

Chapter 340 - Interlude: Red Tiger Storm and Exploration Party



Magic was invoked from the magic crest set up in advance. Many dazzling, vertical flashes of light shaped like stripes came into existence from the extremely uneven ground. The rays of light illuminated the vegetation in the Sea of Trees from below as if trying to stab through clouds. It just looked like a fabulous art performance carried out at night.

However, as understandable from the dazzling light, it was a special light spell. The rays of light hit and paralyzed the bodies of the gendal, native people possessing pure white skin.

"Just as guided, the 《Commandment of Light》 settled it——" A black-haired mage, as pretty as Cleopatra, informed the other members.

As befitting for a mage, her slender hands held onto Magic Wand Alando. Currently she was lifting that wand above her head. Her 《Commandment of Light》 was a light-based spell of Emperor rank which had even stopped the Evil Dragon King from moving. Thus it was unthinkable that the gendal with their low resistance against magic and mind attacks would be able to endure it, resulting in them having become unable to move altogether, just like the man hanging from the tarot card tree.

And while the blue magic gem embedded in the tip of her magic wand kept blinking with glitter, the color of the light changed from blue to a somewhat violet color.

"Alright! We'll kill the remaining gendal." The leader, a catwoman, charged in a forward-bent posture.

Her red scarf fluttered, and the backward-curved longsword in two of her hands shone glaringly. And then, while instantly brandishing her sword, she slew the gendal, who still couldn't move because of the light, with wonderful swordplay that made full use of her own unique step work.

"Okay——"

A catman with a wild, red beard clenched down on his teeth with a grinding, and swung his favorite ax from above while revealing a face full of motivation. The head of a gendal was crushed by his hearty axe attack like a watermelon, causing the rest of the torso to crumble down.

Moreover, while skilfully hanging from a thick branch behind the catman by seductively inserting the branch between the long legs, an elf with a bow said, "Very well. I'll also use <Strong Severing Arrow>——"

The glint in her almond eyes was sharp, truly reminding one of a huntress following her prey. And her characteristic, huge breasts wobbled around as if giving their muffled consent. You might even say that those were special fruits that had been carefully grown in a sea of trees.

The archery skill unleashed by the elf with the magnificent boobs flew as if ripping through the air.

Just one arrow was enough to penetrate the heads of two gendal with their flat, featureless faces - a superb display of skill.

Following this, the gendal were finished off in no time.



This battle was carried out deep in the Sea of Trees. The countless tunnels formed by thick trees and rocks protruding out of the ground in a complicated, jumbled mess reminded one of Cappadocia, a historic site in Turkey's Anatolia.

A group specialized on the exploration of underground ruins operated in these back regions of the Sea of Trees. A small dwarf with a close-cropped head walked ahead with brisk, small steps at the front of the group. His face displayed his satisfaction over the great performance of the adventurer clan he had hired.

His name was Underground Archeologist Domidon. He was the one in charge of this exploration team.

Most recently he had become famous for having discovered and announced an ancient epitaph in the Sea of Trees. And the news of him having succeeded in deciphering a part of the ancient text on it crossed Oseberia's **【Fortress City Hekatrail】** in the East, reached **【Old City Musaka】**, which had become the battlefield in the war between Oseberia and Zamalia, and even reverberated all the way to Radford's **【Strategic City Turndeid】** on the far western side after crossing the Heim River.

This was a great exploit ranking next to the achievements of the adventurer team of Adventurer Minister Floyd Passerini who brought back various items dating back to the southern civilization of the Arzen Dynasty.

Even King Oseberia heard of it. Rumors went around between the nobles of the central government, and it often came up as a topic on banquets.

"Floyd if it's the sea, and Domidon if it's the underground," was a common description exchanged with smiles between the residents of Hekatrail.

But, there was yet another reason why he had become famous, besides the discovery of the epitaph and its deciphering. Domidon's current exploration of the Sea of Trees was also related to it.

This reason was Domidon's thesis.

A part of the hypothesis raised in his thesis caused a huge backlash from archaeologists and theologians. He had developed his theories centered on the questions: 『Aren't the underground ruins connected by the Pel-Heca-Line spreading beneath the Sea of Trees closely related to the formation of the surface world, contrary to what the myths of Mahaheim tell us? Isn't the underground world as we know it far, far bigger than we're imagining it? Doesn't this world have a size that would allow it to swallow the entire Great Goldix Desert beyond the Northern Mahaheim Mountain Range?』. His thesis covered a broad range of topics, from the supposition that the legend

of the ancient sleeping princess wasn't a fairytale but actually existed in reality to a dwarven kingdom formed by his former brethren that vanished underground, the secret maneuvers of ancient gods, and devilish gods.

As he walked in front, Domidon looked back, apparently curious about something. With the beard on his chin swaying, he asked, "A bit further until the tunnel cave from the other day, right?"

"Yes, professor. It's still several kilometers away. But, this time we definitely want to collect a sample of the rock letters." A beautiful dwarf answered Domidon.

The few rays of light breaking through the foliage shone down on her as if putting her small face on center stage. She wore a trendy half-armor made out of cotton-based fabric. Her backpack was equipped with many harnesses of metallic fixtures and tiny sacks as they were popular among researchers nowadays, and was a new product that had leatherwork with a special treatment applied to it. Moreover, she wore expedition boots that had been custom-made for her using the renown Tideln leather.

"Previously we couldn't retrieve even a single piece because of the ongoing attacks... But, this time it should be alright."

Domidon nodded at his assistant's comment. While changing his sharp look into one of expectation, he took a good look at the beautiful adventurers he had hired.

"...A-Rank adventurer party, Red Tiger Storm." His female assistant, who possessed an unusually pretty face for a dwarf woman, spoke the name Red Storm Tiger in a very passionate way, and then stared at a person possessing surreal cat ears on their head among their members, just to have her cheeks dye crimson.

Reading her slight emotions, Domidon gazed at his assistant, whom he thought of like his own daughter, with a gentle look, and nodded his head deeply. His abundant, long beard bounced and then clashed against his very dwarven chest.

Domidon wore a chain mail he had reworked by himself. But, it wasn't any normal chain mail either. A special material was embedded into a part of its outer layer. It was a magic tool emitting mana with a distinctive shape similar to an eraser. It had been created by combining precious elegla nuts, which circulated on the markets of Violent Tower City Senapua and a precious material that could regulate its weight called Multi-Shroom. Thanks to this magic tool, the chain mail was ridiculously light when compared to normal chain mails.

But, because he also had his weapon, a glass staff, and a big amount of quills to scribble with him, his equipment became heavy anyway.

Going by appearance, it just looked like thick brigandine armor. A broad leather belt fitting his thick waist, possessing a buckle teeming with mana. Moreover, bound books like magic creation books hung from thin reels which extended from metallic belt loops, situated on the leather belt's side. Among them were several, unique magic creation books which could be described as being for his exclusive use.

"At present, they're performing great deeds that correspond with their price. But rather than that,

look here."

"Yes, is it triton?"

"No, a part of the trees here have a soft section...maybe..."

"Possibly a new species, right?"

"Yes. This tree...might have a higher quality than triton. The feel of its material is soft and at the same time it's hard."

"I didn't realize. Its hue is slightly different, too."

Domidon and his assistant struggled to cut off a branch of different color with a special saw after deciding that they should take a little sample with them. But, after failing several times as it was too hard, the saw's blades got worn out, making it next to impossible to continue.

The members of Red Tiger Storm kept smiling as they sighed at the happy-go-lucky actions of the professor and his assistant. But, after their leader Sarah, whose nerves were strained due to the exploration in the Sea of Trees, exchanged looks with the other members, including her vice-leader Leciel, she said, "...Professor Domidon...please focus your attention on your request. Right now we've exterminated all monsters around us, but I feel magic sources from all over the place."

"Sorry, Sarah. It was just on the spur of a moment. Anyway, let's hurry towards our destination. It's this way." Domidon bowed towards the leader of Red Tiger Storm, Sarah Florayd, and started to walk ahead.

"Professor, it was correct to have hired **【Red Tiger Storm】**, after all. They're setting their pace while taking us into consideration, and they also show understanding for our research."

His assistant's eyes were pinned on the classy catman with the ax behind Sarah.

"Nothing less of top-notch adventurers. The unified alliance of C and D-Rank adventurer parties from the other day was a huge mistake. Especially that ridiculous, completely unbalanced duo."

"You mean Günther-san and his friend, right? I liked them."

"Oh? Is that so? Certainly, they had the ability to repel attacks by countless monsters with just the two of them. But...that duo left us on their own accord..."

"That might also be your responsibility, professor. While you said stuff like, "Is this wood? Or steel?", you tried to cut off his arm with a saw in order to research the giant treeman... That might have been a bad idea."

"...Ah, I remember, something like that took place as well. But, there might be another reason for their disappearance, too."

"It looked like they squabbled with the members of other clans..."

"Uh-huh, I can't tell whether it was pride or a spirit of competition between the other parties and clans, but they did start to quarrel... In the end, it made me plead that they'd at least take our research, as their clients, into consideration. If I think about the situation back then, we're right on the money this time."

"Yes! But, I'm worried about our low numbers."

"Don't forget, I can fight as well, you know?"

Domidon touched the magic creation books at his waist. Great amounts of magic elements spilled out of those books. And then, the surface of a book caved in, matching the shape of Domidon, and transformed, making it seem as though it had its own consciousness, as if a mouth was crookedly laughing on it.

"I'll also help out to the utmost of my abilities."

The two dwarves chatted with cheerful expressions. Then they bowed to the members of Red Tiger Storm, which had listened to their conversation, and kept walking across the ground thickly covered with leaves.

"...Leader, it looks like the professor and his assistant are well-informed about this area, but we're in the depths of the Sea of Trees, right?"

"Bucchi, your prided cat ears are dented...did you get cold feet?"

"T-That's not it, but..."

"She's right! Your previous ax techniques to exterminate the white-footed fox were utter nonsense. Did your intuition grow dull from all the vacationing?"

"Ugh, I can't say anything...since Belize's arrows saved me."

"Fufu, you're criticizing Bucchi too much. Unlike enemies like the gendal, it was simply powerful as a specimen of high quality."

"Just as Leciel mentioned, the white-footed fox...definitely moved in troublesome ways. But, this is the Sea of Trees. Other formidable enemies might lurk in here, so you can't let your guard down. All of you."

"Yes, please leave the scroll throwing to me. As always, I'll match the timing with Bucchi and you, leader."

"Roger! I must protect Mie-san with this ax of mine...and regain my honor!"

"Fufu, you sure are full of vigor, Bucchi. Did you fall for the assistant of the professor?"

Bucchi's shoulders jumped, and he looked at everyone with a flustered expression, "Y-Yer wrong——"

