends!" he responded, sounding genuinely happy. I knew he was a guy, but his smile was so cute I almost couldn't look away.

Before, he had had some trouble with other players harassing him and making him cry, but I was happy to see he was having fun now.

We caught up a little after that and then moved on to exchanging information about the event. To my surprise, Chris had actually been exploring the western part of the main island before coming to the Prehistoric Island. That was totally unexplored territory for me.

He showed me his map, which gave me even more details than what Alyssa had told me, and he even told me about other plants that could be added to the encyclopedia. This was a huge help. I needed to give him some equally worthy information in exchange. And, unsurprisingly, he wanted to know more about this island.

“First, there’s something I just need to know!”

“Wh-What is it?”

“Are there any Undead dinosaurs?”

“Oh, I see...”

*Ah, right.* There wasn’t a command-class player to be found who wouldn’t be interested in dinosaurs. I would have wanted to tame a dinosaur if I could have. Nevertheless, a dinosaur skeleton, huh...? Yeah, that’d look awesome! Unfortunately, I had no good news to share.

“...I haven’t seen any other monsters besides living dinosaurs here.”

“N-No way...!”

Ammonites, coelacanths, and the like were classified as animals, not monsters, after all.

“And that goes for Undead too,” I added.

“How could this be?! Why, devs, why?!”

After hearing what I said, Chris shakily collapsed to the ground. Wait, didn’t this make it look like I was bullying him? That impression was only made stronger by Chris’s delicate appearance and mannerisms. *Crap, I need to get him back on his feet! If other people see him like this, I can say goodbye to my cool, refined image!*

“Uhh... Hey, chin up! It’s probably just because I wasn’t looking for them!”

“You mean they might be so rare that you wouldn’t even run into them in half a day’s exploration?!”

“Yeah, that’s right! I might’ve not seen any Undead, but I did find this!”

“Is this a fossil?”

“It is. Look, I got this and a Carnivorous Dinosaur Fang. And this too! A bone I got from beating a dinosaur!”

“Oh, wow! That’s amazing!”

Nice, it worked. He was back on his feet. He was actually pretty easily swayed, huh? A naive heroine. Wait, no—since he was a guy, a naive hero? I dunno.

“So cool! If I just gather a few more of these, I could create a new Undead monster!”

“Create a new Undead monster?”

“That’s right!”

Thus far, I had been under the impression that Necromancer was a job class that brought Undead who appeared on the field under their control. To tell the truth, I just thought they were the Undead version of Tamers. But according to Chris, that wasn’t all they did. Amazingly, they could also create new Undead monsters.

“Take bones, for example. Even if I didn’t have the full set of bones, if I had a powerful one, I could create a new skeleton monster from that bone. And even if I couldn’t create a new monster from that bone, I could use it to enhance one of my own skeletons.”

“So you’re saying if you had this bone, you could create a dinosaur skeleton?”

“It’s a possibility.”

His other possible options were using a meat item to make a zombie. If he had a cursed item, he could use it to create a ghost or living armor.

That meant that depending on the combination, it could be possible to produce a yet undiscovered Undead. That revelation made Necromancer seem



like a pretty interesting class too. I kind of wanted to see Chris's necromancy in action, but this bone was a boss drop... I couldn't just hand it over. Oh well. I could just ask him about it later.

Seeing the dinosaur bone must have fired up Chris's enthusiasm. He was eyeing the dense forest with a fully determined expression.

"I can't just sit here!" he exclaimed. "I'll defeat those dinosaurs with my friends!"

"Oh right, you've made some friends?"

"I have! Actually, Siegfried introduced me to some people."

That sounded just like Siegfried, ever the wandering knight. He was always looking out for others.

"They let me join their clan, and we've been playing through the game together."

"Oh cool, you joined a clan? What's it called?"

"It's called the Verification Clan."

"The Verification Clan? Do you mean like people that go around verifying game mechanics and item abilities...?"

"Those people who like doing verification work got together and established a clan."

But still, calling themselves the Verification Clan... I wasn't sure whether to praise them for sticking to their logical nature or to call them out for being lazy.

"Well, that must be interesting."

"Yes, it's been very interesting!"

Chris smiled happily as he waved goodbye and headed off. He was cute to the end...

"Squeak?"

"Ah! N-No, I didn't mean that. I don't think he's cute!"

*Yikes, I started seeing him as a girl all of a sudden! I don't, I swear! His avatar*

*just looks too good!*

“Squeak...?”

“L-Let’s go, everyone!”

“Squeak.”

“D-Don’t pat my side like you’re telling me good job!”

“Squeak?”

*Let’s just hurry up and register the stone pillar and get off this island! If I run into Chris again, I’m gonna lose myself!*

We quickly marched off towards the pillar, which was conveniently free of any other players. People were nearby, but they must have already finished checking it out.

*“Please offer a stone of hidden power.”*

When I approached, a window popped up above the pillar.

“Guess these pillars really do have to be activated individually...”

I’d been hoping that if I already gave an item to one, then this one would be activated just by approaching it...but it looked like I had to give either an Amber or an Ammolite to each pillar.

I peered at the window with my monsters, then selected an Amber to offer to the device. I had mined a few more on the way back here, so I had obtained two more five-star Ambers.

“Tra-la-la.”

“Aye?”

“Hey, behave yourselves. You guys can’t touch the screen.”

“Tra-la?”

I was actually really lucky that they couldn’t. The first thing Eine tried to poke was the option to choose my only eight-star Amber. It had an insect trapped inside it like the seven-star one, but this one was bigger and had a moth inside it. The moth was about the size of my palm. Some people might think it was

gross, but I didn't dislike that sort of thing.

If Eine's fooling around had made me select that one, I doubted I'd have been able to recover for a while. I'd probably stubbornly make us stay on the top of the plateau until we could mine another eight-star specimen.

Fau, in her usual fashion, probably thought that the Ammolite was pretty and tried to leap at it, only to pass through the screen and end up on the other side. She couldn't touch it, though, as it was just a hologram.

"I'll offer a five-star Amber."

*All right, great. Another teleportation point activated.*

I could choose from two destinations now—Event Home and Prehistoric Island (Inner). It looked like it wasn't one-way teleportation; I could actually teleport back to each location.

However, although it was free of charge to teleport to my room, it cost as much as five thousand evets to teleport to the inner area of this island. It looked like I'd have to pay to teleport anywhere that wasn't my home, so I wouldn't be able to easily use these super frequently.

"Should we go home for a bit?"

"Growl."

"Squeak."

Bear Bear and Drimo clung to my sides. Party members didn't have to be touching each other to teleport, but we had made it a custom to teleport while clinging to each other. We had all clung together just in case at the first teleportation point, so I guess that had been fun for them.

"Tra-la-la!"

"Aye!"

"Chirp chirp!"

Eine got on my back, and Fau took up position on my head. Eine had her head on my right shoulder, so Rick got on my left.

"H-Honk...?"

“You can go here.”

“Honk.”

Perca was waddling aimlessly, unsure where he could fit himself in, so I picked him up in my arms. The combination of his short feathers and his subcutaneous fat gave him a pleasant squishiness. I wish I could’ve stayed like this forever.

“Okay, let’s teleport home!”

“What? Wait, Silver—”

“I wanted to ask you some—”

*Huh?* Was someone talking to me? No one I knew was around here, were they? I must have been mistaken. Oh wait, there were probably people coming to talk to me after seeing me activate the stone pillar.

“Oh well.”

Even if that was the case, it was too late now.

“We’re back!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Hum!”

“Hm!”

“If you all jump on me at once, I’ll— Wait, whaaat?”

My monsters who had died or been summoned away during the event hadn’t been put on standby at my farm or my home base, but were sent right here in my event home. Either they were lonely or they had simply been waiting to welcome us back home, but Olto, Reflet, and Himka came swooping down on us all together, making me fall on my butt with enough force to send me skidding backwards.

“If this were the real world, you guys definitely would’ve done some damage to my tailbone...”

“Mm?”

“...”

“Thanks, Sakura. You’re the only mature one around here.”

“...♪”

“Okay, that’s enough. Off, off!”

While Sakura was helping me to my feet, I gave Olto and the others a rough pat on their heads as a form of punishment.

“Mm-mm!”

“Hm-hm!”

“Hum-hum!”

They were laughing and having a good time, though. To them, it was a reward.

“Anyway, this room’s just barely big enough, huh?”

It didn’t feel like we were tightly packed in here, but it was still pretty cramped. My monsters were all small, so it more or less worked for us, but how would players with large monsters make do? Maybe the room expanded, or maybe they had a separate room for their monsters on standby. If I ran into another Tamer, I’d ask them about it.

“All right, what should we do about our next step?”

My plan for after this was to go to the Bazaar and buy some Terrariums, then head west. There was supposedly a nice pond in the forest to the west of the Bazaar, and past the forest, there was a village. Then, farther southwest was a seaside town, near which some sea otters had been spotted. Also, there still wasn’t much information about the northwest area of the main island, so I wanted to check that out too. If there was a bigger tank I could use to house a coelacanth, it might be over there. However, I had plans to meet up with Alyssa in the Bazaar tonight, so I probably couldn’t wander off too far.

“Okay, well, let’s take a short break first.”

I decided to just hang out with my monsters for about an hour, since we could all be together in this room.

I wasn't sure how, but an hour passed in the blink of an eye.

"Mm-mm!"

"Olto, please let go."

"Hmm!"

"Hum!"

"Himka, Reflet, that goes for you too."

As I was trying to leave, those three clung tightly onto me like they were begging me not to leave. *How adorable!* But I couldn't keep hanging out here for any longer.

"...!"

"Mm-mmm..."

"...!"

"Hm."

"Hum."

While I was struggling with the situation, Sakura managed to reason with Olto, Himka, and Reflet, and they reluctantly let go of me.

"Thanks, Sakura. You saved me."

"...♪"

"We'll be back later. You guys look after this place, okay?"

"Mm-mmm!"

I patted each of my monsters' heads in turn, then after we said our goodbyes, I left the room.

"Okay, to the west we go!"

"Aye-aye!"

"Chirp chirp!"

With one tiny monster riding on each shoulder, I left the Bazaar.

The main road outside of town really was virtually clear of monsters. All in all,

we only fought three battles during our hour-long walk. And those three times only happened after we entered the forest, so camping safely was probably possible along the side of the road. I'd have to keep that in mind for when I needed it.

"Wow, what a beautiful place!"

"Aye!"

"Tra-la-la!"

As we progressed through the western forest, we came upon a decently large pond. As I had heard, large lily pads floated on the water, their pale pink flowers in full bloom. This scenery was heavenly, with lotuses floating on crystal clear water and butterflies and dragonflies hovering about. It was breathtakingly beautiful.

"Aye-aye!"

"Tra-la-la!"

Fau and Eine complemented the mystical feel of the pond to a startling degree. Fau was actually sitting on a water lily flower, looking captivatingly picturesque.

"Fau, look this way."

"La-di-daaa. ♪"

"That's perfect."

I took a bunch of screenshots of Fau, acting like I was some sort of cameraman. Look, she was a Fairy playing a musical instrument surrounded by flowers. The scene was just exploding with charm. I had already gone overkill on taking screenshots of the dinosaurs, but pictures of my cute monsters were well worth the same treatment.

"You look cute too, Eine!"

"Tra-la?"

Eine's white hair fluttered as she flew among the lilies, giving off a transcendental combination of dreaminess and cuteness. The light mist rising

from the water only added to the effect.

“Now for Bear Bear and Drimo...”

“Growl?”

“Squeak?”

“...I’ll take a pic somewhere else.”

This spot was probably better suited for the girls. I wondered if I should have brought Reflet along too. I’d thought about switching Perca out for her, but I ended up keeping him in so he could keep leveling up.

“Honk?”

“Don’t worry about it. You have an important job to do. Can you check out what’s underwater?”

“Honk honk!”

Taking pictures was crucial, but so was filling out the encyclopedia. According to my intel, there were several creatures and plants that had only been found in this pond.

“Let’s see, first thing are these water lilies. I heard the big one is a Queen Victoria’s water lily...”

The giant, two-meter-wide water lily floating near the center of the pond was apparently a rare species known as the Queen Victoria’s water lily. It went without saying that I had never seen such a huge water lily before.

“Oh, I see a killifish. And over there’s a white-tailed skimmer.”

I waded through the waist-deep pond, appraising the various plants and animals I found.

“Honk honk!”

“Is that a diving beetle?! Nice, Perca!”

“Honk!”

With the help of my monsters, I more or less registered everything that I had heard about in advance to my encyclopedia. Bear Bear put their Insect



Attractant skill to good use here. Dragonflies came flying over to us from every which way. There was only one thing remaining.

“All that’s left is the basilisk...”

The basilisk was a lizard monster with a petrifying gaze—just kidding, it was an unusual lizard that could run across water. They existed in the real world too.

“All right, guys. Let’s do a little stakeout.”

“Squeak.”

“Growl.”

“Listen up, watch the surface of the water veeery closely. The tiny lizard is going to be speeding across it.”

“Honk.”

“Chirp!”

We hid ourselves in the surrounding grass and stared intently at the pond. With all of us sitting quietly together like this, I could clearly hear the sound of my monsters breathing beside me. No surprise for a VR game whose selling point was its realism. Fau and Rick took small breaths—they were barely audible. Perca and Drimo also breathed unexpectedly quietly. Was that something wild animals knew how to do?

Though that didn’t explain why Bear Bear, who was also an animal-type monster, breathed so heavily. Each time they breathed out of their nose, they blew back the grass in front of them. It was hard to stop myself from laughing. Eine’s breathing was also surprisingly loud. She must have been having so much fun hiding with everyone that she was breathing harder. I could hear her huffing loudly out of her nose. I was watching my monsters, basking in the comfort, when Eine abruptly raised a shout.

“Tra-la!”

“Did you see it? Where?”

“Tra-la, tra-la!”

“Um, where?”

I looked, but couldn't see anything. Out of patience, Eine burst out of the grass.

“Tra-la!”

Eine, now able to fly faster postevolution, accelerated in a flash and swiftly skimmed across the water. She was heading straight for the figure that was moving rapidly across the surface of the water. It was fast for sure, but I was able to appraise it. It was a basilisk.

“That's it! Great work, Eine!”

“Tra-la-*lack!*”

Perhaps getting a little carried away from my praise, Eine tried to catch the basilisk—and failed. The hand she stretched out to capture the lizard splashed against the surface of the water, making her lose her balance. She fell into the pond with a loud crash, sending up a big column of water.

“Eine! Are you okay?!”

“Tra-la...”

Eine, now drenched, rose from the pond looking miserable. Thankfully, she hadn't drowned nor taken any damage, even though she'd crashed pretty hard.

“Thanks. You really went above and beyond.”

“Tra-la.”

“I get you're frustrated, but that basilisk is gonna be hard to catch. Let's give up on that for now.”

“Tra-la...”

*Oh no! Eine's sad!* Because of her juvenile appearance, seeing that sort of face on her made me feel super guilty.

“H-Hey, it's okay! We're done exploring the pond, so let's head southwest to the farming village next!”

“Tra-la?”

“I’m sure we’ll see some new things there! It’ll be fun!”

“Tra-la!”

It helped that she was easy to please. Just imagining the yet-unseen village was enough to put her back in a good mood. She started drying her own hair with a smile on her face.

“Tra-la-la!”

“Y-Your hair...”

I was holding her as she attempted to dry her long hair with air magic, and it started flapping against my face. *Well, she seems to be having fun, so it’s fine!*

With Eine’s white hair tickling my face, I thought about our next destination. I had heard that the farming village was filled with dogs and cats, as well as a flower garden at its hub. If dinosaurs and insects were intended for boys, then the flowers and cute animals were probably made for the girls.

“Hey, Eine?”

“Tra-la?”

“Are you about done drying your hair yet?”

I wasn’t lying when I said her hair had turned my vision completely white.

“Tra-la-la!”

“Not yet, huh?”

Eine seemed to have no intention of leaving. Was she enjoying having me hold her?

“Tra-la-la, tra-la-la.”

“Pleh!”

In fact, the wind was blowing even stronger now! Was it entertaining to see me being at the mercy of hair? I could hear my other monsters laughing.

“Fine, I’ll just walk like this.”

“Tra-la-la!”

## Chapter Five: Westward

My monsters and I continued to walk through the forest, playing and joking around, and we soon arrived at the West Farming Village. Past the forest, we were met with a wide, tranquil expanse of farmland.

The fields were covered in tulips, sunflowers, hydrangeas, and lavender, all blooming out of season, with plenty of dogs and cats running around. Aside from that, though, the town itself was pretty normal. Though it *was* kind of a funny sight to see players crouched down everywhere, petting the dogs and cats with dopey smiles on their faces.

I was a little surprised to see the other players materialize into view when I approached the town. There must have been a system that transferred me to the town map only once I set foot on the grounds. Maybe each town had an occupancy limit, and if that was surpassed, players would be sent over to a new instance.

“According to what Alyssa told me, it should be around here somewhere...”

“Grooowl!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Oh, you found it! Way to go!”

What I had been searching for was the town’s perfume shop. I had heard that they sold perfume made from flowers. There was also a general store that sold decorative bottles filled with beautiful flowers, called Herbariums. In addition to that, they also sold items called Empty Herbarium Bottles, which you could fill with flowers you gathered on the island to display as decoration. I guessed this was the flower version of a Terrarium.

“Growl growl!”

“Squeak.”

Bear Bear’s and Drimo’s noses were twitching as they sniffed in front of a

door. It must have been their keen senses of smell that led them to the door. Never underestimate the power of an animal's nose.

"Mm, it really does smell good."

The floral scent only grew stronger after stepping foot inside. Places with an intense smell like this would've been unpleasant for me in real life, but oddly enough, here in the game, it was nice. Senses in the game worked slightly differently than in real life, just like with the taste of herbal tea.

The shop was stocked with many different types of bottles. They came in a variety of styles, from art deco to simple, modestly decorated ones, as well as different colors and shapes. I was having fun just browsing, but I was surprised to find out I could pick out any bottle I liked right off the shelf. I could then fill it with my favorite scent, creating a totally original perfume bottle. To be honest, I wasn't interested in perfume. But since I was here, I figured I should buy one.

"As for the bottle..."

"Aye!"

"Chirp!"

"What's up? Is that your choice, Fau? And Rick, are you recommending that one?"

"Aye!"

"Chirp chirp!"

While I was perusing the bottles, Fau and Rick came over, each carrying one of their own choosing. I could only assume they were showing me their top recommendations.

As I watched the tiny twosome carrying bottles that were nearly as big as they were above their heads, looking on the verge of dropping them, I couldn't help but feel nervous. Since this was a game, they probably wouldn't break even if dropped, but the sight was just inherently nerve-racking.

"Hmm... This one has a picture of a fairy on it, and this one has a squirrel?"

These two...they seriously just brought me the bottles that had designs resembling themselves on it? Moreover, after seeing what the two of them did,

my other monsters started picking out bottles too.

“Tra-la...”

“Honk?”

“Gr-Growl!”

Seeing their earnest expressions, I couldn’t very well tell them to stop. I had no choice; I had to let them make their selections until they were satisfied.

After ten minutes...

“Now presenting, the winner of the Bottle-1 Grand Prix...!”

“Squeak.”

Acting as my assistant, Drimo raised a bottle above his head.

“Drimo’s selection, the yellow perfume bottle!”

“Honk honk!”

“Growl!”

Bear Bear and Perca spoke up in objection, but what did they expect? Everyone besides Drimo had just picked a bottle that had a drawing that resembled their own likeness on it. The fact that there had even been a penguin-themed bottle had been a surprise to me. In contrast, Drimo had picked out a safe choice—a bottle with a faceted geometric design. If I had chosen one of the other recommended bottles, it would have looked like I was playing favorites, so I really had no choice from the start. I could always depend on Drimo—he had picked this type of bottle out intentionally.

“Okay, now for which perfume to put in here—”

“Aye!”

“Tra-la!”

“Hold on! I don’t need your help choosing anymore! I’ll decide!”

My monsters leaped into action, seeing this opportunity as a second chance. I hastily reined them in. I knew some of them would seriously sulk if their choice didn’t get picked again.

I toured the different shops in town, my monsters keeping me on my toes with their various antics all the while. I ended up buying everyone an Herbarium of their choice. I was more interested in these over the perfume anyway, so it was fine. The bottles, with their multicolored flowers floating in a transparent liquid, were comforting just to look at.

“We’re done with our shopping now, so let’s head to our next stop!”

While this town was famous for its perfume and animals, those weren’t the only things to see here. We headed for the center of town, following the information I’d received, and the scene changed completely.

“Whoa. It’s just like what I was told it’d be like, but it’s even cooler seeing it for myself!”

“Growl...”

“Honk...”

What lay before us was a small hill with a field of tall sunflowers in full bloom. The sunflowers were far taller than us—I’m talking *over three-meter-tall* sunflowers.

We were gazing down at the sunflowers from a lookout platform that offered a view of the hill from above. The field of sunflowers, stretching below our eyes like a rug, was truly beautiful.

“Man, what a view.”

“Tra-la!”

“Squeak!”

My monsters were also clinging to the rail and gazing at the field of sunflowers. I guess this sight would be pretty moving even for monsters. Even Drimo, usually so unruffled, looked a little excited. Perca also had a sparkle in his eyes as he poked his head out between the bars of the railing and stared intently down at the flowers.

“Shall we go try it?”

“Honk!”

“Growl!”

You see, that hill wasn’t just a simple flower garden—it was actually a giant maze. There was no entrance fee, and you were given some delicious juice once you made it through. We had plenty of food, but it just sounded fun. I really wanted to try it.

“Our goal is to get the fastest time! Let’s go!”

“Aye-aye!”

“Chirp chirp!”

And so, with that spirited energy, we challenged the sunflower maze. However...

This maze was *much* harder than I’d expected.

“Ugh! Another dead end!”

It was really complicated, and as an added bonus, the structure of the maze changed after a certain amount of time. From what I’d heard, it randomly changed between five different patterns, which turned out to be a lot more annoying than I thought it’d be.

The route I had memorized became useless, and I became confused between the previous map and the current map. I had no idea what to do.

“Dammit, we’re completely lost...”

“Squeak...”

I didn’t even know what number dead end this was, we had run into so many. The sunflowers above our heads were staring down at us wordlessly. I knew it couldn’t be possible, but I felt like they were making fun of us. Were they *actually* looking down on us, condescendingly? Nah, that had to be my paranoia talking.

In any case, I was getting tired of wandering around in vain. It was time to use my secret weapon.

“...My hands are tied. Fau, you know what to do.”

“Yuh-aye!”



“Tra-la!”

“Right, you go too, Eine.”

“Tra-la-la!”

With my approval, Fau and Eine energetically flew up to survey our surroundings from ten meters high. Was this cheating? Yeah, I thought so too. That was precisely why I hadn’t been using these two’s ability to fly up until now, but we’d been lost for over fifteen minutes at this point...

And so, we progressed through the maze with Fau and Eine finding the way forward from above for five minutes.

“Oho, is that the finish line?”

“Tra-la!”

“We finally reached it...”

“Aye!”

Led by our flying duo, we finally made it to the end. It took us over twenty minutes from the moment we stepped foot in the maze.

The top record was two minutes, which meant it took us ten times longer. At that speed, the fastest team must have known all the maps perfectly and sped through the maze as fast as they could. Although I might’ve been able to memorize the maps, for someone with an inferior agility stat like me, beating that record seemed impossible.

*Ah well. The real winners are the ones who have fun, right?*

“We did it!”

“Honk honk!”

“Growl!”

We crossed the finish line all together. It was fun figuring out which paths to choose with everyone, so I was satisfied with taking our celebratory juice and leaving. That had been my thought, but Rick reacted to something.

“Chirp chirp!”

“What is it? That’s not the exit— Huh?”

“Chirp!”

We were currently in a round clearing in the middle of the sunflower maze. A large tree with a considerably thick trunk grew in the center of it. From here, we could cross a bridge that passed over the maze and would take us right back to the town. Rick, however, started running off in the opposite direction of the bridge. I went to check out where he went, wondering what he’d found, and I saw that there was something behind the tree.

“Is this...a shop?”

“My, my. Welcome to the Fossil Shop.”

Tucked behind the large tree was a straw mat on which sat a lone, white-haired elderly man, wearing Mage-style robes and a befitting monocle. If I had to give him a nickname, it’d be either “Professor” or “Master” or something like that. Laid out in front of the smiling old man was an array of Terrariums in a variety of sizes. Inside of them were various curious insects, like morpho butterflies and Hercules beetles.

“Are you...selling bugs, sir?”

“Why yes, that I am. I see you have some fossils on your person. Please, feel free to take a look.”

“Uh...hmm?”

It was an insect store called the Fossil Shop. How confusing.

But anyway, had I been told about this store? I was pretty sure this hadn’t been included in the information I bought from Alyssa, nor had Chris told me about it when we’d exchanged intel. It was hard to believe that both of them had forgotten to tell me. So did that mean this was some sort of special event?

I decided to ask the man a few questions.

“Do you sell anything besides bugs?”

“I also sell carriers on their own. Would you like to purchase one?”

“Really? Then, do you have them in large sizes too?”

“Why, certainly.”

The old man showed me a list of options, among which was an Extra Large Terrarium, which was as big as five meters. I could keep a coelacanth in something like that. The intended order of things was probably to come here first to buy an Extra Large Terrarium before going to the Prehistoric Island.

“Oh, there’s a teleportation point here too.”

I glanced behind the old man, and there stood a white stone pillar. I was sure I hadn’t heard about this either, which meant it must’ve required some trigger to appear. This sunflower maze was a minigame done in parties. Maybe this old man and teleportation point appeared at the finish line if the party attempting the maze fulfilled a certain condition.

“Excuse me, but is there some sort of requirement to access this shop?”

“Yes there is! Only those who have an Amber or fossil can access this shop!”

I’d been wondering if that was the case since he’d mentioned fossils at the start, and I guess I was right. Whether or not you could see this shop depended on if you were holding a fossil. He didn’t tell me where I could mine them, but it seemed like they could be found on the main island as well, not just the other island.

I could probably safely assume that there were other hidden shops around like this one. And maybe they also sold items intended for the Prehistoric Island? I needed to gather some more information about the minigames in other towns. Just like with this one, they were likely hiding some secrets, so they were worth looking for. After all, I could now come back here anytime using the teleportation point, so now I could replenish my stock of Terrariums whenever I wanted. *Ahh, this stirs my gatherer’s heart.*

“Okay then, I’ll take an Extra Large Terrarium, please!”

“Sure thing. Thank you for your patronage.”

I went ahead and bought as many containers as I could carry and then activated the teleportation point. If there were a lot of teleportation points on the main island, I might run out of Amber.

“I should probably go mine some more on the Prehistoric Island.”

“Squeak squeak!”

“I’ll count on you then, Drimo.”

“Squeak!”

*Though first we’ll try our hand at the maze again!* We went through the maze several more times. It was a blast.

How was our time? Look, those frontline players were all monsters! We couldn’t even manage to beat five minutes. But since I was able to buy Terrariums from the old man now, I was still as satisfied as can be.

After we were done with that, we returned to the town of the Bazaar. I had planned to meet Alyssa here.

“All right, I think we’re meeting around here somewh—”

“Yuto! Over here!”

I turned to the direction Alyssa’s voice was coming from and saw a familiar pair of wiggling cat ears in the direction of a crowd of people.

“Heya, Alyssa.”

“We’re not staying here. Follow me.”

“Oh, okay.”

I obediently followed after Alyssa, and eventually, a fashionable-looking shop came into view.

“Is this a café?” I asked.

“Yep. They’ve got private rooms, which are perfect for conversation. We can chat over some tea.”

“I see. I wonder if they have anything that my monsters can eat?”

“I’ve done my research. This place has a menu that caters fully to monsters too.”

“Aha, I’m impressed.”

Alyssa had gone through the trouble of finding a place that perfectly suited

my party's needs.

We went inside. The interior of the café had a trendy, relaxed feel. Some light jazz was playing in the background, and everyone was quietly drinking coffee. This definitely wasn't the sort of place I would have had the guts to enter alone.

"Guys, don't be loud."

"Growl!"

"Honk!"

"Chirp chirp!"

"Aye!"

"Tra-la!"

They all raised their hands up and nodded in understanding. *But you know, you're already being loud by shouting like that...*

"...Drimo, keep them in check."

"Squeak?!" Drimo cried, looking at me like he was saying, "Who, me?!"

"Please! I'm begging you!"

"Squeak squeak..."

I pressed my hands together entreatingly and whispered earnestly to Drimo. He shrugged his shoulders and lightly shook his head, as if he were sighing and saying, "Good grief." Then, he started gesturing and giving out orders to my other monsters.

"Squeak. Squeak squeak."

"Growl."

"Chirp!"

And wouldn't you believe it, everyone besides Drimo put both their hands over their mouths. I guess they were covering their mouths to prevent themselves from impulsively saying anything.

Just then, I heard some slamming and crashing sounds around me, like some guest had spilled their coffee. Was that because of how loud we were being?

*Sorry, everyone.*

In any case, my monsters looked so cute with their hands over their mouths like that. It was screenshot-worthy. And I wasn't the only one who thought so, evidently.

"Th-They're adorable," Alyssa muttered.

"Aren't they? My monsters are so cute, right?"

For some reason, there was a strained expression on her face. Was that shock she was feeling when she called them cute? Or fear? Either way, she didn't seem happy.

"Your face is kind of scaring me."

"Oops, sorry. I was just thinking about how when people find out that I alone got to see your cute monsters, I'm going to get an earful. Don't worry about it."

"An earful?"

"Yeah. Your monsters have no shortage of fans. I know a lot of my friends are included in that group. Some who you know too, like Amelia, Ursula, and Ashihana."

"Ah..."

Those three *did* seem like the type to cry "No fair!" at Alyssa.

"Do you need a screenshot?"

"You don't mind?"

"Nah. I'll send you one later."

"Thank you..."

After we got that out of the way, we sat across from each other in one of the café's private rooms. My monsters were eating now, so they were quiet. I wanted to try getting business taken care of quickly before they got bored and started making a ruckus.

"Let's see, I have some new info in addition to what I already told you. Mind if I share?"

“...Urk! I *was* expecting this, but...!”

“Huh? Alyssa?”

She had suddenly looked down and mumbled something. Was she talking to someone? Oh, maybe she had called another clan member to ask if it was all right to buy additional information.

“Um, are you okay?”

“Yes, I’m fine! I was just about to do *that* again.”

What did she mean by “that”? Well, whatever, she was probably just referring to some clan jargon or something.

“First, I’ll tell you what happened after our call,” I said.

“Yeah, bring it on!”

Alyssa had a really serious look on her face for some reason. I had to admire her diligence, but she could also stand to relax a little.

Without holding anything back, I told Alyssa about the pond I found at the summit of the tableland, the various prehistoric creatures I found in that pond, and how I had mined Amber and other gems around there. I also spoke about what I did after returning to the main island. I gave her all the intel on the mysterious elderly man at the sunflower maze, and about my idea that Amber could probably be mined here on the main island.

Halfway through, Alyssa took on a strange, zen expression, and nodded in understanding as she listened to me talk. No matter what I said, she remained completely unfazed, her smile of enlightenment never once wavering.

I was expecting more of a reaction. Maybe these weren’t all as big of a discovery as I thought they were? I thought ammonites and coelacanths were pretty huge, but maybe they had already been found in other areas too?

“...and that about sums it up.”

“A pond, prehistoric creatures, Amber, Ammolite, a titan arum, a teleportation device—”

“Alyssa?”

“Ngh...”

With her face frozen in a smile, Alyssa suddenly began to tremble. *Huh? Her complexion isn't looking too good...*

“WAAAH! I knew it, but still!”

*Whoa, she went “WAAAH!” again.* That seemed to be Alyssa's favorite exclamation lately. She screamed that every time I came to sell her information. I wondered if this was part of her role-playing as a Cat-Human hybrid. I was also starting to expect this scream as part of the package when selling information. But I sort of wanted us to get back on track with our normal conversation. Oh, but was it a violation of etiquette to tell a role-player to speak normally?

Alyssa promptly recomposed her expression as I pondered over what to do.

“I'm sorry. I lost my cool.”

*She's always so quick to switch back!* My monsters were a little alarmed witnessing her like that, though. They probably got scared when she screamed out of nowhere. It was like watching a seemingly dead cicada suddenly jump back to life.

After a little more discussion, I sold Alyssa some items like a five-star Amber and Bone-In Dinosaur Meat. They were needed for verification purposes.

“Right, and here's your payment.”

“Thank you.”

I couldn't believe it—even after buying a bunch of information from Alyssa, I still came out with eighty thousand evets! I wondered if I could really accept such a large sum, but we *were* in the middle of an event. I'd take what I could get to increase my rank even just a little. Besides, eighty thousand probably wasn't actually *that* much. Alyssa looked totally at ease, after all.

My reward for beating the Event Brachio had been sixty thousand evets, but thinking about it, I had been able to beat it solo. Maybe it wasn't actually that strong of a boss? I was confident the front liners were earning hundreds of thousands of evets from even stronger monsters.

“I need to work harder too!”



After selling what I knew to Alyssa, I decided to head back to my room so I could get right to bed. First thing tomorrow morning, I wanted to return to the Prehistoric Island and do some gathering and mining. I also wanted to hammer away at fishing.

Before going to bed, I made some potions using the materials I'd gathered that day, and played with monsters, who were clinging to me begging me to play. It was a lot of fun hanging out and chatting together.

"Ah! Where'd the time go?!"

"Hm?"

"Yeah, the day's already over."

"..."

My monsters looked at me as if they were saying, "Aww, but we wanna play more!" Sakura stepped in and gently consoled them. *Ah yes, ever the big sister.*

"Night!"

"La-laaa... ♪" Fau crooned, singing a comforting lullaby.

The next day, I set out right after breakfast. For today's lineup, I wanted to focus more on gathering abilities than combat.

"Let's have fun today too! Olto, Drimo, Bear Bear, Eine, Reflet, and Perca!"

Olto and Drimo were on mining duty. Bear Bear and Eine would handle gathering and bug-catching. Reflet and Perca would be our fishermen.

I touched the door of my home and selected my teleportation destination. This door functioned as a simple teleportation device—I didn't even have to step outside. I selected the option for the interior area of the Prehistoric Island and paid five thousand evets.

In an instant, my vision changed, and the prehistoric pond came into focus. I was unmistakably at the heart of the island. I could come here immediately without even having to leave my room. It was super convenient.

"All right! First task is fishing! Let's get to work!"

“Honk honk!”

“Hummm!”

My goal for today was to catch three coelacanths. I also wanted to mine as many Ambers as possible, since I knew I’d be able to sell Ambers to other players both for their decorative appearance or for their utility value.

After a hard day’s labor here in the island’s center, I made out with some pretty decent results. Unbelievably, I had used up all the Terrariums I stocked up on.

“Seven coelacanths, and a bunch of ammonites and anomalocarises. I also got a larger Meganeura and Hercules beetle.”

We’d also mined three Ammolites and numerous three-to eight-star Ambers. I’d definitely call that quite the haul.

“Let’s check on a few other places before we head back.”

The first place was where the titan arum was. It was no different from the day before, and it didn’t seem to show any signs of blooming.

Next was the Event Brachio. There it was, back in all its glory. As I had expected, it respawned. Not that I wanted to fight it a second time.

“This took us almost the entire day, but I can say I’m fully satisfied.”

“Mm-mm!”

Tomorrow, we’d go back to exploring the main island. It was still an unexplored frontier for me, after all, and I wanted to at least make my rounds of each location.

The morning of the fourth day of the event, I checked the map of the main island for our next destination. If we were going to go in order, I figured we should probably head to the South Fishing Village. Close to that fishing village was an area called the “Marine Mammal Forest” filled with densely growing Giant Kelp, where sea otters had reportedly been spotted.

There was also a beach called “Gauntlet Beach.” Unlike Warrior Beach, where only weak monsters appeared, and the resort-like Recreation Beach, this beach

was filled with some decently strong monsters. I heard I could gather some shellfish there.

Also, I'd been told I could catch some unique fish in the bay-like cove that was surrounded by Gauntlet Beach. I definitely wanted to catch those for my encyclopedia.

"That settles it. Our next stop is the South Fishing Village!"

"Humm!"

"Honk!"

As soon as the underwater duo heard the words "fishing village"—aka the ocean—they couldn't contain their excitement. *Mm-hmm. I'll have to ask these two to work hard again. Their enthusiasm is inspiring.*

But before we headed out, I went to check to see if I could register the morning glories to my encyclopedia, and then to the Prehistoric Island to do the same with the titan arum. I was able to add the morning glories with no problem. I was right about them needing to be blooming. That made me even more impatient for the titan arum to bloom.

I also ended up plugging away at mining for a while at the Prehistoric Island. I kept repeating "Just a little more" when it was suddenly past midday. I should have already been at the South Fishing Village by now.

"Crap! I got too distracted! Let's hurry!"

"Mm-mm!"

Thankfully, the journey to the South Fishing Village was easier than I was anticipating. The village soon came into view without us having to expend too much energy. I thought we'd run into some formidable monsters, but they were surprisingly weak and there weren't very many of them. I'd say they were about on par with monsters between Zone Two and Three.

For we who had survived the fierce battle of the Prehistoric Island, this was nothing.

"Mmm!"

"Hngh!"

But we still couldn't let our guards down here.

An Event Wild Boar Piglet charged towards us, breaking past Olto's defense and hitting me in the stomach, dealing a critical hit. Although it didn't deal much damage, it really surprised me.

"Mm-mm!"

"Sorry, sorry. I'll stay focused."

"Mmm."

With my eye back on the ball, we made it to the South Fishing Village. It wasn't much different from the East Fishing Village—its size and variety of shops were mostly the same. One difference was that the fish market had a few more fish for sale. They had splendid alfonsino and cod available for purchase, which could apparently be caught around here. I could rent a boat here too, so maybe I should try to fish for them.

*But before that—sea otters!* They were supposedly right next to the village. I'd heard that if I was lucky, I'd be able to see them right from the shore.

"Guys! Let's go look for those adorable sea otters!"

"Growl growl!"

"Tra-la-la!"

It took a few minutes to get to the coast. No monsters appeared, so it really felt like we were taking a stroll.

"Is this the shore closest to the Marine Mammal Forest?"

"Squeak."

The shore looked like any ordinary beach. I looked out at the water, but I didn't see anything special. But when I focused my gaze on the ocean, I saw something a dozen or so meters from the shore. It looked like some brown object swaying on the waves.

Was that the rumored Giant Kelp? I'd heard that if you looked at the entire thing underwater, you'd see long, giant seaweed that looked like a kelp monster. These existed in the real world too, apparently. The Earth was not to

be underestimated.

I tried to look even farther out at the surface of the ocean.

“Oh hey, something’s floating out there.”

In a spot pretty far removed from the shore, a similar strange green thing was peeking out of the water. Countless belt-like objects were floating near the surface of the water. It was a cluster of Giant Kelp.

But I didn’t see any sea otters. I stuck around for a while, but they were nowhere to be seen. Maybe the Giant Kelp was blocking my view.

“I’d like to get closer, but getting in the water is kind of scary.”

Reflet and Perca could swim out there for me, but I wanted to get closer with our whole group if we could.

“How about we go rent a boat?”

“Hum!”

“Honk honk!”

Reflet and Perca raised their arms up in delight, expressing their approval. *Oh yeah, these guys like pulling the boat along. I guess they want to do that again.*

“Okay, let’s head to the boat rental shop, then.”

And so, we went back to the fishing village, but before going to rent a boat, I decided to stop by somewhere else first—a hut next to the wharf. This was supposedly where this village’s minigame was held. It was much smaller than the sunflower maze in the West Farming Village, but this *was* the right place, wasn’t it?

“Hello.”

“Oho, welcome!”

“Yeah, this is definitely the right place.”

Inside the hut was a tanned, elderly man. With the white tank top and a twisted headband he wore, he looked like a true, spirited man of the sea. He looked exactly like he’d been described.

“I heard you’re collecting fish prints.”

“Well, ya might say I buy fish to make fish prints! That’s my hobby! I’ve got a special way to make fish prints and then add them to my collection!”

Long story short, this minigame involved catching fish with which to make inked fish impressions. The points were decided by the size and type of the fish, and you received a reward in proportion to your points. The participation prize was fish food. The highest reward confirmed to be given to date was a set of prints.

“So, um, I need to bring you fish from this bay, right?”

“Right you are! And I’ll only accept fish you’ve caught yourself!”

You’d think any fish would be fine for a fish print, but the old guy was pretty picky. We also had to bring him fish that our party had caught within the past day.

“Okay, I’ll go rent a boat and do some fishing.”

“I’m looking forward to what you bring for me! Here, I’ll give ya this! It’s an advance on your participation prize!”

“Thank you.”

He gave me ten pieces of fish food. This was probably meant to help out players who didn’t have bait.

“Oh, right.”

Before exiting the hut, there was something else I wanted to ask. I’d been wondering about it since I walked in. This old guy looked exactly like the owner of the Fossil Shop at the sunflower maze.

The other guy didn’t have tanned skin and was wearing Mage’s robes and a monocle, but their face structures were very similar. They were both involved with minigames, so they probably had some connection to each other.

“Um, do you know a store called the Fossil Shop?”

“Oh! That’s my younger brother’s shop! Do you know him, by chance?”

“I do. I met him at the sunflower maze.”

“I see, I see! Well, I hope you continue to get along!”

I lingered a little to see if he'd offer any more information, but I didn't get any further useful tidbits. But if he was connected to the owner of the Fossil Shop, then I could probably expect some special info and items from him too. It probably wasn't far off to think that if I earned over a certain number of points, he'd give me some information. I *definitely* had to catch a big one!

“But first, the Marine Mammal Forest.”

The Marine Mammal Forest was to the west outside of the bay. I could add several creatures to my encyclopedia there, and then move on to fishing. That seemed like an efficient way to do things.

And so, we rented a boat at the fishing village and set out rowing on the big, blue sea.

“Hum-hum-hum-hum-hum!”

“Honk honk honk honk honk!”

Okay, I wasn't really doing any rowing, since Reflet and Perca were pulling the boat along. But soon, their vigor started to wane, and our speed suddenly dropped.

“Is the Giant Kelp in the way?”

“Hum...”

“Honk honk.”

Countless pieces of what looked like brown cloth were floating on the surface of the water. I peeked underwater and saw innumerable strands of Giant Kelp growing from the bottom of the ocean. I thought the distance to the ocean floor was twenty meters, but the length of the Giant Kelp looked easily more than that. Closer to thirty meters, maybe? True to its name, the Marine Mammal Forest was an area of the ocean where a mass of Giant Kelp grew.

“Okay then, what about the sea otters—”

“Tra-la! Tra-la-la!”

“Oh, did you see them?”

“Tra-la-la!”

I had been glancing around when Eine flew up excitedly. Then, she made a sudden nosedive, plunging into the water. At least, I thought that she had gone in, since water had splashed up, but it looked like she had actually just skimmed the surface of the water before quickly rising steeply back into the air.

“Tra-la-la!”

“Whoa! I-It’s a sea otter?!”

Amazingly, Eine was carrying a sea otter.

“Tra-la!”

“Chirrup!”

Eine was smiling broadly as she held the sea otter from behind under its arms, the lower half of its body dangling. This combo was cute as heck.

I grabbed the sea otter from Eine and held it.

“Chirrup?”

“Ack!”

*Oh my god, it’s just too cute!*

“Can I take this little guy home...?”

“Chirrup?”

The sea otter gazed up at me with its adorable, round eyes. I wanted to take it home with me! But since it wasn’t a monster, I couldn’t tame it.

“Then, can I put it in a Terrarium?”

But maybe it was too cruel to stuff this cute creature into a small case and selfishly take it with me. Wasn’t that just the sort of behavior that exposed the cruel, selfish nature of man?

“Wait, but there’s no harm in trying, right? I won’t know anything before I try, you know?”

*I’m just gonna test things out! I’ll just put it in the Terrarium for a little! So—*

*“This creature is incompatible with Terrariums.”*



“Of course it is.”

The sea otter was blocked from entering the Terrarium by some invisible wall and wouldn't go in any farther. I felt a strange mix of emotions—slightly disappointed, slightly relieved. Since I had no choice but to let it go, I wanted to at least pet it for a bit. I made a mental apology to the slightly annoyed-looking sea otter and picked it back up, holding it like I would a cat.

“Heh heh heh, you can't escape now.”

“Chirrup?”

“Now, if you'll excuse me...”

First, I rubbed its belly.

“So fluffy!”

Then, I stroked, sniffed, and ruffled the sea otter's soft fur, admiring it until I was fully satisfied. After a few minutes, I started thinking I should return the sea otter to the ocean. Despite that, I just couldn't bring myself to make the decision to let the sea otter go. I had already become a slave to its enchanting fur. But then, as I was ruminating...

*Duuuh-dun. Duuuh-dun.*

“Th-This music...”

A heavy, dangerous bass theme started to play. This game didn't have background music, so hearing it was very unusual.

“We've heard this here before! It's the shark motif!”

Yes, it was the music that had played when we encountered the great white shark on the way to the Prehistoric Island. I hastily looked around and saw a shark fin gliding through the water, coming our way.

“Oh no! Go, go, go!”

“Honk honk!”

“Humm!”

It hadn't attacked us when we'd run into it before, but this time was different. According to what I had heard, this great white shark had, in fact, attacked

some parties and even capsized their boats, killing them. The shark appeared if you caught and held on to a sea otter for a length of time. The shark must have seen the sea otter as its prey, so as long as you had one with you, you'd be pursued by the shark endlessly. I had been so captivated by the sea otter's fur that I had totally forgotten about that fact!

"If I let the sea otter go..."

But that would mean using the sea otter as bait solely to save our own skin.

"Chirrup?"

*Don't look at me with your innocent eyes! It makes it harder to let you go! Dammit! You're just rubbing your face so cutely with your paws, oblivious to the impending danger!*

"I can't do it! I can't use this sea otter as a decoy! Reflet, Perca! Keep going!"

"Honk honk honk honk hoooonk!"

"Hum-hum-hum-hum-huuuum!"

"The rest of you, attack the shark!"

"Squeak squeak!"

"Growl growl!"

I shot off some spells too. But none of our attacks had any effect on the shark. It seemed like the shark was classified as an object and was therefore invincible. It didn't even have an HP bar.

"All right, then we'll have to row as hard as we can! Bear Bear, you row first!"

"Growl!"

"Once Bear Bear gets tired, Drimo and Olto, you two take over!"

"Mm-mm!"

"Squeak!"

I knew that I could leave the rowing to those three, small yet powerful as they were.

"Eine, use Cheerleader to boost everyone's stats!"

“Tra-la-la!”

“And I’ll do this! Hydro Pressure!”

“Groooooowl!”

*Witness the full power of we who broke past the ocean current!*

After ten minutes of running from the shark as fast as we could, we made it out of the Marine Mammal Forest, which was practically a maze thanks to the Giant Kelp, and put a good amount of distance between us and the shark. We must have been pretty far out at sea by that point.

Despite that, the shark still hadn’t given up and was still pursuing our boat. It already closed the gap by a lot. I had exhausted all my magic, and our rowing team of Bear Bear, Drimo, and Olto were too exhausted to move. We were right in the midst of the worst crisis—that was when I heard another announcement.

*“You have successfully captured a designated animal for a fixed amount of time. A sea otter has now been added to the list of possible creatures you may exchange event points for at the end of the event.”*

*Wh-What?! Sea otters can become mascots?!*

Players could obtain animals within the event as mascots once they captured them. An announcement like the one that had just played for me would alert players whenever animals were added to the list. Apparently, foxes and tanuki could be turned into mascots instantly as soon as you touched them. Since that hadn’t happened with the sea otter, I’d assumed that it couldn’t become a mascot. It was just considered a booby trap to lure the shark. But clearly, that wasn’t the case.

The announcement said this happened after holding the sea otter for a “fixed amount of time,” didn’t it? That meant there was a possibility other animals could become mascots, contrary to current belief. In exchange for not being able to house them in Terrariums like fish and insects, players could invite them home as mascots.

*I-I need to try this out with a dinosaur!*

Ah! Could I also keep a shark?! But wait, it probably couldn’t even fit into the

Extra Large Terrarium, could it? Or maybe there was an even bigger size? Or one for mascots?

*Wait, I don't have time for this right now!*

"The shark— Huh?"

At some point, the great white shark had disappeared. Same with the sea otter. They had both vanished after the latter had turned into a mascot.

"Th-That was dangerous..."

That was seriously one of the most panic-filled moments I'd been in since starting this game.

"Great job, everyone."

All my monsters looked proud of themselves, knowing they had worked hard. They all looked content as I petted them.

"All right! That really fired me up!"

We'd been on a heart-stopping thrill ride, but it had been a lot of fun.

# Online Forum [Assemble, Fans of Silver-Haired] All Things Silver-Haired-Related, Part 15

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.

---

659: Yodel-Ay-Hee

I witnessed Silver-Haired's power.

---

660: Yang Yang

His power? What do you mean? That dinosaur video? That really was impressive!

He's in the lead in the video rankings, by a huge margin. It's all anyone's talking about, even in unrelated threads.

---

661: Yodel-Ay-Hee

That was awesome, but no, that's not what I'm talking about.

---

662: visitorfromanotherplanet

Then, did he pull another stunt?

He already found a hidden island and a raid boss, so did he find a dungeon or something?

---

663: Yodel-Ay-Hee

No, it's not so much what he did, and more so what he showed off?

---

664: Willow

I'm not following.

---

665: Yodel-Ay-Hee

A group of girls was playing beach volleyball by the entrance of the open beach.

Their goal was clearly to show off their swimsuits, right?

---

666: visitorfromanotherplanet

I think a lot of people are less shy about doing that since they're just showing off their avatar.

I can sort of understand why they'd want to show off the avatar they spent time perfecting the appearance and physique of.

I wear stylish clothes I'd never wear in real life too.

---

667: Yodel-Ay-Hee

There's just something about getting the attention of other people that you'd never get IRL, right?

Like the desire to be seen?

And in fact, a bunch of guys took the opportunity to do some ogling.

---

668: Yang Yang

And you were paying attention to *them* because...?

---

669: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Oh, I've said too much.

I-I plead the fifth.

---

670: Yang Yang

Well, whatever.

So, what'd Silver-Haired do?

---

671: Yodel-Ay-Hee

So when the girls were having their time in the limelight, Silver-Haired and his monsters slid into center stage.

He was just walking, and everyone's eyes were glued to him. I think everyone, men and women alike, stared at him.

The girls playing volleyball quickly dispersed.

---

672: Yang Yang

Th-That's Silver-Haired for you.

---

673: visitorfromanotherplanet

Not just the girls, but the guys were staring too? Scary...

---

674: Willow

It's Silver-Haired, so yeah. And his monsters are cute, of course.

---

675: Yodel-Ay-Hee

You can't help but look at them, even when they're just walking by.

But Silver-Haired is totally oblivious to the staring. It's so like him. His power to ignore things is unmatched.

I know if it were me, I'd be way too self-conscious and get the hell out of there.

I guess that's just what happens when you get as used to other people's attention as he is.

---

676: Yang Yang

The people staring were probably those who like his monsters, and people who just want whatever information they can get, right?

---

677: visitorfromanotherplanet

I don't think that's all.

Some people just can't help but look when a celebrity passes by.

If other people are paying attention, they kinda just get sucked into doing the same.

---

678: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Everyone's eyes were on him at the beach.

I mean, even after they left, people were talking about his monsters' swimsuits.

---

679: Willow

Speaking of, the beach thread was going nuts.

Lots of talk about swimsuits, but also information about Silver-Haired! Who would've guessed!

---

680: visitorfromanotherplanet

There were heated debates over which swimsuit was the best. One-piece suits, school swimsuits, or full-body bathing suits.



I wasn't sure how full-body bathing suits made it into the running, but...

They weren't debating swimsuits on *people*, after all.

---

681: Yang Yang

Debating what swimsuits look best on monsters, not cute girls? LOL

Ahh, the Silver-Haired effect.

---

682: Willow

You think that's also part of the Silver-Haired effect?

---

683: visitorfromanotherplanet

If it's caused by Silver-Haired, then it's the Silver-Haired effect.

---

684: Willow

His reach is unbelievably wide!

---

685: Yodel-Ay-Hee

In this case, Silver-Haired sparked a swimsuit debate. I'd say that qualifies as the Silver-Haired effect.

The question of what swimsuit was best for each monster got a little wild.

---

686: Yang Yang

Wild lololol

Yeah, I sorta get what you mean.

---

687: visitorfromanotherplanet

Well, depending on which monster and swimsuit you're talking about...

---

688: Willow

Is it over the line for a guy to say they want to dress a girl monster in a school swimsuit?

---

689: Yodel-Ay-Hee

I dunno, I'd actually say that's kinda wholesome, don't you think?

Aren't the girls who say they want to dress a gnome in shorts even worse?

---

690: visitorfromanotherplanet

Or guys who want to dress a fire elemental in swim briefs.

---

691: Willow

Huh? "Guys"?

---

692: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Th-There are all sorts of people in this world...

---

693: visitorfromanotherplanet

There were also girls getting put off by people saying the tree nymph should wear a bikini.

It's not like this game would have anything like string bikinis anyway. This game's marketed to younger kids too, after all.

---

694: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Hey! This conversation ends here! I feel like things are about to go too far!

A new topic, por favor!

---

695: Yang Yang

I'll change the subject.

As far as going too far, that's just what happens when monsters are brought up. People quickly separate into factions and fight among each other.

And there's always the argument about which monster is the best.

---

696: visitorfromanotherplanet

Which monster's the cutest, which one's the coolest, which one's the strongest.

Which one's the most useful, which one's the most helpful at crafting, and which one's the fluffiest.

---

697: Willow

I'm impressed there are so many points to debate. Though, I know I'd be right in the fray if I was a part of those threads.

---

698: visitorfromanotherplanet

Which monster do you want to take a screenshot with, which one would you want to go on a date with.

Which one would you want to make their voice your ringtone, which would you want to give a piggyback ride to.

---

699: Yang Yang

You're mixing some weird ones in there.

---

700: visitorfromanotherplanet

Which one has the most supple skin. Which one has the prettiest hair color.

Which one would you want to sniff. Which one has the shapeliest butt.

Which one would you want to be scolded by. Which one would you want to be kicked by.

---

701: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Don't you dare go any further!

This is too much for this forum to handle! Let someone else take over!

---

702: Yang Yang

I can't believe you can recite all that from memory...

---

703: visitorfromanotherplanet

Hey, don't go making any terrible accusations!

I was just listing out the thread names that actually exist!

---

704: Willow

What?! That's terrifying!

That fact is even scarier!

---

705: Yodel-Ay-Hee

I've witnessed the dark underside of LJO...!

---

706: Yang Yang

The preferences exposed in the latter half of that list are a bit, uh, yikes.

Not sure if those people would have awakened to those if they hadn't played this game...

---

707: visitorfromanotherplanet

I bet Silver-Haired's monsters opened a door for a lot of people.

---

708: Willow

Is that Silver-Haired's fault...?

---

709: Yodel-Ay-Hee

I'm not sure about that. More like the fault of the people that created this game?

---

710: Yang Yang

The crime of making a game that's so involved you get crazy into it?

---

711: visitorfromanotherplanet

Let's go with that.

Criticizing Silver-Haired is bound to make you enemies in many places.

---

712: Willow

Ah, very true. That's also part of Silver-Haired's power.

---

713: Yang Yang

Speaking of, Yodel-Ay-Hee. Didn't you say something at some point about how you were going to talk to Silver-Haired?

---

714: visitorfromanotherplanet

He did.

Something about telling Silver-Haired not to choose Painter as a second job...

---

715: Willow

That's right! You were going to convince him that Painter's a trash job!

So? How'd it go?

---

716: Yodel-Ay-Hee

As if there's any chance of someone like me being able to talk to Silver-Haired in front of a huge crowd of staring people.

The Defenders would have my head.

Once I'm on their radar, I'm done for.

They'd chase me till the end of time and put me in a guillotine...probably.

---

717: Yang Yang

What are they, the Inquisition?!

---

718: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Joking aside, it's too hard to talk to him when people are watching.

---

719: visitorfromanotherplanet

If that's how you see it, then your only chance is to run into him on the field by coincidence.

There's not a second that Silver-Haired isn't drawing attention in towns, after all.

---

720: Yodel-Ay-Hee

No way! Absolutely no way!

---

721: Willow

So you *are* a chicken...

---

722: visitorfromanotherplanet

You tandoori chicken.

---

723: Yang Yang

Teriyaki chicken!

---

724: Yodel-Ay-Hee

Are those supposed to be insulting...?

Anyway, talking to him in front of a crowd is a no-go.

I pray I'll meet Silver-Haired when he's alone in the field!

---

725: Willow

Impossible.

---

726: Yang Yang

That won't happen.

---

727: visitorfromanotherplanet

I mean, if you're doing cutting-edge stuff like Silver-Haired does, you might have a chance of meeting him somewhere?

---

728: Yodel-Ay-Hee

There's an even lesser chance of that happening!

If that were in any way possible, everyone would be doing that!

---

# [I Wanna Pet All the Monsters!] Tamed Monster Appreciation Thread for Non-Tamers and Non-Summoners, Part 10

Are you a nonmainstream 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.

---

32: LordApple

So, dinosaurs.

---

33: Raspu

Dinosaurs! So cool! I want one!

---

34: LordApple

They look strong. Not cute, though.

---

35: Raspu

They're cool! That's good enough!

But unfortunately, I heard they can't be tamed or summoned.

---

36: Ruach

Not an elemental, not interested.



---

37: Longneck

Not a yokai, not interested.

---

38: Requiem

Not an undead, not interested.

---

39: LordApple

There's no accounting for taste!

---

40: Raspu

But there's actually a chance for an undead monster, isn't there?

---

41: Requiem

Yeah, I know. I just wanted to join in.

I even promised to help with experimenting, as a volunteer Necromancer.

---

42: Raspu

So we're talking dino skeletons and zombies?

It seems possible.

---

43: LordApple

Huh? No way.

---

44: Ruach

I wonder if there're dinosaur zombies?

---

45: Longneck

If there are dinosaur skeletons, maybe they'd look like a Gashadokuro?

But zombies are out of the question. I won't let you.

---

46: Requiem

I-I wasn't expecting such strong opinions...

Zombies are just cool, okay?

Besides, I thought everyone in the world liked dinosaurs.

---

47: Raspu

Same. But most girls probably aren't dinosaur fans.

---

48: Requiem

Ah, I see.

I know most people aren't familiar with the undead world, but the dinos are a big hit there.

---

49: Ruach

But in the end, they're still rotting corpses.

That's an important part.

---

50: Requiem

I thought they'd be the saviors of the Necromancer job class, which is so lacking in guys...

---

51: Raspu

There aren't a lot of male Necromancers?

---

52: Requiem

Surprisingly not.

There are already so few Necromancers, and over half of them are girls.

I wonder why?

---

53: Raspu

Well, when you think about it, maybe more girls are into horror and the grotesque? Considering that, it's not all that surprising.

---

54: Longneck

Yeah, all the more well-known Necromancers are girls. Like that one with bunny ears.

---

55: Requiem

The one with blue hair?

---

56: Longneck

Yeah, her!

---

57: Raspu

That's...a guy.

---

58: Longneck

What? No, no, no, she's a super cute girl.

She's a rabbit-human hybrid, has ultramarine-colored hair, and wears a skirt.

---

59: Requiem

Yeah, and he's a guy!

---

60: Longneck

A-A femboy...?

Ah! Is that who people call the femboy Necromancer?!

---

61: Requiem

You got it. He's the most famous player among Necromancers...

But why...?

I mean, he's a great guy once you talk to him. Always tries his best. We're about to do some verification work on the dinosaurs together.

But...

---

62: LordApple

But?

---

63: Requiem

He's too adorable!

Why's he gotta be so cute?!

---

64: Ruach

Wow, strong feelings you got there.

Is it such a bad thing that he's cute? Just enjoy the view.

Even if he's a feminine guy, what's so wrong with that?

---

65: Requiem

That's the number one problem!

Don't you get it? That unspeakable feeling you get after getting butterflies from seeing a dude?

Hrrnng...

---

66: Longneck

No more! Requiem's spirit can't take any more of this!

---

67: Raspu

Ah, right. About that.

This event is supposed to be like a summer vacation for the second-wave players, but is that really all it is?

---

68: Ruach

What d'you mean?

Are you suggesting some terrifying conspiracy is afoot?!

---

69: LordApple

Are the devs enacting some secret plan behind the facade of a fun summer event?!

---

70: Longneck

Is this the start of a death game? Is it really?

How exciting!

---

71: Raspu

Why do you sound so happy about that?

That's not what I meant. I was thinking it's possible they incorporated some saving grace for minor jobs during the event.

---

72: LordApple

O Devs! Bestow upon us your saving grace!

---

73: Longneck

What sort of a saving grace do you mean?

---

74: Raspu

Well, it depends on what the Necromancers find during their verification.

---

75: LordApple

Hey, don't ignore my gag. I put a lot of thought into it. But I know what you're trying to say.

Other command-class players definitely wouldn't be happy if only Necromancers could get dinosaurs.

So maybe they've prepared some special tamed monsters for jobs like Onmyoji and Elementalists too?

---

76: Raspu

Of course people wouldn't tolerate only Necromancers being able to tame dinosaurs. *I* wouldn't tolerate it!

The devs must know the game's filled with fanatics.

---

77: Ruach

So in order for Necromancers to not be given favorable treatment, there might be something set up for other classes too?

I could see that.

---

78: Raspu

That's why the Necromancers' verification work is so important.

---

79: Requiem

A lot of things will be found out depending on whether we're successful in commanding dinosaurs or not, then?

---

80: Raspu

Yeah. If Necromancers can get dinosaurs, then there's hope for other classes.

The devs probably don't want to show bias for any one job

class. They want there to be a variety of classes being played.

It's totally possible they'd implement some assistance and support to classes with fewer players at a time like this.

---

81: Requiem

Tamers' numbers have gone up, while others are still pretty lacking, as far as command classes go.

---

82: Ruach

Silver-Haired has had a big impact.

---

83: Longneck

Even with Onmyoji, if you trace it back to how it started, Silver-Haired was the one who unlocked that class.

---

84: LordApple

And there are also a lot of players who aren't playing as Tamers, but learned the Command or Tame skills.

It's got a lot of uses, from battle support, crafting support, gathering, reconnaissance, healing, adoring, being adored, *etc.*

---

85: Raspu

What's with the end of that list?!

---

86: Requiem

What exactly is meant by "healing"?

---

87: LordApple

Oh, well...you know?

---

88: Longneck

Run, gnomes!

---

89: LordApple

I didn't specify, did I? Though it's probably a bit of everything.

Gnomes and Undines are super useful.

At the very least, they'll probably become standard fixtures on farms.

---

90: Ruach

Is that also Silver-Haired's influence?

---

91: LordApple

Well, he is the one who discovered both.

And he was the one to demonstrate their capabilities and cuteness.

---

92: Raspu

Silver-Haired's had a huge effect on the command-class world, huh?

---

93: Requiem

Silver-Haired! Please, discover something great for us Necromancers!

Just once, I want people to rave about how great Necromancers are!

---

94: Longneck

And yokai! Yokai too, please!

---

95: Requiem



Yokai have had their moment already!

It's undead monsters' turn next!

---

96: Ruach

Give elemental monsters a turn too, please.

---

97: Raspu

You lazy freeloaders! Don't any of you have the guts to make your own big discoveries?

Aren't you embarrassed to rely on Silver-Haired all the time?!

---

98: Requiem

Well, would that I could.

---

99: Longneck

Instead of wasting our time trying to do the impossible, it's way faster to just wait for Silver-Haired to do his thing.

---

100: LordApple

Couldn't agree more.

---

101: Ruach

Ditto.

---

102: Raspu

Grrr, I can't deny that.

Silver-Haired! I know it wouldn't make sense, but please make a big discovery for Summoners too!

Anything will do!

---

103: Requiem

You're a Soldier but you have summon skills, right?

I guess thinking about it, it must be hard to benefit from Silver-Haired as a Summoner.

In fact, Summoners are probably losing a lot of numbers since people are switching to Tamer.

---

104: Raspu

That's right! It's not fair that everyone else gets to reap the rewards!

Lord Silver-Haired! Bless us with something good too!

Please, God! Give us your salvation!

---

105: LordApple

Hey, you stole my joke!

So now you like it? How dare you!

---

106: Requiem

Aren't you embarrassed?

---

107: Raspu

No, I'm not!

So please, answer my prayers!

---

108: Ruach

Whoa...

---

109: Longneck

It's like looking in a mirror and seeing how pathetic we looked...

---

110: Requiem

I'm going to try my best, with my own power.

---

111: LordApple

That sounds good.

---

112: Ruach

Yeah.

---

113: Raspu

Let my prayers reach Silver-Haired!

Aaaahhhhhh!

---

# Epilogue

A shark had attacked us when we were playing around with a sea otter. That had really sent me into a panic, though we did manage to escape. But because of that, we found ourselves ridiculously far from the shore.

“Perca, Reflet. Sorry to ask this, but you’ll have to keep it up for a bit more.”

“Honk!”

“Hum!”

“For now, let’s go back to the bay by the fishing vill—”

“Tra-la-la! Tra-la!”

“Whoa! What is it, Eine?”

Eine came swooping down and started roughly rocking my shoulders back and forth. *Urk, I’m getting nauseous! What happens to my real body when I get nauseous in the game?!* I was seriously getting worried. Indifferent to my concerns, Eine pointed at something in the opposite direction of the shore.

“D-Did you find something?”

“Tra-la!”

“Umm...?”

I stared in the direction where Eine was pointing, but I couldn’t see anything.

“Tra-la-la!”

“Hmm...”

“Tra-la!”

“Ack, wait! Don’t pull me!”

Eine probably wanted to say that I could see if I had a higher vantage point. She grabbed the collar of my robe and tried to pull me upwards.



“I really don’t think— Whoa, for real?!”

“Tra-la-laaa!”

“Y-You’re lifting me up!”

To my surprise, Eine was able to raise me up a little, and was slowly lifting me up even higher. Now I thought about it, Eine was respectably strong now that she had evolved. Also, my weight in the game—even counting my equipment—must have been at most around sixty kilograms. I was also short, being a Halfling, so she was able to pick me up, for just a short time.

In order not to slip out of my robe, which Eine was pulling me up by, I squeezed my armpits tight and gripped the front with both hands. This should work for a little. Thankfully, this wasn’t the type of robe that fastened around my neck. Eine lifted me up like that for ten meters.

“Oh! I see it! It looks like a...a small island!”

“Tra...la...”

“Huh? Wait, *noooooo!*”

“Tra-la!”

The moment I spotted the small island in the distance, Eine exhausted all her strength. I fell straight down.

“Squeak squeak!”

“Urgh!”

“Tra-la!”

Drimo managed to catch me, but dang, was that scary! It didn’t hurt, of course, since this was a game, but my body was tense with shock and fear.

“Tra-laaa...”

“It’s fine.”

I patted Eine’s head as she apologized and instructed Reflet and Perca to bring us to the small island. I thought they’d be too tired and wouldn’t want to do it, but they both were elated. It was like they were saying, “Yay! We get to

keep pulling the boat!”

Then, after traveling on the water for some time, we arrived at the small island we’d just spotted. Although it was more like a reef than an island. It couldn’t have been more than ten meters across.

“No one told me about a place like this, did they?”

Was it still undiscovered? Or maybe the people who had found it were keeping that information for themselves. We were all rivals in this event, after all.

“Let’s disembark.”

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak squeak!”

With Olto in the lead, we cautiously stepped foot onto the reef. It’d be great if we found some treasure here. The worst-case scenario would be if it triggered a boss fight. The footing here was really narrow, so it’d probably be really hard to fight.

“...Not much going on here, is there?”

“Hum...”

“Mm-mm?”

We all searched the reef, but we didn’t find anything of note. The excavation team and the underwater search team didn’t turn up much either. At least we were able to catch some sea snails, so it wasn’t a complete waste. We went ahead and did some fishing too, in the hopes of catching some rare fish. Unfortunately, all we caught was mackerel and other ordinary fish.

“The sun’s setting soon... Oh wait, why don’t I try some night fishing?”

I wouldn’t be surprised if the type of fish you could catch changed depending on the time of day. And so, we all cast out our lines and fished for two hours. As we fished, we watched in awe at the evening sun sinking below the great, big sea, the dark water looking a little terrifying. However...

“No rare fish to be found here, huh?”

“Honk.”

“Hum.”

Even with Perca using Fire Lure and Reflet checking things out underwater, there wasn't much of a difference from the daytime.

“Oh well. Let's wrap things up,” I muttered. As I stood up, something happened.

“Squeak squeaaaak!”

“D-Drimo?”

Drimo let out a resounding shriek, which was unusual for him. I whipped around to face him and saw he was glowing. Actually no, he wasn't—he was standing on a beam of light.

Drimo hastily leaped off it, revealing the true form of the light that had been illuminating him.

“An Undead monster? No, that's an event marker. So is it an NPC?”

The thing—no, the *person* that was there was a translucent man. It was the ghost of a person who looked as gaunt as a mummy.

“...Ahh, curse that blasted jellyfish... That beast remembered our ship's flag... It will follow us everywhere... There's nowhere to run... If we escape the current, avoid the whirlpool, and make it past the cape, our village would be right at our fingertips... Should we have folded up our flag...? Nay, that flag is a symbol of our pride... But that jellyfish will pursue our flag to the ends of the earth... I escaped on a small boat. I betrayed my comrades... What became of the ship that sank by the cape...?”

The specter muttered its monologue one-sidedly, then finally disappeared without a trace as tears streamed down its face. I searched around where it had been, but there was nothing there. The ghost had appeared just so I could hear what it had to say. But that had been a *really* long monologue. If I hadn't had a way to check the log, I would've definitely missed some important information. As I reread his monologue, I thought about what it could mean.

“A jellyfish, huh? A jellyfish that can sink a ship? Maybe that giant tentacle



near the ocean current is a part of that jellyfish?” So, this guy’s boat was targeted by that, and despite their attempts to escape, they sank just before the cape. Meaning, this ghost was telling me the location of the sunken ship. “A sunken ship resting at the bottom of the deep blue sea! Oh man, I can just taste the adventure and treasure!”

Okay, yeah, I also sensed a hint of danger. But I couldn’t pass this up! Even if it was dangerous, I had to try it!

“Next up, exploring a sunken ship!”

Fish prints, sunken ships, and filling out my encyclopedia. I kept finding new things to do. I’d already been having fun so far, but now things were getting really juicy! I enjoyed taking things easy too, but I had to take full advantage of this event!

“Guys, we’ve still got a lot of work to do! And I’ll need your help to do it!”

“Growl growl!”

“Mm-mm!”

“Squeak squeak!”

“Tra-la!”

“Honk hooonk!”

“Hum-hum!”



A  
LATE-  
START

# TAMER'S LAID-BACK LIFE

9



A Late-Start Tamer's  
Laid-Back Life







HELMET TEXT: AIN'T AFRAID OF NO SUNLIGHT















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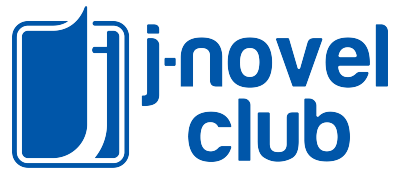
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A Late-Start Tamer's Laid-Back Life: Volume 9

by Yuu Tanaka

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