

If it's a door that has to be pulled, it should pose quite the trouble for us - with me being a child, Agnes' group young girls, and Arnest being a scholar type. Pushing aside the fire-breathing dragons with a 『Magic Barrier』, we finally arrive at the exit door.

"Arnest, check it."

"Very well."

I have Arnest examine the door. Meanwhile Betty redploys her 『Magic Barrier』, dealing with the dragons' breaths.

"So?"

"It is a push door."

"Huh? That's unexpectedly kind of the designer."

"That is no more than a pipe dream."

The four of us, except for Betty, try pushing the door at once, but it doesn't budge in the slightest due to its excessive weight.

"In short, we have no choice but to increase our strength through magic, deadhead Earl Baumeister."

"Shut it."

Indeed, as a child with an elementary level of mana I'm completely useless here.

"Can't-use-offensive-magic Arnest, reinforce your strength to the limit with mana and push."

"I have told you many times over, I am a brainworker."

"So you're going to die as one?"

"Okay, okay, I will push."

"I will help out as well."

"Me too...arg——h, I should have invested more time into practicing 『Body Strengthening』."

Arnest, Agnes and Cindy continue pushing for dear life while boosting their strength through mana in order to open the iron door blocking the exit. However, because their base strength is rather low to begin with, the door doesn't move at all.

Having said that, it's not like I've currently got much more strength than them either. Even if I were to help, the effect would be negligible, and my mana would likely run out quickly since I don't have much of it. Replenishing mana with spare magic gems is simple, but sadly I would probably collapse right away, unable to bear the mental strain with this child body.

I can't do much more than cheering the three on.

"Sensei, how much longer?" Betty, who has spread her 『Magic Barrier』 in a semicircle with the door as focal point, is showered by the concentrated fire of the dragons who have assembled.

As her mana consumption ought to be quite intense, I'm sure she wants us to open the door as quickly as possible.

"Let us push with all power!"

"Now's not the time to talk about saving mana!"

"Here I go!"

The three drastically increase the mana they're using, causing the door to finally start moving bit-by-bit.

"We just got to open it wide enough so that we can get out of here!"

"I know!"

The three are probably expending quite a bit of mana there.

Once they somehow manage to open a gap allowing one person a time to pass through, we jump through it one after the other.

"Naturally, we have to close it again, don't we?"

"Otherwise they're going to follow us."

Hearing my reply, Cindy reveals an openly dejected expression.

Next, the work to push the door shut so that the small dragons don't come after us begins. Betty blocks the door with her 『Magic Barrier』, preventing the dragons to slip in through the gap.

"Ack! Stay outsidee——!"

Deploying a 『Magic Barrier』 in an unfamiliar shape is a heavier toll on mana and mental force than one would expect.

"We are almost there!"

"Heavy!"

"Ugh!"

The three look pained as they push the heavy iron door. Just like during the opening, it consumes a lot of mana before they finally manage to close it.

"Phew..." Having no need to keep up the barrier any longer, Betty flops down on the spot while sighing.

It's the same for the other three. However, at the same time we can continuously hear loud banging from the door's other side.

"Everyone, please get away from the door."

"Sensei?"

"What, I'm just going to plug it up."

Indeed, I've now understood why the door has to be pushed to open up. Even if the intruders succeed in running away, the small dragon golems can still pursue them by pushing the door.

In that case, I've got an idea of my own as well.

I take out heavy rubbish from my magic bag, piling it up high in front of the door.

"This should keep them away for a while."

"Eh? This much is only going to last a while?"

"Agnes, you think the designer of this ruin hasn't estimated that we might do this?"

My prediction might be correct. The loud banging sounds at the door have increased in number. Moreover, the door has started to move, albeit very slowly, in spite of me having blocked it with this many heavy items. The only explanation would be an increase of the dragons on the other side.

"It is the same as with the previous wall trap. Once we broke through it, the trap not allowing 『Flight』 above the pond has disappeared."

In other words, right now a huge mass of the dragon golems, which keep spawning endlessly, has gathered in front of the door, pushing against it all at once.

"That's why I said that we'll be alright for a while. Rest up while we still can."

"But, we have to go on as soon as possible."

"That's impossible with these legs, isn't it?"

They've been walking in numbingly cold water while soaked up to the waist. Moreover, they've pushed the door with all their power. Thus it's impossible for them to walk normally with their trembling legs and loins.

"All of you, take off your boots and socks."

"Eh? Expose my feet? If possible, I'd like to do that when we're alone..."

"Come on! I'm serious here! Cindy, Betty, Arnest, you too."

Agnes might actually be a girl with lots of superficial knowledge about sex. Isn't she resembling Ina a bit in this?

I start warming up their feet with a spell similar to a 『Heater』, applying fire magic. I have to at least remove the freezing cold from their legs. Otherwise they won't be able to walk, let alone run.

"It's warm. Sensei, is this fire magic?"

"Yep."

"This is a difficult spell, isn't it?"

"It is."

At the very least I doubt that the girls will be able to use it at this point in time. To lower fire magic to the limit so as to reproduce 『Warm』 and not 『Hot』 requires magic precision beyond a certain level. If someone unskilled at magic precision tries this, they'll definitely cause scalds.

I've become capable of doing this after practicing it. With the stress of this spell being on magic precision, it doesn't need much mana, which is great for me in this situation. Seeing how I've become a burden with my child body, we won't be able to survive unless I provide at least such support.

"How nice." Cindy looks rather comfortable as I'm heating her feet in the same way.

"Sensei, could you please direct it higher up?"

"For me as well."

"Please do the same for me. My waist is cold as well."

Either way, I guess it'll be difficult to continue to the upper floors if I don't get rid of their lower body's undercooling.

"Arnest too. Your legs are cold, aren't they?"

"Magic precision, huh? I am getting my just desserts for having skipped on this so far."

Generally demons have vast amounts of mana at their disposal and thus have no need to use magic precision. It looks like the majority of them don't train their magic at all. That's why it's not strange that Arnest, who's lived for a good while now, can't warm up his own legs either.

Since it'd be a problem if he burned himself by unskillfully trying to handle it himself, it's probably better if I do it for him. To be honest, it's a no-brainer that I'd rather warm up the legs of three young and beautiful girls than those of some old dude, but right now it's for the sake of survival.

"It feels nicely warm. I will leave the question why you do not start a campfire aside, though."

"In an airtight space? The stairways connecting the floors are narrow, as you can see yourself."

"I just asked to make sure. Either way, it is warm."

While at it, I also cast a simple healing spell. After all it'd be a disaster if they got a frostbite. And then I ran out of mana.

"Not having any mana is really harsh."

Since the amount of my mana has only been climbing so far, I didn't care about it much, but now I easily run out of mana if I don't pay attention to how I use it. I quickly replenish it with a magic gem, but a child's body is susceptible to fatigue either way.

I feel that it's questionable whether I'll be able to replenish my mana once more. Even though the gems contain enough mana to refill mine as many times as I want, I can't do that because of the mental fatigue.

The designer of this ruin has a truly nasty character for having anticipated that, and set up his traps so that the intruders can't catch a breath.

"You girls, replenish your mana now. I think it'll get rough from her on."

""""Okay!""""

The three girls and Arnest refill the large amount of mana they spent earlier with the magic gems that have been filled up with mana for times like these.

"This is a lot harsher than I had expected."

As long as you previously poured your own mana into a magic gem, you can recover your mana with it. If you can use healing magic, you can also heal injuries and such with it. However, mental fatigue is the only thing that can't be avoided.

It might be even better if we could take a nap as well, but hearing the frequency of banging sounds on the iron door going up, and seeing how the door itself moves each time, it seems difficult to take more than a short rest. In the first place, it'd be tough to carefreely sleep around in a situation where you don't know when the door might give way.

"Arnest, what do you think? How many more floors are waiting for us?"

"I think the next will be the last one."

"Hoh, I also feel that, but why do you think so?"

"This place is a military installation. I believe it is correct to assess this ruin as place to run experiments with the small dragon golems and various magic technologies, but going by my experience so far, the next floor should be the limit."

"Limit, eh...? You mean because of the budget?"

"No matter the era, money spins the human world after all."

"That's my opinion as well."

Moreover, I've been feeling like we're getting closer to the surface, albeit only vaguely by intuition. It's something like a sixth sense, lacking any grounded basis.

However...

"Because it will be the last floor, it should become a lot harsher than the ones so far."

"We're prepared for that."

Even if the next floor isn't the last, we must proceed onwards until we run out of strength. Once I look at Agnes, Betty, and Cindy, I can see resolve dwelling in their eyes. It looks like today's actual experiences have allowed the girls to grow a lot more than any of the lessons and training sessions so far.

I'd like to allow them to return alive from this, and display today's results after they graduate. After all, I'm their teacher.

"We should go soon."

"Yep."

Having taken a break of around ten minutes, we climb the stairs towards the next floor after seeing how the iron door has been getting warped due to small dragons. If this isn't the last floor, we might possibly get overrun by all of them after reaching our limit, but I keep going upwards while making sure to not think about that as much as possible.



"What do you think?"

"It looks kinda like the last floor."

"Whoaaa, what a big floor."

"Something like a maneuvering ground?"

"The exit of this floor is so far away that you can't see it from here."

We've reached the next floor. I quickly retrieve a telescope from my magic bag, and look for a door that might be the exit.

Oh, I think I've spotted something around 500 meters ahead of us? It looks like a gaudily decorated door. A dragon head has been set up on the wall right above the door, and on top of that, there are many holes at the wall. After coming all the way here, these holes only give me a bad vibe.

Quietly I hand the telescope to Arnest.

"The dragon head hanging over the exit door hands out the orders and repels the invaders."

"That dragon head does? But I don't think that its breath will reach all the way here." Agnes states her own opinion after looking at the exit through the telescope next.

"Those holes are fishy...aren't they?" Cindy looks at me with an expression that can't be described as anything but having a bad feeling after looking at the exit through a spare telescope I handed to her.

I share her view that those holes certainly don't look like normal ventilation holes. Artificial golems don't need any air in the first place, and even if, there wouldn't be any need to open up a dozen ventilation holes on one wall.

"I'd be happier if you weren't right about this."

"That's an unreasonable wish."

Betty puts on the same expression as Cindy after checking the exit area after borrowing a telescope from me.

Going by the events up until now, I can't believe that the designer of this ruin would make such a blunder.

"It might turn into a battle against time."

"Isn't the idea here that we'll be alright as long as we manage to reach the exit?"

"You should abandon such naive thinking."

"Figures..."

Checking through the telescope once again, I see how small dragon golems pour out of the holes in the wall, heading this way. Given that the eyes of the dragon head are shining crimson, it has very likely handed out an order along the lines of 『Eliminate the invaders!』

""Sensei, give us a strategy!""

"If possible, I'd like you to come up with your own, though..."

Agnes and the other two might soon hit their limit as well. Having said that, now that it has come to this, the usable strategies are limited.

"Arnest will keep up his 『Magic Barrier』 for as long as possible while regularly replenishing his mana."

"I suppose."

We're in a situation where we don't know when the iron door at the lower floor will break down. So we've got no choice but to defeat that dragon head before we get stuck in a pincer attack.

If we defeat that dragon head, the dragon golems should stop coming out of the ejection holes at the exit's wall in front...theoretically. I feel like we'd have big luck if it went as far as them stopping to work altogether.

Relying on Arnest's mana, we will put all our effort in getting close to that dragon head first. Then I'll have Agnes' group destroy the head once we're close enough. That also needs to be done as quickly as possible.