



Oyred is a beautiful mountain village of straw-thatched houses standing side by side along a river. Its current population amounts to 321. And right now, almost the same number of hunters is at the village.

"Tsk, we here to stack sandbags or what?" A man passes me cursing under his breath while carrying a sandbag on his shoulder.

The work of the hunters has been split into two subdivisions: the sandbag group who creates an embankment with sandbags to repel the tsunami, and the evacuation group who assist the villager's evacuation. All hunters have started their work after being assigned to either of those groups.

The villagers have already gathered on a plaza with the hunters of the evacuation team checking the name register. Having finished calling out all names just now, they've made sure that all villagers are present. All that's left is to get the villagers ready to move.

While gazing at that from the distance, I shovel sand into a bag.

"Why the hell are we part of the sandbag group?" Elemia lets her anger free reign.

"It looks like they've assigned people capable of giving the villagers a sense of security to the evacuation group."

"That's what's pissing me off! Over here they've got a cute, and moreover, reliable elf who can attack over a distance!" Elemia is fuming.

If the person who decided her group were to show up here, she'd definitely lunge at them.

"It doesn't really matter either way, does it? Both groups do no more than chores." Shea comments.

"Isn't this completely your fault, Lady Shea!? You're the furthest away from giving anyone a sense of security!"

"Hmm!? Me?"

"Obviously! Any child would break into tears when seeing your machete and mask!"

"...I think they look pretty neat, though." Shea removes her Bone-Breaking Mask from the top of her head and stares fixedly at it.

"But, this group is much better since it's easy work ~nya." Nao heaves two sandbags on her shoulders, demonstrating a level of strength you wouldn't expect from her appearance.

As I thought, beastmen have a fundamentally different level of base strength.

A wall of sandbags is being built on the western side of the village. After just half a day, it's already reached the height of my waist.

"I don't know whether it's going well, though..."

"The Shadow Tsunami is going to arrive here the day after tomorrow. They said we're aiming to reach a height that will make it impossible for the undead to scale. What a pain in the ass!"

I think we'll somehow manage to get this much done...

Shouldering a sandbag, I follow Nao. It's a plain, physically-taxing work, but surprisingly I don't hate such simple labor. I feel like watching the wall grow little-by-little makes it worthwhile.

We're building the sandbag wall so that it has an acute angle. The idea is to turn away the Shadow Tsunami with the sandbag wall as if driving a wedge into a flood. I add my own sandbag to the corner of the wall, and then wipe away my sweat.

The sky is blue without a single cloud in sight. A water wheel slowly makes its rounds while repeating the same clattering and splashing sounds as it picks up the river's water and drops it on the other side again. Those regular, rhythmical sounds are gentle enough to make me sleepy—

But then, all of a sudden, the wheel's melody is drowned out.

"We're screwed! Run away!" A man is running this way from outside the wall while shouting.

I remember him. It's the old dude with the ax-beard who invited me to partner up.

"Those cursed things swallowed the yak herd! They're movin' at a ridiculous speed, you won't be in time!"

He sprints at full speed, and head dives behind the wall with a light jump that doesn't suit his short and stout body.

"The Shadow Tsunami will be here soon."

In addition to the hunters having been split up into evacuation and sandbag group, some of them have been assigned to stand watch. It appears Mr. Beard-Ax is one of those lookouts.

He explains that the swarm of undead has moved as expected, clashing with the yak herd. As a result of that, almost all of the yak became undead. With its momentum having grown from this, the tsunami is heading straight for this village.

"The undead from the yak should amount to several dozen? That's not overly much, is it?" Shea asks in the pause when the man is catching his breath.

"If it was only them, sure. The guys who ate them mean trouble as well. There's some huge ass trolls in the bunch."

"Those trolls, huh...?" Shea clicks her tongue lightly.

Anyway, the herd of yaks is advancing while breaking through all obstacles. They'll be here very

soon. No time left to bother with the wall any longer."

The wall at its current height won't block a charge by yaks or attacks by trolls.

"We're going to retreat ~nya. And just after we got it up so high ~nyaa."

The news has already spread, and the hunters of the sandbag group are ceasing to work one after the other, returning to the village's plaza. We follow as well, withdrawing.

At that moment, an old man hurries after the retreating hunters, pleading, "Can't you wait one more day!?"

"Village chief...that's an unreasonable request."

"Please, make it work somehow..." The village chief begs with a sad voice.

Just why would he...?

"It's going to be born, the 322th villager." Elemia answers my unspoken question after having arrived on the plaza first.

—In short, a child is going to be born.

"If it's safely born in a day, we can move tomorrow."

"I get where you're coming from, but the Shadow Tsunami will be here in a few more hours. Ain't no time to wait around here. Right?" Mr. Beard-Ax asks the hunters around him for agreement.

Everyone is looking somewhat apologetic, but none of them objects.

"It's unreasonable to sacrifice many for one. Can't you transport the mother somehow?"

"Her water has already broken, and the birth is going to be difficult..."

"I see...I'm sorry to hear that, but then it's just going to be the mother."

"That's a rational decision."

"Yeah, as long as the mother survives, she can get another child..."

The hunters chat amongst each other.

Rational. Get another...

The village chief drops his shoulders in disappointment. Even though they feel guilty, the hunters hide behind the word 'reality'.

"It's going to be alright. Does the pregnant woman have everything she needs?" I address the village chief.

"Oi, don't try to act all cool there." One of the hunters voices the "ironclad rule" of the hunters.

I can fully understand what he wants to say as someone who has stayed in this area for close to a hundred days. It's extremely dangerous to talk about ideals when on site.

"I know that acting cool on site only leads to death."

"Why do you do it then?"

"Umm, probably because I can." I summon my courage and answer his question.

"Haaah!?" The hunter threatens me.

However, I've gotten used to the threatening of a grim, old man during these almost hundred days.

"I just assessed that our party is fully capable of holding out here for a day. ...We'll be able to handle it one way or another, right?" I ask my party members for confirmation.

Elemia takes a step forward without any hesitation, and glares up to the big hunter who's more than a head taller than her.

"I'll be troubled if you slight Sir Teo's abilities. The capabilities of the cortege blacksmith dropout Teo Korpi, the One-Man-Arsenal." Elemia proudly throws her chest out while pointing a finger straight at me.

"Wait a moment, I haven't dropped out."

"Don't mind the small details."

"No, no, wait. I really hate that alias."

For some reason we started quarreling over my nickname at this time.

Unable to watch us bicker any longer, Shea speaks up, "So, what do you plan to do? Going by what you've said, you have a plan, don't you?"

"Umm, it's nothing more than an idea that could work somehow."

"Hoh, out with it then."

She has already started to walk even while speaking with me. A natural, preparatory meeting on the walk.

"Hey...we're not done here."

Come to think of it, the grim hunter was threatening me. Not like he got anything of value to say anyway. It's better to put my time into preparing for battle.

"If you give me three to four hours, I'll be able to make around 50 simple weapons with field smithing. As long as a certain amount of hunters stay behind, we'll be able to fight off a hundred or two hundred undead. Right?"

"If there's no attack by the Undead Dragon, that is."

"You think it's possible for it to come here in a day?"

"We're going to be safe if the Undead Dragon exits to the east, running into the Nihlua Valley. We'll also be safe if it exits to the west, wandering off towards a route along the road. If it comes down the river, it's possible for it to arrive here in a day."

"One third of a chance for a direct attack, huh? I guess this will turn into a gamble then." Elemia demonstrates her fighting spirit by rolling up her sleeves.

"Elemia, can I have you gather the other hunters who're going to stay back?"

Even if I create many weapons, it'll be meaningless without humes capable of using them.

"Sure. I think many will stay back if they know we're on board as well. After all, they'll get all the leftovers from Lady Shea and Sir Teo. Okaaay, everyone wanting to ride with us, come over here!"

At once a hunter calls out to Elemia, telling her that he wants to stay behind.

While watching the spectacle, I head over to the smithy.



After asking the village chief, we gather up all the scythes for harvesting, and I apply the whirlwind enchantment to them.

Next up is Nao's weapon. I finely adjusted the size of the war rat claws I had prepared in advance.

"Nya!"

It looks like it fits her perfectly. She's brandishing both hands while looking happy.

"Next is..."

Elemia's arrows. Blaze-based enchantments suit her. For the arrowheads I'm going to use an alloy of Blood Sand and Swinging Fire Ore which contains a powerful fire spirit. I create powerful blaze-enchanted arrows which are referred to as Worm Killer.

Once she runs out of arrows, she'll also want a knife.

There's not much time left until the Shadow Tsunami hits this place. I single-mindedly devote myself to smithing. My concentration deepens gradually. Eventually the concept of time disappears

from my mind, and at the same time the noise of my mind dissipates, too. The world outside the smithy is gone as well. All that's left is the steel emitting heat in front of me.

Each time I swing down my hammer, vibrant sparks fly off it, accompanied by the pleasant sound of metal hitting metal.

—Teo...

—Teo...

"Hey, Teo, can you hear me ~nya?"

"Oh, Nao."

"The battle has started. They're saying they want more of these."

A hammer enchanted with Magic Fuse. It has already been used to the extent of the enchantment running out, and its blade is blackened from all the enchantment burning.

"Got it. Please go and pick up all the hammers that have run out of enchantments. Since I can also add the enchantment to tools other than hammers, you can keep bringing even hoes, pickaxes, and wooden mallets to me."

"On it ~nya!"

After crisply saluting, Nao runs off at full speed. As a tracker, she isn't very proficient at direct combat. She's very likely working as logistical support right now.

I'll refresh the enchantment on the hammer Nao brought over right away. First I carefully remove the soot and dirt clinging to it, and check the hammer for deformations.

"As expected, it's quite bent."

The hammer's surface area at its head has been greatly distorted by the explosions. Normally I'd apply the enchantment after fixing the deformations, but here I'm going to directly add the proximity explosion.

"I found some forks ~nya!" Nao returns while carrying worn forks for farming.

These are quite rusty, but...those give a blacksmith the best opportunity to shine with his skills.

I scrape the surface roughly with a metallic rasp, and then directly sprinkle it with a solution of melted fire stone and a strong acid.

—Liquefied Spirit Soaking

Enchant Water.

It's an impromptu, water-based weapon - "Undine Fork." Its durability is low, but if undead are

stabbed with this, their body fluids will go on a rampage, bursting.

"If you want hoes, there's plenty of those ~nya!"

—Liquefied Spirit Soaking

Enchant Wind.

I've added wind blades to the hoe's blade. An impromptu, wind-based weapon - "Farmer's Gale."

"More ~nya! The numbers are amazing ~nya!"

—Liquefied Spirit Soaking

Enchant Earth.

"Charge's Scoop."

"No matter how many they kill, there's no end to them ~nya. Those who got killed are gradually turning into undead. It's terrible since they can't run away. ~nya."

I continue creating impromptu weapons while listening to Nao's report inside the smithy.