

## Chapter 321: Golden Dragon

"Here I come!"

Alise declared as she kicked the floor and darted into the group of black rhinos. The monsters had surrounded her from all sides, yet she kept stabbing with a fearless grin. She was the picture-perfect definition of a reckless adventurer. Her unparalleled confidence stemmed from Asahi. The golden spearhead of his spear smoothly ripped into the rhino's thick chest and impaled its heart. He turned around and stabbed thrice, piercing a monster heart with each. The adrenaline power of the spear allowed him to use bullet-time without using his perception.

Alise looked at him with stars in her eyes. "Wow. Jun... Asahi, your new spear is strong!"

"You just called me Junior, didn't you?"

Alise giggled sheepishly. "I'm too used to that... where did you get that spear?"

Finn was also curious about the spear's origins. Even his top-class spear met resistance when slashing the thick rhino hide.

"Hephaestus helped me in forging this," Asahi said.

He couldn't say his goddess created the spear for him in less than a moment. That would be like putting down the deities of this world.

"Hephaestus-sama?" Finn mumbled. "You are a blacksmith as well?"

“A novice one, yeah,” he shrugged. “We should move. I can feel a strong monster that way.”

Riveria wanted to ask how he sensed where to go in these maze-like corridors. A floor like this usually took over half a day because of the jumbled-up path. Asahi guided them throughout as if he knew every direction.

Asahi took Alise’s hand and guided the group toward the strong monster lurking in the depths of this floor. The occasion hordes of purple spiders and the black rhinos fell as soon as they leaped out of the walls.

Asahi glanced at Ryuu, who walked beside Alise. She had been silent ever since the morning incident. She hadn’t gotten over the shock of finding her friend being with the lover of her goddess.

Ryuu dodged his gaze and hung her head. Even though she cheered for them, seeing them together made her bittersweet. The time they spent yesterday was one of the most memorable moments of her life. He was the center of her attention yesterday, but she couldn’t look him in the eyes today.

*‘Why am I feeling like this? I should be happy for Alise...’*

The elf couldn’t comprehend her heart. She continued the trip with a heavy heart. The number of monsters she slew wasn’t a fraction of what she accomplished yesterday.

Asahi noticed her odd state and frowned. Alise squeezed his hand, tilting her head.

"Anything wrong?"

"Ryuu. She looks down."

"I can guess her reason," Alise said with a sigh. She couldn't help Ryuu this time. The elf had to deal with her feelings on her own and decide what was best for her life. If Alise pushed her in the wrong direction, Ryuu could be stuck in a life full of regrets. Elves were arrogant and haughty, but they rarely changed their partners throughout their long life. She believed in Asahi's ability to keep a woman happy. After all, every woman around him looked happier than the last.

*'I'm on that list too. Hehe.'*

Asahi came face to face with four paths that split into countless intersections. The hallway in the far corner gave the strongest impression.

"It's this way," Finn said and pointed at the same path.

Asahi released Alise's hand and approached Ais. "We'll be fighting a dragon."

Ais looked up and nodded, a fierce glint in her eyes. Asahi calmed her bubbling anger with headpats.

"I'll be mad if you go berserk for some cheap lizard. Save the anger for the black one, okay?"

Ais gave another silent nod. "Onii-san... knows about me?"

"Not everything, but yeah."

Riveria heaved a sigh on the side. She was concerned over Ais for nothing.

Asahi winked at Riveria. "Mom, it'd be better if you let me take care of that lizard."

After meeting Ddraig, he didn't put any dragon in his eyes. Especially not a level 6 one.

*'I haven't fought that whining dragon for weeks.'*

Another thing added to his hefty to-do list.

"I'll fight with you!" Alise said, eyes burning with a newfound will. "Don't forget that we're... we're... comrades."

Turning crimson, she tried to speak about their relationship, but her embarrassment got the better of her.

"I'm coming too..." Ryuu spoke up.

Asahi chuckled. "Alright. Let's hunt down that golden lizard."

"I'll aid you with my spells," Riveria said.

Finn nodded, rubbing his chin. "Tiona and I will help him on the frontlines. Aki and others will keep watch on the monsters here. The monsters will spawn as long as we are here. We don't want our exit to be blocked."

Tiona jumped up, grinning wildly. "Ye! I'll fight the dragon!"

Tione hung her head. "I wanna beat a dragon."

"Tione! I promise I won't level up without you!"

"No, do what you must. I'll catch up in no time."

With heartwarming smiles, the sisters talked like typical Amazonians.

Asahi looked at Bete with a smirk. "You hear that, Beta? Keep watch here. Don't let anyone slip by."

Bete gritted his teeth. Wolves heavily emphasized the hierarchy in their packs. Being beta was insulting to his pride. As a former member of the werewolf tribe, such traditions were ingrained in him throughout his life.

Riveria frowned at the odd skirmish between Asahi and Bete.

*'Is this retaliation for calling him a newbie?'*

Asahi could wipe Bete from existence. Even Loki wouldn't do much other than saying some curses. Yet, he just teased Bete instead of choosing violence.

*'It's oddly cute...'*

Taking Ais's hand, he entered the hallway, which only narrowed the further he went.

"There it is."

Light came from the wide chamber up ahead. Asahi could hear the snores of the dragon, obviously in a slumber. He smiled at Ais and gently released her hand. He clenched his spear and walked into the room.

The other side had plenty of lush green trees, enough to be considered a small forest. In the corner of the room, a pond could be seen surrounded by wildflowers. Ripples traveled across the pristine blue water as it fell from a crack in the wall.

The guardian of the Cadmus Spring laid on a bed of flowers nearby. A dragon with soft golden scales. With how its wings and forelegs were seamlessly joint together, it appeared as a wyvern.

“You sure that’s a dragon?” Asahi asked. “Looks like a cheap wyvern to me.”

Riveria and others were speechless. Only Alise was grinning beside him. Asahi was unsure if his new lover had a split personality disorder. She seemed to become a different person when excited.

*‘Tsunderes around me are just built different.’*

As if hearing the insult directed at it, the dragon opened its eyes with a snap, and its reptilian pupils shrunk. With a mighty roar, it pushed itself off the ground.

Ais unsheathed her sword and calmly faced the roaring dragon. This battle was a test of her willpower more than anyone.