

「著」夕蜜柑

「イラスト」狐印

防  
御  
力

痛いのは  
嫌なので

9

極  
振り

したいと思  
います。

# **Itai no wa Iya nanode Bōgyo-Ryoku ni Kyokufuri Shitai to Omoimasu**

**– I hate being in pain, so I think I'll make a full defense build –**

**- VOLUME 9 -**

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**[ Asian Hobbyist ]**



痛いのは嫌なので

【著】夕蜜柑

【イラスト】狐印

All points are  
divided to VIT.

Because a  
painful one isn't liked.

防御力に極振りしたいと思います。

9

ミイ

Mii's STATUS

Lv86

HP 635/635

MP 1740/1740

[STR 20]

[VIT 70]

[AGI 85]

[DEX 30]

[INT 150]

Welcome to  
"NewWorld  
Online".





総攻撃のチャンスにて

【攻撃開始】!

【聖竜の光剣】!

【殺戮の豪炎】!

「クイントプルスラッシュ」!





「こちらこそ、助かった」

「ああ、共闘も  
存外いいものだった」



「三日目も  
頑張りましょうね！」

【楓の木】  
イベント拠点にて





SKILL Fire Magic X / Explos flame / Flame spear / Blaze Circle /  
Knowledge of Magic X / Master of Magic X / Fast chanting /  
MP Enhancement large / MP Saving large / MP Recovery speed Enhancement large /  
Magical attack Enhancement large / Magic Boost / Magical Power Increasing /  
Reinforced Magic / Insight / Sheep shearing / Poison ineffective / Paralysis ineffective /  
Stun ineffective / Sleep Resistance medium / Freeze ineffective / Burn ineffective /  
Eternal Blaze / the Flame Emperor / eruption / Flare accelerator / Prison of Flame /  
Self-destruction / Great flame / Blue Flame / Chaining Fire / Inferno /  
Mud of Dead spirit / Huge eruption

## Mii's STATUS

Lv86 HP 635/635 MP 1740/1740

[STR 20] [VIT 70]

[AGI 85] [DEX 30] [INT 150]

防痛  
御力  
極振り  
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は  
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思います。  
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Welcome to  
“NewWorld Online”.

9





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All points are divided to VIT.

Because

a painful one isn't liked.

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## NewWorld Online STATUS

GUILD 楓の木

NAME **メイプル** II Maple **LV 60**  
 HP 200/200 MP 22/22

## PROFILE

## 最強最硬の大盾使い

ゲーム初心者だったが、防御力に極振りし、どんな攻撃もノーダメージな最硬大盾使いとなる。なんでも楽しめる真っ直ぐな性格で、発想の突飛さで周囲を驚かせることもしばしば。戦闘では、あらゆる攻撃を無効化しつつ数々の強力無比なカウンタースキルを叩き込む。

## STATUS

STR 000 VIT 15180 AGI 000  
 DEX 000 INT 000

## EQUIPMENT

新月 skill ヒドラ 毒竜 闇夜ノ写 skill 悪食  
 黒薔薇ノ鎧 skill しみ出る混沌  
 絆の架け橋 タフネスリング  
 命の指輪

## SKILL

シールドアタック 体捌き 攻撃逸らし 瞑想 挑発 鼓舞 ヘビーボディ  
 HP強化小 MP強化小 深緑の加護  
 大盾の心得Ⅶ カバームーブⅣ カバー ピアースガード カウンター クイックチェンジ  
 絶対防御 極悪非道 大物喰らい 毒竜喰らい 爆弾喰らい 羊喰らい  
 不屈の守護者 念力 フォートレス 身捧ぐ慈愛 機械神 蠱毒の呪法 凍てつく大地  
 百鬼夜行Ⅰ 天王の玉座 冥界の縁 結晶化 大噴火 不壊の盾

## TAME MONSTER

Name シロップ 高い防御力を誇る亀のモンスター  
 巨大化 精霊砲 大自然 etc.





## NewWorld Online STATUS

## GUILD 楓の木

NAME **サリー** II Sally LV **60**  
 HP 32/32 MP 130/130

## PROFILE

## 絶対回避の暗殺者

メイプルの親友であり相棒である、しっかり者の少女。友達思いで、メイプルと一緒にゲームを楽しむことを心がけている。軽装の短剣二刀流をバトルスタイルとし、驚異的な集中力とプレイヤースキルで、あらゆる攻撃を回避する。

## STATUS

STR 125 VIT 000 AGI 170  
 DEX 045 INT 060

## EQUIPMENT

II 深海のダガー II 水底のダガー  
 II 水面のマフラー skill 蟹気楼  
 II 大海のコート skill 大海  
 II 大海の衣 II 死者の足 skill 黄泉への一步  
 II 絆の架け橋



## SKILL

疾風斬り ディフェンスブレイク 鼓舞  
 ダウンアタック パワーアタック スイッチアタック ビンポイントアタック  
 連撃剣V 体術VIII 火魔法III 水魔法III 風魔法III 土魔法III 闇魔法III 光魔法III  
 筋力強化大 連撃強化大  
 MP強化中 MPカット中 MP回復速度強化中 毒耐性小 採取速度強化小  
 短剣の心得X 魔法の心得III  
 状態異常攻撃VIII 気配遮断III 気配察知II しのび足I 跳躍V クイックチェンジ  
 料理I 釣り 水泳X 潜水X 毛刈り  
 超加速 古代ノ海 追刃 器用貧乏 剣ノ舞 空蟬 糸使いVII 氷柱 氷結領域  
 冥界の縁 大噴火 水操術IV

## TAME MONSTER

II Name 朧 多彩なスキルで敵を翻弄する狐のモンスター

瞬影 影分身 拘束結界 etc.



## NewWorld Online STATUS

## GUILD 楓の木

NAME クロム II Kuromu

LV 80

HP 940/940 MP 52/52

## PROFILE

## 不撓不屈のゾンビ盾

NewWorld Onlineで古くから名の知られた上位プレイヤー。面倒見がよく頼りになる兄貴分。メイプルと同じ大盾使いで、どんな攻撃にも50%の確率でHP1を残して耐えられるユニーク装備を持ち、豊富な回復スキルも相まってしぶとく戦線を維持する。

## STATUS

STR 135 VIT 175 AGI 040

DEX 030 INT 020

## EQUIPMENT

首落とし skill 命喰らい

怨霊の壁 skill 吸魂

血塗れ髑髏 skill 魂喰らい

血染めの白鎧 skill デッド・オア・アライブ

頑健の指輪 鉄壁の指輪

絆の架け橋

## SKILL

刺突 属性剣 シールドアタック 体捌き 攻撃逸らし 大防御 挑発

鉄壁体制

防壁 アイアンボディ ヘビーボディ

HP強化大 HP回復速度強化大 MP強化中 深緑の加護

大盾の心得X 防御の心得X カバームーブX カバー ビアースガード カウンター

ガードオーラ 防御陣形 守護の力 大盾の極意VII 防御の極意VI

毒無効 麻痺無効 スタン無効 睡眠無効 氷結無効 炎上耐性大

採掘IV 採取VII 毛刈り

精霊の光 不屈の守護者 バトルヒーリング 死霊の泥 結晶化 活性化

## TAME MONSTER

Name ネクロ 身に纏うことで真価を発揮する鎧型モンスター

幽鎧装着 衝撃反射 etc.





## NewWorld Online STATUS

GUILD 楓の木

NAME **イズ** II Iz **LV 66**  
 HP 100/100 MP 100/100

## PROFILE

## 超一流の生産職

モノづくりに強いこだわりとプライドを持つ生産特化型プレイヤー。ゲームで思い通りに服、武器、鎧、アイテムなどを作れることに魅力を感じている。戦闘には極力関わらないスタイルだったが、最近は攻撃や支援をアイテムで担当することも。

## STATUS

STR 045 VIT 020 AGI 080  
 DEX 210 INT 080

## EQUIPMENT

鍛冶屋のハンマー・X  
 錬金術士のゴーグル skill 天邪鬼な錬金術  
 錬金術士のロングコート skill 魔法工房  
 鍛冶屋のレギンス・X  
 錬金術士のブーツ skill 新境地  
 ポーションポーチ アイテムポーチ  
 絆の架け橋

## SKILL

ストライク  
 生産の心得X 生産の極意X  
 強化成功率強化大 採取速度強化大 採掘速度強化大  
 生産個数増加大 生産速度強化大  
 状態異常攻撃III しのび足V 遠見  
 鍛冶X 裁縫X 栽培X 調合X 加工X 料理X 採掘X 採取X 水泳VI 潜水VII  
 毛刈り  
 鍛冶神の加護X 観察眼 特性付与IV 植物学 鉱物学

## TAME MONSTER

Name **フェイ** アイテム製作をサポートする精霊  
 アイテム強化 リサイクル etc.





## NewWorld Online STATUS

GUILD 楓の木

NAME カスミ Kasumi

LV 76

HP 435/435 MP 70/70

## PROFILE

## 孤高のソードダンサー

ソロプレイヤーとしても高い実力を持つ刀使いの女性プレイヤー。一歩引いて物事を考えられる落ち着いた性格で、メイプル・サリーの規格外コンビにはいつも驚かされている。戦局に応じて様々な刀スキルを繰り出しながら戦う。

## STATUS

STR 205 VIT 080 AGI 090

DEX 030 INT 030

## EQUIPMENT

身喰らいの妖刀・紫 桜色の髪留め

桜の衣 今紫の袴 侍の脛当

侍の手甲 金の帯留め

絆の架け橋 桜の紋章



## SKILL

一閃 兜割り ガードブレイク 斬り払い 見切り 鼓舞 攻撃体制

刀術X 一刀両断 投擲 パワーオーラ 鎧斬り

HP強化大 MP強化中 攻撃強化中 毒無効 麻痺無効 スタン耐性大 睡眠耐性大

氷結耐性中 炎上耐性大

長剣の心得X 刀の心得X 長剣の極意V 刀の極意VII

採掘IV 採取VI 潜水V 水泳VI 跳躍VII 毛刈り

遠見 不屈 剣気 勇猛 怪力 超加速 常在戦場 心眼

## TAME MONSTER

Name ハク 霧の中からの奇襲を得意とする白蛇

超巨大化 麻痺毒 etc.

## NewWorld Online STATUS

GUILD 楓の木

NAME カナデ Kanade

LV 52

HP 335/335 MP 250/250

## PROFILE

## 気まぐれな天才魔術師

中性的な容姿の、ずば抜けた記憶力を持つ天才プレイヤー。その頭脳ゆえ人付き合いを避けるタイプだったが、無邪気なメイプルとは打ち解け仲良くなる。様々な魔法を事前に魔導書としてストックしておくことができる。

## STATUS

STR 015 VIT 010 AGI 090

DEX 050 INT 110

## EQUIPMENT

神々の叡智 skill 神界書庫

ダイヤのキャスケット・Ⅷ

知恵のコート・Ⅵ 知恵のレギンス・Ⅷ

知恵のブーツ・Ⅵ

スベードのイヤリング

魔道士のグローブ 絆の架け橋

## SKILL

魔法の心得Ⅷ 高速詠唱

MP強化中 MPカット中 MP回復速度強化大 魔法威力強化中 深緑の加護

火魔法Ⅶ 水魔法Ⅴ 風魔法Ⅶ 土魔法Ⅴ 闇魔法Ⅲ 光魔法Ⅶ

魔導書庫 死霊の泥

魔法融合

## TAME MONSTER

Name ソウ プレイヤーの能力をコピーできるスライム

擬態 分裂 etc.





## NewWorld Online STATUS

GUILD 楓の木

NAME **マイ** II Mai **LV 48**  
 HP 35/35 MP 20/20

## PROFILE

## 双子の侵略者

メイプルがスカウトした双子の攻撃極振り初心者プレイヤーの片割れ。ユイの姉で、皆の役に立てるように精一杯頑張っている。ゲーム内最高峰の攻撃力を持ち、近距離の敵なら二刀流のハンマーで粉砕する。

## STATUS

STR 490 VIT 000 AGI 000  
 DEX 000 INT 000

## EQUIPMENT

破壊の黒槌・X  
 ブラックドールドレス・X  
 ブラックドールタイツ・X  
 ブラックドールシューズ・X  
 小さなりボン シルクグローブ  
 絆の架け橋



## SKILL

ダブルスタンプ ダブルインパクト ダブルストライク  
 攻撃強化大 大槌の心得X  
 投擲 飛撃  
 侵略者 破壊王 ジャイアントキリング デストロイモード  
 大物喰らい 決戦仕様

## TAME MONSTER

Name **ツキミ** 黒い毛並みが特徴の熊のモンスター  
 パワーシェア ブライトスター etc.

## NewWorld Online STATUS

GUILD 楓の木

NAME ユイ Yui LV 48  
 HP 35/35 MP 20/20

## PROFILE

## 双子の破壊王

メイプルがスカウトした双子の攻撃極振り初心者プレイヤーの片割れ。マイの妹で、マイよりも前向きで立ち直りが早い。ゲーム内最高峰の攻撃力を持ち、遠距離の敵ならイズお手製の鉄球を投げて粉碎する。

## STATUS

STR 490 VIT 000 AGI 000  
 DEX 000 INT 000

## EQUIPMENT

破壊の白槌・X  
 ホワイトドールドレス・X  
 ホワイトドールタイツ・X  
 ホワイトドールシューズ・X  
 小さなりボン シルクグローブ  
 絆の架け橋

## SKILL

ダブルスタンプ ダブルインパクト ダブルストライク  
 攻撃強化大 大槌の心得X  
 投擲 飛撃  
 侵略者 破壊王 ジャイアントキリング デストロイモード  
 大物喰らい 決戦仕様

## TAME MONSTER

Name ユキミ 白い毛並みが特徴の熊のモンスター  
 パワーシェア ブライトスター etc.





## OUTLINE

## 名実ともにNo.1の最強ギルド

トップクラスの実力を備えたプレイヤーたちが揃った大規模ギルドで、第四回イベントのギルド対抗戦では堂々の一位を獲得した。階層攻略の最前線に立ち、プレイヤーたちからも一目置かれている。

## Guild Member



## || NAME ペイン

第一回イベントで一位を取ってから、今もなお最高峰の実力を維持し続けているトッププレイヤー。第四回イベントではその攻撃力からメイプルをあと一歩のところまで追いつめた。

## TAME MONSTER

|| Name レイ 銀の鱗を持つドラゴン



## || NAME ドレッド

【神速】の異名を持つスピードタイプの短剣使い。第一回イベントでは二位であり、サリーと同様に素早い動きで敵を翻弄しながら戦う。

## TAME MONSTER

|| Name シャドウ 影に潜む狼



## || NAME フレデリカ

あらゆる魔法を多重化して使用する魔法使い。その特性を生かし、攻撃・防御・支援を幅広く行う。緩めの口調とは裏腹に負けず嫌いな一面があり、サリーにライバル心を燃やす。

## TAME MONSTER

|| Name ノーツ 黄色い小鳥



## || NAME ドラグ

巨大な斧と武骨な鎧を装備したパワーファイター。第一回イベントでは五位に入る実力を持ち、その斧を叩きつければ大地が割れる。

## TAME MONSTER

|| Name アース 岩でできたゴーレム

## OUTLINE

## ミィに忠誠を誓う組織力の高いギルド

カリスマ的存在である【炎帝】ミィのもとで、ギルドメンバーが強固に団結しているのが特徴。ミィの圧倒的な火力を最大限に生かすため、各々が戦線維持や回復支援など与えられた役割をこなす。

## Guild Member



||| NAME ミィ

スキル【炎帝】を所持する炎特化型の魔法使い。超高威力で見た目も派手な大技を連発する一方、MPの消費が激しい。凛々しいリーダー像を演じているだけで、本当は可愛いものが大好き。

TAME MONSTER

||| Name イグニス 炎を纏う不死鳥



||| NAME マルクス

数々の罠を遠隔設置し敵を妨害するトラッパー。とても用心深い性格で、罠の設置箇所を見極める力はギルドメンバーからも一目置かれている。

TAME MONSTER

||| Name クリア 姿を消せるカメレオン



||| NAME ミザリー

ミィのことを支えるヒーラーであり、MP譲渡や蘇生、範囲回復など優秀なスキルを多数所持している。その役回りからギルドメンバーには【聖女】と慕われている。

TAME MONSTER

||| Name ペル 長毛の白猫



||| NAME シン

【崩剣】という、一つの剣を複数の小さな剣に分裂させて攻撃する独特なバトルスタイルを持ち、その手数で敵を圧倒する。カスミとは互いにライバルの関係。

TAME MONSTER

||| Name ウェン 風を操る鷹



# 『NewWorld Online』 各層紹介

## 一層

NWOのプレイヤーたちを出迎えるファンタジー世界の入り口。澄み切った青空と雄大な自然が、プレイヤーを冒険へと駆り立てる。初心者向けの易しい階層かと思いきや、高難易度のダンジョンもいくつか



メイブル が スキル【絶対防御】 を  
取得しました

## 二層

NWOサービス開始から三カ月後のアップデートで追加された階層。一層から階層ボスを撃破することで往来可能となり、森や鉱山・荒地など様々なエリアがプレイヤーを待ち受ける。NPCやクエストも豊富に設定されており、中には報酬として規格外のスキルを手に入れられるものも存在する。

サリー が スキル【超加速】 を  
取得しました

### 第二回イベント

イベントエリアに散らばった三百枚のメダルを集める探索型イベント。メイブルとサリーは二人でこのイベントを攻略する中で、カスミやカナデ、シロップや臘など、この後も一緒にプレイしていくことになる大切な仲間たちと出会う。



設置されている。メイブルやサリーも当然この二層からスタートし、今のプレイスタイルの礎を築いた。



メイブル が スキル【毒竜】 を  
取得しました

### 第一回イベント

NWO最初のイベントは、複数プレイヤー同士のバトルロイヤル。メイブルはノーダメージで二千人以上ものプレイヤーを撃破し、初心者ながらイベント三位という華々しいデビューを飾った。



また第二回イベント終了後にはギルドシステムが実装され、メイブルもギルド「楓の木」を設立。個性豊かなギルドメンバーたちと一緒に、この二層でさらにパワーアップしていく。

クロム が ユニークシリーズ を  
獲得しました

メイブル が スキル【身捧ぐ慈愛】 を  
取得しました

メイブル が スキル【参み出る混沌】 を  
取得しました

カナデ が スキル【魔導書庫】 を  
取得しました

### 第三回イベント

フィールドに現れる期間限定モンスターを倒し、そのモンスターがドロップするアイテムを集めるイベント。イズ謹製の羊毛装備が披露された。





カスミが「身喰らいの妖刀・紫」を獲得しました

#### 第五回イベント

フィールドに現れる四種類のモンスターを倒し、それぞれに応じたポイントを集めていく探索型イベント。時期がクリスマスということもあり、ランダムで「プレゼントボックス」というアイテムがドロップした。



メイプルがスキル「百鬼夜行」を取得しました



イズがユニークシリーズを獲得しました

メイプルがスキル「機械神」を取得しました

曇り空に覆われた機械と道具の世界。今までの階層とは世界観が大きく変わっており、フィールドの高低差はかなり激しい。そのため移動手段として、飛行アイテムが実装されている。町の中心にある建物には機械神がいるという逸話があり、それにまつわるイベントにメイプルは巻き込まれる――。

### 三層

#### 第四回イベント

大小さまざまなギルド同士で行われるオープン争奪戦。第一回イベント一位のペイン率いる【集う聖剣】や、圧倒的なカリスマを誇る炎使いミィ率いる【炎帝ノ国】などの大規模ギルドが覇を競う中、たった八人の【楓の木】は彼らとの直接対決を制し、イベント三位に食い込む快挙を成し遂げる。

### 四層



白熱の第四回イベントから一カ月と少し経って実装された、赤と青の二つの満月が浮かぶ常夜の新エリア。木造建築の立ち並ぶ和風の世界観で、町の中央に向かうには専用の許可証をもって鳥居をくぐらねばならない。和風のものに目がないカスミにとっては堪らないエリアで、カスミが最速で町の中心部に到達したことで、妖怪たちが闊歩する呪術の町へと姿を変えた。

### 五層



メイプルがスキル「天王の玉座」を取得しました

#### 第六回イベント

HPの回復が禁じられたジャングルが舞台の探索型イベント。メイプルは良きライバルとなったペインと共闘しその防御力を見せつける一方、サリーも更なるスキルを獲得し、その移動力に磨きをかける。

サリーがスキル「糸使い」を取得しました

一面がふわふわの雲で出来た、天上の楽園とでもいふべき階層。ダンジョンやモンスターに至るまで雲で設計されている。立体構造になっているところが多く、足元も不安定なので注意が必要。隠しボスとして「光の王」という敵が出現するが、メイプルによる絶対防御とマイ・ユイの圧倒的な攻撃力の前に敗れ去った……。





スタイルに合わせて個性豊かなモンスターと絆を結んでいく。一方のメイプルとサリーも、長らく一緒に旅してきたシロップと朧に進化イベントが発生し、その成長を喜ぶ。



プレイヤーたちの前に立ち並ぶのは、古びた墓標と荒野。薄暗く少し霧のかかった不気味なエリアである。この階層では各層に設置されるギルドホームの外観も廃屋に様変わり。出てくるモンスターも幽霊やアンデッドばかりで、恐いものが苦手なサリーは早々にログアウトを決意する。メイプルはダウンしたサリーのために二人で探索を始める。

## 六層

To be continued...

### 第八回イベント

予選と本戦の二段階で構成されるイベントで、まず予選ではイベントフィールドで「モンスターの撃破数」と「一デスまでの時間」を競い合う。その結果に応じて本戦フィールドの難易度とそのイベント報酬が変更される。【楓の木】の面々は無事に全員が最高難易度のフィールドに駒を進め、強豪ギルド達も本戦開始に向けてやる気を漲らせるのだった。



## 七層

心地よい風の吹く草原をはじめ、火山や雪山、浮遊島など多様な地形がプレイヤーを出迎えるエリア。その最大の特徴は、このエリアのモンスターを仲間にすることが出来ること。まだティムモンスターを手に入れていない【楓の木】の面々は、各々のプレイ

### 第七回イベント

十階建ての塔を登っていく、ダンジョン攻略タイプのイベント。いくつかの難易度が設定されており、それに応じて報酬としてもらえるメダルの枚数も変わる。メイプルとサリーは、二人だけで最高難易度のノーダメージ攻略をはじめる。



サリーがスキル「水操術」を獲得しました

# CHAPTER 295

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND THE MAIN BATTLE

As Maple and the others spent their days busily raising their monsters's levels, the day of the main battle finally arrived.

They discussed their direction one last time and then waited to be teleported to the field.

The eight of them would be taking on the field with the highest difficulty, and if you survived until the end, you would receive 5 medals.

"It seems like you can also get other medals by killing monsters on the field. So it would be great if we can collect more than the ones for surviving. Considering how the battle is set up... I think we're supposed to decide if we are going to stick together the entire time or not."

Like Sally said, the more of the optional medals you collected, the stronger you would become.

And these medals you got on the field would go to every party member. In other words, if Maple acquired 1 medal, then each of the other members would also get 1 medal.

If they all split up and defeated strong monsters, they would be able to acquire a lot of medals. However, there was also a possibility that they could die, and the number of medals they received for surviving would drop.

"It says that there is a specific time when strong monsters come out. I think we could gain the most by gathering together when that happens, while generally spreading out."

"Yeah. Surviving is important. But I want to get as many medals as possible!"

"Well, even if we split up, I think it would best if it was just in half, while considering who works best with who."



Kanade suggested, and the others agreed. It was then decided that Maple, Sally, Yui, and Mai would make one team, while Kanade, Izu, Chrome, and Kasumi would make the other team.

As it was clear that Maple should be teamed up with the three that could be one-shotted if they were ambushed, they came to this decision in an instant.

“Let’s do our best during the main fight too!”

“Yes, Yui.”

“Is it almost time?... Oh, here it comes.”

“Alright! Let’s all survive until the end!”

Those were Maple’s final words as she raised her fish into the air. The others followed. And like that, the members of Maple Tree were enveloped in light as they were teleported away.

When the light faded around them, they saw that they were in the same field once again. As for their starting point, it was like a wasteland or desert, where only sand and rocks could be seen.

“It’s a good thing that we have a clear view. There doesn’t seem to be any players around...”

“Yeah. However, it seems that we have a visitor already!”

Great waves appeared in the sand, and then gigantic worms that could have swallowed the entire party began to appear before them. Once they detected Maple and the others, they opened their mouths and attacked.

“Alright! ‘Dedicated Affection’!”

Maple activated the skill in order to protect everyone. As the clouds of dust rose into the air, all of the attacks were neutralized. At the same time, each of them called out their tamed monster and then went out on the attack.

“There’s no time to put them in place... Fay, ‘Item Buff’!”

Izu threw the attack strengthening item onto the ground, and a red light enveloped all of them. Once that was over, Yui and Mai got onto their tamed monsters and jumped out.

“‘Power Share’! ‘Bright Star’!”

“‘Power Share’! ‘Bright Star’!”

Mai and Yui gave the order and a spherical effect bounced off of Tsukimi and Yuki. This caused great damage to all of the worms that were close to them.

However, they still had a lot of HP remaining. But this was no surprise, given that it was the highest difficulty.

“I won’t let you get away! Kasumi! Sally!”

“Yeah! ‘Blood Blade’! Haku, ‘Super Enlarge,’ ‘Paralysis Poison’!”

“Oboro! ‘Binding Barrier’!”

Haku suddenly grew very large next to Kasumi. It quickly wrapped around and strangled the worm while paralyzing it so that it couldn’t move. At the same time, Oboro stopped a different worm from moving.

“Necro, ‘Fire of Death’!”

Once they were unable to move, Chrome, who was equipping Necro, began to shoot out flames, accelerating the damage.

It was here that Mai and Yui, along with Tsukimi and Yukimi, began to pommel the worms. This was too much, and the worms were unable to withstand it, and they exploded. The other words seemed to understand that they were at a disadvantage, and they dove back into the sand and escaped.

Dust filled the air once again. And when it settled, the field was as quiet as it was before.

“Oohh! Amazing! All of your monsters are so strong!”

“But we weren’t able to kill all of them... Still, it was easy to fight since you were protecting us, Maple.”



“Monsters other than the ones we were attacking also died. All of the tamed monsters were so strong!”

Yui and Mai said as they looked at the others with awe and respect. Sally, Kasumi and Chrome looked puzzled.

“Eh? No, I didn’t think it was that impressive.”

“Yeah, me too. Though, Haku’s attack power was a little high...”

“Hehehe... Sou! Over here.”

Kanade laughed with amusement when he saw how confused they looked. Then he called Sou. What then appeared from the huge shadow of Haku, was Sou, who now had white hair, and had clothes made of a pink mesh with frills and ribbons. In other words, Sou looked exactly like Yui.

“What!? Me-me!?”

“Yes. I borrowed your attack power for a little while. It really was impressive.”

Sou had been acting in a state where the appearance and status were reflected by the skill. So if it was mimicking Yui, then it stood to reason that its attack power would be tremendous.

“Ohh. Kanade’s tamed monster is strong too. That really increases the possibilities in terms of strategy...”

“That being said, looks like its time is up.”

Kanade said. Just then, Sou’s body was enveloped in light, and then it returned to being a transparent slime.

“It’s over pretty quickly, but the cool down time is long. Still, it’s interesting, isn’t it? It can turn into party members that it memorized in advance.”

Like this, Kanade’s team had plenty of attack ability. And then the four of them started to look around.

“Ah! Sally. Are there any medals on the ground?”

“Hmm. Let me see.”

There was nothing around that looked like a medal. Perhaps it meant that those worms were just stock monsters.

“We’ll die if we let our guard down.”

“I suppose this is what the hardest difficulty is going to be like. Alright, let’s look for a place where we can get our bearings. You can all ride on Haku.”

And so the rest of them returned their tamed monsters to their rings, and then got on top of Haku’s back. And like that, the snake slithered through the desert.



# CHAPTER 296

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND THE MARSHLANDS

The desert was connected directly to a forest. And since there were no monsters around them, they decided that it was a good place to split up.

Sally checked her map again and told the others the direction they would take.

“All of our party members will be displayed on the map. So we can separate here and then regroup shortly before the strong monsters come out.”

“Yeah, that sounds fine. We should go to the forest then. Maple’s team can go to the marshlands.”

“Okay! I’m going to find lots of medals!”

“Oh! And I’m going to find promising monsters and hunt them!”

While Maple waved her hand wildly, they separated from Chrome’s team and started their search for medals.

“Alright, since ‘Dedicated Affection’ is still activated, let’s go and explore.”

“Yes, let’s do that! Are you fine, Mai and Yui?”

“I’m fine!”

“I’m fine!”

“Let’s go then!”

Now that they had tamed monsters, Mai and Yui could move faster than when they rode on Syrup. Mai and Sally got onto Tsukimi’s back, while Yui and Maple rode on Yukimi. And like that, they dashed through the marshland.

“Still, this field really is big. Hmm. Where should we look...”

“Hehehe. I thought this might happen... Look at this.”

Sally said as she sent the other three a message. It was a photo of Sally’s map during the preliminary.

“Since it’s supposed to be the same map, I marked down some likely places. I think it could be useful. Of course, I sent it to the other group as well.”

“You’re amazing, Sally! Uh, we’re currently right here, so...”

The three of them compared the image with their current map and found a mark that was close by.

“Ah! Maple, there is one in this marshland too!”

“Oh, there is!”

“Yes. So why don’t we go there first? Mai, I’ll give you instructions.”

“Okay, got it. Tsukimi!”

As they had decided their first destination, the four of them started to move towards it. There were almost no obstacles in their path. It was just water and short plants.

“It’s in the center, right?”

“Yes. Well, I doubt we will reach it so easily!”

As the four of them walked on, they were suddenly surrounded by dolls made of water and mud that rose from the ground. The things dragged their feet while moving closer and closer to them.

“Wh-what should we do!”

“Leave it to me. Syrup! ‘Sinking Earth!’”

Maple gave the order. And the ground around Syrup began to change in property. And the dolls that had appeared from it began to sink.

“Our main objective is to survive... Mai, Yui, let’s get out while we can!”

“Yes. They have no magic attacks and they move so slowly... I think they’re the type that are dangerous if they catch you! I’ll create a platform!”

“Okay!”

“Okay!”

They activated Star Step in order to move faster, and then they used the platform that Sally made in order to jump over the dolls.

“Let’s continue like this!”

“Since we have to save Maple’s skills for more powerful monsters, we’ll be counting on you, Mai and Yui!”

“Yes!”

“Yes!”

Like this, while Syrup slowed the enemy down, Sally made footholds in the air or created places for Tsukimi and Yukimi to climb with ‘Ice Pillar.’ They avoided combat until they arrived at the mark that Sally had put on the map.

Here, there was an especially large lake, with a single island in the center.

Small pink flowers bloomed on the island, and the atmosphere was quite different from everywhere else.

Of course, there were numerous water and mud dolls squirming around the lake as well. They were currently scanning the area from afar through Maple’s binoculars.

“What do you think, Sally? Is it different from before?”

“There weren’t nearly as many monsters last time. But the terrain is the same.”

“Yes... it does look like there would be something here.”

“What should we do?”



“Hmm. We won’t get any medals if we’re killed from the get go.”

Even normal monsters were strong on this field. Charging into the lair of a more powerful boss monster would only increase their chances of dying and losing out on the survival medals.

“But! We decided to hunt and gather more medals!”

Maple said. And the three nodded, as they felt the same.

“I think that if we ride the bears, we’ll have to fight until we reach the island.”

“That’s fine! It’s times like these that we should rely on Syrup!”

There were other monsters you could ride in Maple Tree. But Syrup was the only one who could fly.

“Syrup’s not actually supposed to be able to fly... Alright, let’s go from the air then. From what I saw, it seems like we won’t have to worry about being shot out of the air.”

Once that was settled, Maple called out Syrup and had it enlarge. Then they got on its back.

And so they were able to skip the monsters that squirmed on the ground, and arrive on the island with the flowers.

“It looks like I can just lower Syrup like this. Let’s go.”

And so Maple had Syrup land on the island. In the same instant, the island began to glow, and the four of them sensed that they were going to be teleported.

“It’s fine! We have Dedicated Affection!”

Maple said confidently. It didn’t matter what was on the other side. And like that, the four of them disappeared from the marshlands.

# CHAPTER 297

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND RIGHT BELOW

“Oomph! We arrived!”

“Underground, huh... We must be right under the island then. Both the ground and the ceiling are damp and muddy.”

“It really is... Woah. And there are so many branching paths...”

The place that the four of them arrived was completely covered in brown and looked like a typical underground dungeon. The starting point was a wide circle, and there were six paths that branched from there. And while all of them were wide, they were very damp, like Sally said. And some even had puddles of water.

“I bet there will be more of those mud dolls. We might have to defeat them this time!”

“Yes. If it comes to that, it would be very helpful if you could one-shot them.”

“Leave it to us!”

“Leave it to us!”

While there were many paths, thinking about it would not give them an answer. And so they chose one random one and started to walk.

“Uhhh. It’s all sticky.”

“It really is... I’m glad that I’m not getting dirty for real.”

“Oh, here they are!”

As Sally said, dolls were noisily coming out of the puddles and mud. However, their movements were slow, which meant that Mai and Yui were able to hit them.

“Double Strike!”

“Double Strike!”

Before the dolls could do anything, their attacks landed, and the dolls that had been blocking their path splattered wetly as they soiled the ground.

“Oh! Awesome!”

“...No, it's not finished yet!”

The splattered mud and water did not turn into light and disappear. Instead, they all started to form new dolls. Suddenly, there were twice as many of them, and they swarmed around the group. Mai and Yui were too stunned to move, and they ended up getting attacked.

“Maple! Are you alright!?”

As both types of dolls were attacking, something must be happening to Maple through Dedicated Affection.

“Uhh... let me see... Hmm...”

Sally looked at Maple and then Mai and Yui, who were subject to the sticky attacks, and then she sighed.

“Ah! I can't move anymore! Also... the timer for when I can use it again won't move.”

“So you can't move and the cooldown clock is frozen... It would not be strange for a party to be annihilated from this... They seem to deal decent damage and there are so many of them.”

“Sally! Ho-how can we defeat them!?”

“Well, I guess we should test several things out...”

Maple couldn't move anymore, that's all. There was plenty that she could do even when she wasn't moving. Right now, the only thing they needed was Dedicated Affection.

And so while Maple bought them time, they tried to think of a way of dealing with the



dolls. And they learned that if you used fire attacks on the mud dolls and lightning attacks on the water dolls, you could deal damage and defeat them without causing them to separate. In fact, anything else would just cause them to splatter.

But because they had left the defenses to Maple and spent so much time experimenting, the dolls had multiplied to a ridiculous degree. It was so bad that not only were they completely blocking the passage, but they went all the way up to the ceiling and some couldn't even move.

The dolls would fall down like an avalanche, and Mai and Yui had to be careful to not accidentally attack them.

“Okay, so we’re finished with that... Let’s deal with all these dolls now...”

“Yes...”

“Yes...”

“Thi-this really is crazy...”

As Maple couldn't move, they didn't have the option of going down a different path.

The day that Maple could move again would never come unless they killed every one of them.

# CHAPTER 298

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND WATER AND MUD

“Phew... We finally finished... Good work, Mai and Yui.”

“Sorry. I wish that I could have helped you...”

“It’s fine! You were protecting us, Maple!”

“You have to save your energy for the boss fight...!”

Maple’s skills were very strong, but almost all of them were limited use.

And that was a big demerit in events like this one, where you had to fight for the entire day. This meant that Mai and Yui had to work harder, as their attack ability did not change.

“Let’s continue on until we reach the boss! After all, we know how to beat them now!”

“That’s true. We’ll be expecting a lot from you during the boss fight. Okay, Maple?”

“Yes. I’ll make up for all this time I’ve been saving my energy!”

Now that they knew how to defeat the stock monsters, they could make progress very easily. Of course, it was not supposed to be possible to one-shot these monsters, and they were designed to require the use of many resources, but this was hardly the case for Mai and Yui.

Mai was put in charge of the mud dolls and Yui the water dolls. And with precision, Sally took down any that they missed. Maple protected them with Dedicated Affection so it wouldn’t matter if they were hit. As all of their attacks were nullified, there was no way for the dolls to stop these four.

And like that, the team breezed through the area and got closer and closer until they

reached what could only have been the boss room.

“It took us a while, since there were so many, but we’re finally here.”

“We’re ready!”

“We’re ready!”

“Alright! I’m going to open it!”

Maple opened the door, and the four of them cautiously stepped into the room. There were puddles of water and mud throughout the room, but the rest of the ground was covered in a yellow and green moss.

And then two dolls that were about four meters tall rose up in front of them. One was made of mud and had moss and grass growing on it. The other was made of water.

“Well, let’s continue to use the same attacks we used on the way! We’ll defeat them one by one!”

“Yes!”

“Yes!”

The three attackers chose the mud doll as their first target, and then approached it with weapons enveloped in fire. In the meantime, Maple attracted the attention of the water doll, allowing the others to concentrate on attacking.

“Let’s finish it in one try, Mai!”

“Yes!”

Mai and Yui slammed their burning great hammers into it all at once. Of course, boss monsters were not designed with their attack power in mind. And so just as they had declared, chunks of its HP bar were lost immediately. The mud doll attacked them repeatedly with its slow movements, but Maple’s Dedicated Affection blocked them all. This also meant that the cool down clock for Maple’s skills would be paused, but that was fine.

“I can’t fall behind!”



Unlike Mai and Yui, Sally dodged attacks in order to enhance the effect of Sword Dance while she cut at the enemy's legs.

"One more time!"

"One more time!"

Just as Sally's attacks had caused it to lose its balance, Mai and Yui's great hammers smashed into it. And the mud doll's HP went straight to 0.

"Good!"

"Good!"

"Oh! That's amazing!"

"...Wait. Something is not right!"

Sally said. Just then, bubbles started to burst from inside of the doll. Then it exploded loudly.

While Mai and Yui were hit by it, they took no damage, thanks to Maple.

"We're fine!... Huh!?"

Just as Maple was boasting about nullifying the mud, her HP bar suddenly went down by 20%. She looked around in confusion.

"Mai! Yui! Your feet!"

"Huh? Ah!"

As the two stood in the puddle of mud, they saw that there were brown seeds next to their feet. And vines were growing from them and wrapping around their legs. Just as Maple's HP dropped by 20%, Mai and Yui tore away the vines.

"Maple! Call out Syrup! You two, come over here!"

Sally ordered. And then the three of them dodged the seeds as they made their way over to Syrup and then jumped on its back.

As the seeds only reacted to people on the ground, they were able to escape the danger, and Maple's HP recovered as well.

"Phew... That was a surprise... Uhh, but now we can't get down..."

"Woah... And it seems like the mud doll was able to recover."

"But at least we're safe up here!"

"As we practiced... we should be able to attack it from here."

The reliable pair declared. And so Maple and Sally decided to let them handle it.

Just as before, Maple was blocking the mud and water that came flying towards them. While this happened, Mai and Yui took out metal balls from their inventory.

They had been improved since the 4th event, and were now larger and had spikes. And so they enveloped them in fire and prepared to throw them.

"Go!"

"Go!"

Their adorable voices shouted as they unleashed the balls. They shot towards the mud doll's face at a frightening speed. And like that, the balls erased its recovered HP in a flash before sinking deeply into the ground behind it.

"Yes! We did it!"

"It's because we practiced!"

"Only you two could have practiced like that... Still, that is some impressive control."

They had played catch with iron balls during their free time, and it was clear that it had paid off. The two took aim at their next target. This time, the iron balls cracked with electricity as they shot through the air and pierced the giant's body.

"Ohh! Ah, I know! Wouldn't it do more damage if you hit them with your great hammers?"

"Ahh... That won't work."

“The iron balls just shatter! That’s why we asked Izu to make stronger ones!”

As iron balls were just items, they broke if they took a certain amount of damage. They had tested it out once, and with a horrifying sound, the iron balls had exploded like a ball of snow.

While the current balls could not be hit, they had various additions made to them.

“I can’t pass you balls of this size... I guess I can’t do anything but watch.”

“Leave it to us!”

“Leave it to us!”

Every time the iron balls crashed heavily to the ground, a hole opened up inside of the watery body.

The ground was covered in seeds now, but it didn’t matter to them. The final iron ball shot through the enemy’s head. And like that, both the mud and water dolls were defeated. And all of the seeds disappeared into light.

Then they heard the notification sound as all the members of Maple Tree were awarded 1 silver medal.

“Phew. We did it! And we got a medal!”

“Yes, what a relief. But we have to be careful. Syrup couldn’t fly this time either, so it was pretty dangerous.”

“Yes. And they can revive... They were probably supposed to be even stronger.”

“We’ll have to avoid entering dungeons that are a bad fit for us. The stock monsters should give us an idea. Oh, we’re being forced out now...”

“So, I guess we can’t stay here while it’s safe.”

“Alright, let’s go on to the next one!”

As their bodies were enveloped in light, they teleported out of the dungeon like they always did.



# CHAPTER 299

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND THE BLAST

“Oh, it looks like Maple’s team got some medals.”

“There must have been a dungeon in the marshlands. I guess we really should be using Sally’s map.”

The four of them had headed towards the forest. And for the most part, they continued to move by riding on the head of the enlarged Haku.

And when they encountered any monsters, Izu would throw items and Kanade would scatter debuffs. After that, Haku would strangle them to death.

Chrome and Kasumi were not particularly good with ranged attacks, so they were in charge of getting any monsters that slipped through.

“While it’s just three days, I’m glad that we took time to prepare.”

All of Izu’s strengths were born through her variety of items. Of course, it meant that every time she ran out of a certain type, there was less that she was able to do.

Unlike normal crafting jobs, she was able to make items from gold. Furthermore, Izu was able to use the workshop no matter her location, which meant that she could restock on items as long as she had gold.

And since she had enough gold to build several guild homes, Izu had no weaknesses.

“Ah, aren’t we about to reach the spot that Sally marked?”

“Alright. Let’s do this!”

As the snake slithered on, they found a tree that had a mark on it that looked like a magic circle.

“This must be it. But there is nothing else around here...”

“Should I touch it? It seems like a magic circle, after all.”

They all agreed, and so Kasumi had Haku move its head forward so she could touch it. And then just as they expected, the pattern began to shine and they were all teleported away.

The place that they found themselves in was also surrounded by trees. The only difference was a wall on the other side that was made of larger trees and vines.

It was quite large too. And though they all prepared to fight, there didn’t seem to be anything else there.

“Surely it’s not actually empty?”

“Yes.”

As they waited cautiously, they suddenly heard the sound of something cutting through the air. Chrome was the first to react.

“‘Cover’!”

There was a high-pitched ring as he blocked the projectile that then bounced in the air. Chrome quickly checked to see what it was.

There were three kunais that were attached to bombs with lit fuses.

“Tsk. Kanade, do it!”

“Sou, ‘Target Increase,’ ‘Light of the Spirit’!”

After mimicking Kanade, Sou took out the magic books and activated the defense skills. After that, there was a thunderous roar as they were ravaged by explosive wind and flames.

When it died down, their HP was reduced, but they had all survived.

“When Sou uses them, the damage immunity effect becomes a damage reduction effect. But it’s still enough, right?”

“Yeah. You saved us.”

“I’ll heal you now.”

“So, where did the attack come from...”

“Since they were attached to kunais, maybe it was a ninja? But with that force, it would be a bad idea to split up and search...”

It was hard to imagine that kunais were its only method of attack. And since Kanade and Izu had such low HP, it was possible that they could be one-shotted.

“Should we keep searching for a while? We should be able to survive if Sou is around to use powerful skills that would usually have a use limit.”

“Let’s do that then. Now, considering that we can’t see it...”

The four decided they had to find it first. However, no matter how much they walked around and searched the forest, they could not find anything. However, they continued to be attacked by projectiles.

“Hmm... We’re managing to survive because of Kanade’s stock of books... But we still can’t find it.”

“What should we do? If only I could get close to it.”

They pondered on this for a while, and then Izu hesitantly opened her mouth.

“Yes... It’s a bit rough, but I have an idea.”

“Oh? What is it?”

“This place seems to have a fixed size... so, while it will take a little time to prepare, I could explode everything.”

“I see... Interesting. Well, uh, it’s certainly worth a try. Yes.”

Chrome looked like he had been bracing himself for these very words to come out of Izu’s mouth. However, he was also certain that there was no point in continuing what they were doing.





“Just like you did during the preliminary?”

“Yes. However, I was able to make some new items in time. So it will cover the sky as well.”

Izu said as she took out the item. It was a box with a propeller, that had a string coming out from the bottom. Izu attached a few bombs to it and sent it up into the air. It climbed steadily up until it reached a certain height.

“It cost a lot to make... but I can’t be stingy now.”

“You sure make some brutal things... How do you activate it?”

“I have an item for that. This will take care of everything above the trees. Now, let’s add the others to the ground and the tree trunks.”

“Return bombs with bombs, eh? What about us?”

“I’ll leave the center as a safety zone. The item will do equal damage to everything, so make sure that you don’t step out of the safety zone.”

It would be a rain of attacks, immense debuffs, and status effects. There was no insurance that even someone like Chrome could survive it.

Sou’s magic and Haku’s huge body protected them as she went around and set the items all over the forest.

“Alright. I’m finished. It will be very bright and very loud. So be careful.”

Just like during the preliminary, electricity was sent through the strings of water, and then the blast echoed around the forest.

The explosives on the enemy’s kunais seemed very small now. Everything but the safety zone was burned to the ground.

“It should still be alive!”

“Hmm. It’s according to the plan. ‘Eye of the Assassin!’”

It was a skill that Kanade could only use today through ‘Akashic Records.’ It increased the damage against monsters and players that had status effects and let you know

their position.

“There it is!”

“Let’s go, Kasumi!”

“Yes!”

Chrome equipped Necro in order to enhance his reach. Kasumi called out the arms of the warrior on both sides of her, and they moved in all at once. What they saw was a poisoned, paralyzed, frozen, yet burning shinobi.

“‘Last of the Blades – Oborozuki!’”

“‘Ghost Mud’! Necro, ‘Fire of Death’!”

It was easy once they could see it. And after taking damage from both of their attacks, the shinobi’s HP dropped down to 0, and it disappeared.

“Phew... Good. It wasn’t so bad after all.”

“Is it really finished?”

“Yeah. Well... maybe it wasn’t dead. But it’s basically the same thing.”

“That’s a relief. I’m starting to run out of damage reduction skills.”

It was here that they got the same notification that Maple’s team had, saying that they had acquired some medals.

“Yes. This is a great result for our first day!”

“We got through several forests, and while this took quite a long time. It seemed really quick.”

“I guess we can search one or two more before reuniting with the others. Judging by the timer, the strong monsters come out at night.”

“That’s right. Haku has made traveling easy, but we have actually traveled quite a distance.”



They contacted Maple in order to make sure that they didn't get too far apart. And then the four of them searched for their next dungeon, while also looking for a place to camp for the night.

# CHAPTER 300

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND BASE BUILDING

Some time afterward. After they had finished the dungeon, they flew around to a few of the other locations that Sally had marked. But they were all misses.

“Phew... It sure is hard to find them...”

“Yes. And it’s almost time for the monsters to come out. It might be better to reunite with the others instead of entering another dungeon.”

They still didn’t know how strong the monsters were, so it was a bad time to take any chances. Getting through dungeons was important, but so were the medals they would acquire through survival.

“I’ll try to get in contact with Chrome then.”

While Sally sent the message, they rode on Tsukimi and Yukimi until they reached a clearing. As they didn’t have to fight other players this time, this would be a good place. Monsters would not be able to ambush them.

“Oh, they stopped entering dungeons and are looking for a place they can turn into a base. Seems like they found a promising cave.”

“Ohh! Let’s go and meet them then!”

“Now we won’t have to worry during the night!”

“I’ll send you the location, can you take us there, Mai and Yui?”

“Of course!”

“Of course!”

They raised Tsukimi and Yukimi's speed as they rushed through fields and forests in order to reach Chrome and the others.

While they encountered some monsters on the way, they were no threat to these four, and they were able to unite with the others without trouble.

"Ah! Over there! Heey!"

Maple shouted as she waved her hands. Chrome and the others noticed them and came running.

"Ah, you're here. It seems like things went well for you too."

Everyone in the guild had earned two silver medals. That meant they just needed to gather three more and survive until the end, and they would reach their goal of getting ten medals.

"Oh, that's right. We found a cave that we can use as our base. It's over here."

Chrome led the others into the cave. It seemed to continue quite far back, and while there were no lights like in the dungeons, there were several interconnecting chambers inside, like an ants nest.

"It does remind me of a dungeon... but I guess it's empty..."

"Yeah, there are quite a few places like this that resemble dungeons. I think they're for resting in."

"Alright, then we better get this place ready for the night! We have to make it more comfortable!"

The surface of the cave couldn't be all exposed rock if they wanted to spend the night in comfort. Some modifications were necessary to keep their morale up.

"I have items that won't disappear even if they are taken out. While I don't have much furniture, I can make some now."

"Hmm. I'm so glad you're here. I should receive some items from Izu and set up defense traps."

“I’ll help you!”

“I’ll help you!”

“We don’t have much time. Maple and I can share the load. We have to complete a defense system.”

“Yes! I’ll do my best!”

Due to Maple’s nature, Maple Tree was better at protecting, rather than attacking. They needed to ensure that there was only one entrance and use items to their fullest. Like this, an average cave could be turned into a fortress with incredible defense ability.

Maple also received items from Izu, and started to customize the room.

“Hmm... what should I do... There’s a lot of space, and I need to make it so you can’t pass through here...”

And so just like before, Maple used Venom Capsules to fill up the space in the room. And then she waited for the room to be filled with poison.

“Alright. Hmm. But that’s not enough. It will break if they attack from the passage...”

The poison that Maple created caused instant death at a very high rate. So as long as they hit their target, she could kill them in one hit.

“...I know! Uh, the item I got from Izu... here!”

Maple moved loudly through the poison and started to set the items.

These were traps that reacted to attacks by spraying water and throwing the enemy into the air. However, Maple didn’t want to throw monsters into the air, but the poison. Once she was finished installing enough of them, she tried to block the passage so that the poison wouldn’t flow to their side.

“Hmm... I don’t have any good items for... Ah, that’s right. “Throne of the Heavenly King!”

Maple placed the throne inside of the narrow entrance, and then used pieces of wood to forcefully fill in the gaps and complete the blockade.

“Alright! This room is finished! Next!”

Maple ran to the next room in order to strengthen their defense. After she had repeated the process in a few rooms, she found Mai and Yui.

“Are things going well?”

“Ah! Maple!”

“Y-you shouldn’t come in...!”

“Huh? Wa! Ah?!”

It was just as Maple had taken one step inside. A boulder that was so big that she wouldn’t have been able to wrap her arms around it, suddenly fell from the ceiling and landed on her head. There was a loud bang as it bounced off and rolled onto the ground. As if that was the trigger, more and more boulders began to fall.

Once it was finished, Mai and Yui hopped around frantically towards Maple, who came out of the rubble unharmed.

“Th-that was a surprise... I’m sorry! I activated the traps you set up!”

“It’s okay! Besides, I’m just glad that you’re okay.”

“I’ll help you set them up again. But I can’t call Syrup... so you can climb on this shield!”

Maple changed her equipment so that she had the three great shields. Mai and Yui picked up the boulders and stood on top of the shields so they could set up the traps again.

“Uhhh... I’ll have to be careful when checking the other rooms.”

“You can get through if you walk carefully... So you shouldn’t have any trouble when getting out.”

“Oh, I see... The same can’t be said for the rooms I did.”

Apparently, Maple was not very good at setting traps. And she felt a little disappointed as she thought back on the rooms that she had customized.



There was no question about those rooms being able to defeat intruders, but on the other hand, no guild members would be able to go in.

“I might have to discuss it with Sally and remake them...”

“Wh-what kind of room is it?”

“Ehehe. Well...”

And so Maple answered Yui’s question as they finished setting up the traps again. And then they left the room.

As Mai and Yui’s room was also incredibly lethal, they almost felt sorry for any monster that might go in.

From there, the three of them set up rock and poison traps in the remaining rooms. Then with satisfied expressions, they returned to the area in the far back. Here, there were now lights and a table. And partitions had also been set up so they had a place to rest. Perhaps she had even gotten a little ambitious, as Izu had spread out a carpet and was even hanging up some wallpaper.

Half of the room had not been altered, and it was there that they would drive back any monsters that managed to get past the traps.

“Wow! It’s so nice now!”

“Ah, welcome back. Did you finish setting up the traps then?”

“Yes! All set!”

“We finished everything.”

“We’re almost finished here too. I think it’ll be a lot more comfortable than it was during the 4th event.”

As a finishing touch, Izu set up a cannon in the area facing the entrance, and then put up a wall so the enemy wouldn’t be able to get in all at once. Then she sighed.

“That was a lot of work. But it was a good experience. Also, it was really fun.”

“Th-that’s amazing. You must have used up a lot of materials? We have to gather more...”

“I didn’t use much that was valuable. Still, I’d welcome your help later.”

“We’ll help you whenever you want!”

As the four of them talked like this, the other four finished setting up their traps and returned.

“Ahh, I finished. However, you’ll have to be very careful when going out. It’s crazy, and a lot of them will kill you if you make a mistake.”

They were all in agreement about this and nodded. Then Maple suddenly raised her head as if remembering something.

“Ah! That’s right. What should we do if other players come in? They’ll trigger the traps!”

“Mmm. Ah, it’s fine. I put up a sign outside.”

“Huh? Oh, you did? Thank you, Sally! Uhh, what does it say?”

““Maple Tree’s Base – High Quantity of Dangerous Objects. No Guarantee of Survival.””

“...Well, that’s not wrong.”

“If anything, you could say that it couldn’t be more correct.”

“Yes. This place is covered in traps.”

After preparing this dungeon full of deadly traps, the time for the appearance of powerful monsters finally came.

“In any case, let’s get ready to face them.”

“Yes. We don’t know what kinds of monsters will come out.”

They hid behind the wall that Izu had built between the areas, and held their weapons ready so that they could attack immediately. As they waited, they heard the sounds of the earth shaking above them, and they knew that something had entered the dungeon.

“Something is here.”

“Yes, I’m ready to attack.”

A nervous air filled the room. However, the shaking soon subsided, and no matter how long they waited, nothing appeared.

“...Did they die?”

“Probably... But it will be necessary to confirm the state of the traps.”

Not only would they be able to find out what kind of powerful monster had come in, but if they had succeeded in killing it, it would be necessary to reset the trap.

“I’ll go with Maple. We’ll be able to run even in the worst case scenario.”

“That’s true. And even if you accidentally trigger a trap, it will be fine if Maple is there.”

And so the two of them stepped out of the resting area. In the passage leading up to the surface, they found a single monster that had horns like Maple’s Savagery. It looked like a demon without eyes and nose, but had demonic wings and a spear as it flew around, spreading damage effects everywhere. Then it splattered over the floor and disappeared into light.

“Ahh... It must have been desperately trying to survive.”

“Yes. Well, that’s our goal as well.”

While it was hard to tell which of them were the dungeon boss now, this devil had given them some valuable information.

“I think this means we’re lacking in anti-aerial measures.”

“That’s true. But we can improve the traps now.”

And so Maple and Sally went around to check the other traps. All of them had been triggered from the entrance onwards. And judging by the immense amount of materials on the ground, they had been monsters that walked on the ground.

“It’s not that difficult to set them up again. Let’s call the others so we can get to work.”

“Yes. Oh, that’s right! Mai and Yui can carry the large boulders. We can block off passages and force the monsters to head into traps!”

“That would be great. I want to sleep soundly, so our defenses must be rock steady.”

They took pictures that would show the situation and then returned to the back.

Just as night started to fall, they finished resetting the traps and decided to take turns resting.

“Now, it seems like the strong monsters will come here on their own. So there’s nothing to do but take turns sleeping.”

“But why don’t we just block the entrance, just in case? It should be easy for Mai and Yui.”

“Can you, Mai and Yui?”

“Yes, it will be fine!”

“Yes, it will be fine!”

Yui and Mai headed towards the entrance of the area and then blocked it with the same kind of large boulders that they had used for the traps.

“Alright. Now we’ll know if something is trying to force their way in.”

The monsters would have to break a number of boulders first. So they would have time to react when they heard the sounds of them breaking. You could say that an ambush would be very difficult.

“Now, there’s nothing to worry about...”

“Heey! Sally! Why don’t we play over here?”

Just as Sally sighed in relief, Maple called her from the living space. She had several items in her inventory that would help them kill time. Sally looked at Maple, who smiled and waved her hand like she always did. She smiled just a little in return, and walked towards Maple. And like that, they played and rested on their first night, just as it got darker and darker outside.

# CHAPTER 301

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND TRAPS

While they took turns resting, the members of Maple Tree were far deadlier than the dungeons that management had prepared, and so there were no monsters that were able to reach the pile of rocks above the entrance.

As they were the last ones to take the watch, Sally and Kasumi went around to wake up the other six.

“Maple. Get up, it’s morning.”

“Mmm... aahh... mmm. Good morning, Sally. Was everything alright?”

“Nothing happened. I heard the sounds of a lot of traps being activated, but nothing got through.”

“That’s good. Yes! Let’s do our best today as well!”

Maple slapped her cheeks to wake up and then left the partitioned room. Everyone else was already prepared to go out and explore. Upon seeing this, and since she was the Guild Master of Maple Tree, Maple reminded them of their goal.

“Just three more medals! We’ll have ten if we survive until the end. So let’s work hard!”

“Alright, then let’s decide where we’ll go today.”

Sally said as she opened her map. However, it seemed like something was strange, as she kept tapping it with her finger.

“The map... it won’t show up.”

“Hmm... Ah, mine too.”



“Same with mine. And it looks like I can’t use the messaging feature either.”

Not being able to confirm your location and having no means to contact each other was like walking in the dark. It hadn’t been like this on the first day, and they had a bad feeling about it. An air of alertness fell over them.

“Well, we should all move together for now! It will be a lot of trouble if we get separated.”

“That’s true. And we have a goal to reach. However, maybe we should decide on a marker, just in case we do get separated.”

And so they discussed it until they had a good idea.

“...Alright, that can be the marker.”

“...Yes.”

“Okay! Let’s go!”

As the place was filled with instant death traps that affected everyone, Maple activated Dedicated Affection, just in case. In the meantime, Mai and Yui gathered their boulders as they headed outside.

“So, it’ll be all eight of us today. We’ll have no problem winning like this!”

“Yes. Well, we got two medals on the first day already. So we are pretty lucky that we don’t have to split up.”

They recovered what items they could without activating any of the traps as they headed outside.

“Oh, I have to deactivate ‘Venom Capsule’ and recover the throne!”

If there were devil-like monsters, she would need ‘Throne of the Heavenly King,’ which would allow her to seal their skills. They had to gather what they could and go out in the best condition possible.

Once they were finished, they all stepped outside. And in spite of it being morning, it was still dim. The sky was dark and without a single star visible.

“Uhh. I have a bad feeling about this...”

“Be careful...! Maple!”

Shortly after they had stepped outside, a black magic circle appeared at their feet. It was just as large as the range of Maple’s Dedicated Affection, and so it was not possible for them to jump out of it.

“It’s fine! Just get ready to heal!”

As Maple said this, they were all surrounded in the black light. Maple held her eyes shut tightly and braced herself to take damage. However, she didn’t feel any impact on her body.

“...Oh, good. I’m fine, everyone!... Everyone...?”

Bad feelings were generally had for a reason, and when Maple opened her eyes, there was no one else around her. Not only that, but the base that should have been behind her was also gone. She had no idea where she was.

And though she checked her map again, her present location was not displayed. And she could not send any messages either.

This was the kind of worst case scenario she had feared. But then again, it was a relief that it wasn’t something completely unpredictable.

“All of you better stay alive...!”

And Maple had to do what she could. She was glad that they had discussed it in advance. And so she began to make preparations.

# CHAPTER 302

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND MEETING UP

It seemed that they had all been blown away and completely separated. In the darkness, Sally warily made her way to an open area.

“So this is why the preliminary was solo... I’m sure Maple will be fine... But I’m worried about Mai and Yui.”

She hoped that Tsukimi and Yukimi would be able to protect them. It was as Sally was thinking this, that a black magic circle suddenly appeared in front of her. And from within, a devil-like monster with horns and sharp claws emerged. It flapped its wings loudly and flew towards her.

“Oboro, ‘Binding Barrier’!... It doesn’t work!”

Sally dodged its thrusting arm and slashed deeply into its side, before jumping back. The monster let out a chilling cry, and several small black magic circles appeared on the ground. And from these, smaller demons were summoned.

“Oboro, ‘Fire Child.’”

Sally enveloped her weapons in fire in order to increase their reach. Then she turned to the devils with a serious expression.

“They’re also coming from behind...!”

Perhaps they had been attracted by the sounds of fighting, because she could hear rustling coming from behind her. Sally increased her concentration. She could not be defeated here.

More than anything, she needed to know how many monsters were there, and so she looked back just for a split second. Even as she fought the devils, she saw the familiar figure behind her.

“Frederica?!”

“Ah, so it is you, Sally? What a relief. I was just searching for an advance guard!”

Frederica said as she ran up to Sally and stood so that their backs were stuck together.

“...You could have at least killed them before coming. Why are you here anyway?”

“Sorry. Well, I’ll tell you the details later.”

“Fine. More importantly, we have to clear this area first!”





They decided to cooperate temporarily as they raised their weapons. And just as the devils jumped on them, they attacked.

“‘Multi-fire Bullets’! Knots, ‘Singing Round’!”

“Oboro, ‘Cross Fire,’ ‘Shadow Clone’!”

The fire that Frederica shot out was then multiplied by Knots. And Sally also unleashed a chain of fire towards the monsters. The dark field was suddenly bathed in red light.

“Defenses... I don’t think I need any. ‘Multi-water Bullets’!”

A few monsters that didn’t even have wide-area attacks were no threat to Sally. Frederica defeated the monsters while also ensuring that Sally could draw out as much firepower as possible.

She usually used ‘Multi-Obstacle’ on Drag, but if she used it on herself, she could fight while minimizing the damage taken. Frederica did this while repeatedly healing. She would look for an opening and then attack. Then she heard an especially loud voice behind her. The large devil had just been cut down by Sally.

“I have to end things here too. Knots, ‘Amplify’!”

Frederica created a number of fireballs like she always did, and then she used Knots’s skill to make them bigger and stronger.

“Phew. I stopped them somehow.”

It burned the remaining monsters. When the two of them erased the flames, darkness fell over the field once again.

“Haa. Thank you.”

“I’m sure you would have won if you were alone.”

“Ahaha! You can tell? Well, it really wasn’t that easy. And Payne and the others are so far away.”

“Hey, wait. How do you know?”

“Uhh, I have a skill for that. I’m sure you know what I’m talking about. And so I was able to contact them. But they’re so far away.”

Frederica wanted an ally just in case something happened. As for Sally, she didn’t see any demerits to the alliance, and so she had no reason to refuse.

“I can’t enter any dungeons until we reunite. And it looks like you want to find the rest of your team.”

How do you intend on doing that? Frederica asked with a laugh.

“You can’t even contact them, right? See, you should just give up on that and come with me.”

Frederica said as she pointed in the direction that she was headed.

“Hmm. Well, wait a minute. Ah...”

“Huh? Fireworks? Is it an event?”

While it was far away, Sally and Frederica heard the sound and saw the light in the empty sky very clearly.

“That’s Maple’s mark. So that’s where she is...”

“What? You have fireworks...”

“No, that’s just Maple. She put bombs on herself and detonated them.”

“...Huh?...??”

As Frederica tried to digest this, Sally started walking away.

“Ah! Hey, wait! Wait! It’s in the same direction, so why don’t we go together?”

“Uh, alright. But I might leave you if it gets dangerous.”

“Damn it... I thought you had no way to meet up with them, and I’d be able to persuade you to team up...”

Frederica grumbled about how things never went her way. And like that, Sally headed towards Maple.

“I don’t have much hope for Drag, but Dred has high scouting ability, so he might have found someone by now.”

“I suppose you’d want a strong player as a temporary ally... Well, if you can even find one... Knots seems like it’s aware of a pretty wide area. I guess that means I can’t ambush you anymore.”

“No comment. Ah, there’s something interesting nearby. Do you want to go and see?”

“That face... It’s a monster, isn’t it? No thanks.”

“How did you know!”

However, this skill was very useful, and Frederica used Knots’s ability to lead them forward while avoiding monsters.

# CHAPTER 303

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND MEETING UP 2

“Hmm... I moved as planned... I hope someone comes soon...”

Maple was riding on Syrup’s back in the darkness. They would have just looked like shadows from far away. Every once in a while, she would repeat the act of launching herself into the air and exploding. After a while, she got bored of just exploding, and so she started to use shiny items that reacted to the explosions, so it would look like fireworks. However, Maple was so worried about the safety of the others, that she couldn’t settle down.

“Alright, one more time! ‘Commence Attack!’”

Maple shot off of Syrup’s back and flew high into the air. Then she closed her eyes and covered her ears as she waited for the bombs to go off.

Because of this, Maple did not notice the devil monster that was flying near her, and she was captured while still in the air.

“Ahhh!? Oh, you shouldn’t be so close...!”

Just then, all of the bombs detonated, and the monster burst into countless pieces and disappeared.

“Wo-wo-woooah... ah... Syrup!”

Maple went flying diagonally, and though she tried to make Syrup move, she had launched herself into the air using such a reckless method, and there was no way that Syrup could move in time.

She would fall straight to the ground like this. As she considered just falling or exploding once again so that she could try jumping onto Syrup, she was suddenly caught by something soft that was beneath her.

“Huh? Uh? What?”

“Are you alright...?”

“Damn it, you never fail to surprise me. What are you doing, Maple?”

Maple had landed on the back of an enlarged Ignis. Ignis’s master, Mi was there. And so was Mai, for some reason.

“Mi! And... Mai? Why are you two together?”

“Well, I don’t want to antagonize Maple Tree if I don’t have to. I just happened to find her on the way, so I brought her here.”

“I see! Thank you!”

“You be careful too, Maple. It seems like the corners of the map are being swallowed up by darkness. And the closer you are to the darkness, the stronger the monsters. Apparently, my party is inside.”

“Uh, okay! I’ll be careful. Ummm. I’ll have to return the favor somehow.”

“...In that case, there is one request I’d like to make.”

“What? What? It can be anything!”

Maple said. And so Mi took out a tag from her inventory and showed it to them.

“I want you to hold onto this. Don’t worry, it will disappear by the time this event ends.”

“That’s it? Uh... ‘Mark Tag’...?”

There was no item description, and so they looked at it with puzzled expressions. But Mi did not explain further. She let Mai off of Ignis’s back, and then rose into the sky.

“I’m sure we’ll meet again. I just hope it doesn’t involve a battle over medals.”

“Yes, see you again! Thank you!”

“Th-thank you so much!”

Mi waved at them and then flew away. As Maple had unexpectedly been able to reunite with Mai, now they just needed to wait for the other six.

“Now I can protect you. Things are going well! I’m glad you got here quickly, since you and Yui have low HP!”

“Yes. It’s quite a relief... It seems like the Kingdom of the Flame Emperor members are able to contact each other.”

“Huh, I wish we could do that too... And then I would be able to fly right towards them!”

In any case, since the others weren’t there yet, Maple had to go back to being the marker.

On the other hand, after leaving Mai with Maple, Mi went flying away with Ignis.

“Phew. I’m glad I was able to get her there. They both seemed really happy. Now, I better hurry!”

Mi took out a crystal from her inventory and crushed it. Marx had given it to her, and it worked with the ‘Mark Tag’ that his skill had made. It allowed you to see the position of the person with the tag.

“Gah. Only three of my party members are left... Dungeons will be very hard now... Tsk. This forceful teleportation is taking so many of us out at once.”

The marker of her closest comrade was moving wildly on the map. The person was likely in the middle of a battle. And so Mi rode Ignis towards it as fast as she could.



# CHAPTER 304

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND MEETING UP 3

The map was getting smaller, and since strong players tended to cooperate when bumping into each other, two such top players were currently together as they faced a pack of monsters.

“Tsk! Can’t we do something about their numbers!”

“And this is even with the right attributes...!”

Misery and Chrome were currently surrounded by dozens of monsters as they looked for a chance to escape. The two of them had cooperated in the jungle during the previous event, but unlike then, they could now recover their HP. Most of Misery’s MP was used to heal Chrome, and Chrome was continually pushed to the brink of death, only to return. This repeated over and over again.

“Necro, ‘Burst Flame’!”

“‘Holy Spear’!”

Misery’s magic was supposed to be effective against these devil-like monsters. However, she was a healer and he was a great shield wielder. They did not have enough attack power together.

“I won’t die! But I can’t kill!”

“Yes... It seems like more monsters keep getting summoned...”

Chrome and Misery still had damage reduction skills, damage nullifying skills, and resurrection skills. This toughness, where they could come back even after falling once or even twice, was something that even Maple Tree would find hard to do.

Chrome continued to change Necro’s form as he switched between attacking and

defense.

“While we can survive, these things are fast... Misery, can't you do something!?”

“...Hold on there! I have something promising!”

“Okay! I trust you! ‘Revitalize’! Necro ‘Ghost Armor – Robust’!”

Chrome changed Necro to a defense specialized form, and blocked all of the attacks. He would buy time, just like Misery had said. As both were good when it came to healing, they could resort to these kinds of tactics in spite of taking damage. Unlike Mi, Chrome had a great shield and did not need to attack. He could make use of his powerful guard and survive while being surrounded by monsters. This tense battle continued for quite some time. And Chrome slowly lost his ability to concentrate as the amount of projectiles increased.

“I guess it depends on ‘Dead or Alive.’...I hope this help is going to arrive soon!”

“Yes, it's fine. I think it's here now.”

“Hmm? Ohh!?”

Just as Misery said it, giant balls of fire rained down and enveloped the monsters. The fire that Chrome unleashed with the help of Necro could not compare to this. Chrome had had to slowly chip away at their HP, and now they were being annihilated in a flash.

“Woah... amazing...”

“Phew. That's a relief. Thank you, Mi.”

“Ah, I'm glad you're alright, Misery. Hmm. So there's a Maple Tree member here as well.”

“Huh? Did you meet someone else?”

“One of the twins. I think it was Mai. But I took her to Maple.”

“Oh! Thank you.”

“Mi. What should we do now?”

“Shin and Marx are likely alive. Let’s meet up with them.”

“Hmm... Then can I go with you?”

Chrome said. The two of them looked puzzled. After all, Chrome’s goal was completely different from theirs.

“Well, it’s just that I heard the screams of other players before meeting up with Misery. And if players are meeting up like this in such a huge field, I think we’re all being teleported pretty close together.”

In that case, perhaps members of Maple Tree would be close to Marx or Shin.

Furthermore, Mi and the others could use a reliable shield bearer. There were plenty of merits for taking him along.

“I don’t mind. What about you, Misery?”

“No, I don’t mind.”

“Then it’s settled.”

And so the three of them got onto Ignis’s back and rose into the sky.

“Are they around here?”

“A little farther. On the other side of the mountain.”

“Maybe they don’t want us to unite with the others... While the field is shrinking, it’s still pretty big.”

“Maybe it will change again on the third day. In any case, we have to create our bases before its time for the strong monsters to come out.”

While the place was overflowing with devil-like monsters, and they were strong, that didn’t mean they were the enhanced monsters for the second day.

If they weren’t able to unite with the others soon, the number of casualties would increase.

“I hope I find one of my friends along the way... Huh?”

“What is it?”

“I think one of them might be here. I remember a similar explosion from the first day.”

Chrome saw the flashes of thunder and fire that tore through the darkness in front of them. And he was immediately reminded of a certain crafter who was quite scary when she was angry.

# CHAPTER 305

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND MEETING UP 4

“...What should we do?”

“What should we do... We can’t do much if it’s just us two...”

Marx and Izu were currently hiding within walls made of rock and vines.

As both were the kind of players who couldn’t fight unless they had plenty of time to prepare, they had been running around and trying to survive until they bumped into each other.

“Marx. How much longer can it last?”

“...Considering the amount... Maybe five minutes?”

“I’ll also make items at full power, so we’ll have to advance while taking turns defending!”

Izu said as she opened her workshop and started to make items. And just like Marx said, the wall was destroyed after five minutes, and the monsters swept in.

“How about this!”

However, Izu was able to stop the monsters by creating a wall of ice with a crystal that she had made. The two used the opportunity to move and search for better terrain.

“We’ll do it over here this time. You’ll have to make more items...”

“Yes. It can’t be helped. This is going to be very costly for me.”

They thought about the gold while they made more traps and items in order to survive.

“Uhhh. I’m running out... Mi, hurry...”

“...There’s a cave! Maybe we can fight back from there!”

“Hmm. But it’s pretty far.”

“I have a way for us to get there in an instant.”

“Really...? That would help... huh?”

Izu took out a clump of water from her inventory. It floated in the air around their feet.

“Fay! ‘Item Buff.’”

“Woah, this thing! It’s what Maple always uses!”

“Correct! Now hold on tight!”

“Wo-woah!”

Izu grabbed Marx and stepped on the sphere of water. And just like that, the strengthened water shot out an incredible amount of water all at once, and the two were launched into the air.

They shot through the horde of monsters and were able to reach the cave safely.

However, before they could get ready to face the monsters, the ground at their feet began to glow and envelope them.

“This...”

“What... it’s teleportation...”

There was nothing that you could do once it was activated, and the two vanished and reappeared in a different location. When the light faded and they opened their eyes, they saw that they were in a passage where the walls were made of stone bricks and the ground was smooth sand. And while there was a wall behind them, the monsters that had been troubling them were nowhere in sight. But there was also a new problem.

“We’re in a dungeon.”



“Ju-just us in a dungeon? Oh, no...”

They both had supporting roles, and depending on the boss, they might have no chance at all of winning.

“Mi won’t be able to come here either... Ah, this bad. This is bad.”

“What should we do? Maybe we should just wait here in the dungeon? Someone else might come here too.”

“But strong monsters come out after a certain amount of time has passed... I learned that the hard way on the first day.”

Marx said this as if he didn’t want to think about it. Izu could tell that he wasn’t lying.

“Well, that’s troubling. Do you think we have no choice but to fight our way through?”

“Yes. It’s the only way. This is not the time to be saving our strength... Clear “Transparent.”

Marx activated the skill of the chameleon on his head. And then the effect covered both Marx and Izu.

“Now they won’t find us as long as we don’t bump into them... Though, I’m sure it won’t work on the boss. It didn’t work on the monsters outside either. It’s annoying.”

“I see. It’s a good ability! Especially for a trapper like you.”

“Re-really?”

After that, they were ignored by the weaker monsters, which allowed them to move through the dungeon while inspecting it.

“Sand... It reminds me of the ruins in the jungle event.”

“Oh, that one that Chrome and Kanade went through. Yes, it is similar to that.”

As they continued, the sand on the ground started to move upwards, and sand monsters that were wielding large spears and wearing armor emerged. As their bodies were made of sand, it dripped down as they moved.

“It’s fine. It looks like they can’t see us... I think.”

“Let’s move to the edge.”

Izu and Marx pressed against the wall and waited for the sand soldiers to pass through. It seemed like Clear’s ‘Transparent’ was working well, and they sighed with relief.

“Phew. I think we might be able to make it till the end like this.”

“Yes. We can’t do anything unless we get out of here...”

And so the two of them continued on their way towards the boss room.

Thanks to Clear’s power, they were able to reach it without too much trouble. The problem was how to proceed from here.

“Wh-what should we do? We managed to make it this far...”

“Yes. Well, we have no choice but to go and do it.”

“True...”

“Come on, we can do it. Besides, we have plenty of time to prepare before going through this door. Don’t we?”

“Huh? Oh, yeah.”

Both of them were used to supporting attackers when taking on bosses. It was usually a waste of time to do anything that would increase their own damage output.

However, things were different now.

“I don’t know what kind of monster it is, but we need to show it how scary we can be when allowed to prepare.”

“...Yes, that’s true. Okay. I’m not the same person I was during the 4th event.”

And like that, the two of them took their time creating items and preparing skills that were slow to activate. And when they were ready, they opened the door and stepped inside.

It was a large room, and the ground was all sand that it looked like a desert. And in the far back of the room, was a throne made of rock and sand. And there was the king. He had a larger spear than any of the soldiers and wore golden armor under a red cape.

In spite of them being invisible, the spear tapped the ground the moment that they walked in. And then soldiers started to rise out of the sand.

“If they are soldiers... we are the castle. ‘Install – One Night Castle!’”

Just as Marx activated the skill, large walls rose up and surrounded them, forming a fortress.

Marx activated even more skills, and just like when he defended them against the devil monsters, vine and rocks created a barricade. In the meantime, Izu started setting up cannons in Marx’s fortress.

“We usually don’t need it because of Maple’s Machine God. But I can use it now!”

“And we have soldiers too. ‘Remote Install – Water Army,’ ‘Remote Install – Flower Cavalry.’”

As they were still just traps, they activated when the monsters got close. They were one time use and the effect didn’t last long. However, since they were against sand soldiers, they were useful in erasing the advantage of numbers.

“I’m good at defending... You take care of the boss.”

“Alright. A gift of cannonballs!”

Izu used Fay to strengthen the balls and the cannons. And then cast ‘Recycle’ on the balls. Because of this, they would be able to reach the back of the room easily, and be able to denote multiple times. A very rare type of cannonball indeed.

“All cannons, fire!”

The numerous cannons that lined the fortress fired at once. They flew with precision towards the throne, covering it with explosive flames.

“Woah... A-are you really a crafter?”

“Uh, yeah? I can do a little attacking now, that’s all.”

“A little...?”

“This is no time for talking. It’s still quite alive.”

“...Well, it is a boss. But...”

“Yes, I prepared for that.”

Izu took out more cannons and bombs from her inventory, while Marx continued to remotely set up traps in order to keep the soldiers away. The bombs knocked them down and pushed the battle line back, increasing the area that Marx filled with traps.

“Alright... Let’s keep moving closer.”

“Yes, I’m ready.”

““Change.””

While the cool down time was long, it was a skill that changed the position of two traps. The reason that the cool down time was so long, was because this was more than just a useful skill.

The trap that had pushed through the soldiers and stopped in front of the king. It was obvious which trap it would be traded with.

“Oh, you’re an easy target when you’re this close.”

Yes, they had traded places with ‘One Night Castle.’ And just like that, the cannons were all directed at the king, and a huge load of bombs rolled down towards the throne.

The immense amount of traps and the fortress itself now blocked all of the summoned sand soldiers behind them. And so they just unloaded their inventory of bombs over the king as if they meant to empty it completely.

“I should at least be able to bind him...”

Their base had incredible defenses and was now right in front of it. This was bad for commander-type bosses. Marx then bound all four of his limbs, but it still thrust its

spear out. However, he was then covered by so many bombs that the explosion reached the ceiling. And with that, he turned into sand and disappeared.

“That wasn’t as hard as I expected?”

“Really... Maple Tree is weird. Ah, the medal.”

“Hey, I got one too. In that case, I can spend the second day just trying to reunite with the others and building the base.”

“Oh, right. I have to meet the others...”

It was then that they were surrounded by light and sent back to the field they were in. Of course, this meant that they would be surrounded by monsters again. Or so they thought. But the monsters weren’t there. Instead, they saw Mi holding balls of fire, and Misery, who focused on healing her. Also, there was Chrome, who had likely been surrounded by the monsters a moment ago.

“Oh, you really are here, Izu. You seem to be okay.”

“You were fine too, Marx. What a relief.”

“Uh, yeah... A lot happened, but we were fine in the end. I guess?”

“And you also seem to have won a medal...?”

“I got the notice too. Does that mean you two did it together?”

“We made a surprisingly good team.”

“Yes... we did.”

It was a pleasant surprise. And they smiled at the fact that they had acquired the medals. The three had been waiting here for Marx after the Mark Tag had suddenly stopped detecting him in this area.

“I’m glad I was able to find Chrome. Now we can go to Maple.”

It was here that Chrome explained why he was there to Izu. And so Izu decided to go with them. There was no harm in being with a lot of people.

“I feel bad for getting a free ride. So you can have some potions. I’m sure Mi knows how special they are.”

“Yes, thank you. We’ll take you to Maple as soon as we find Shin. I don’t mind.”

“Thank you. It will be a great help.”

“...Hey. Sorry to have to tell you now... but what looked like Shin’s tag has just disappeared.”

“What? I didn’t think he would die so easily...”

Mi knew how strong he was and couldn’t help but be suspicious. But if he wasn’t dead, there was only one other explanation.

“Maybe... he entered a dungeon?”

It was something that Marx had just experienced himself. And it turned out that his guess was right.





# CHAPTER 306

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND MEETING UP 5

“Hmm. This is bad.”

“Yeah, I didn’t think the magic circle would be that big.”

Shin and Kasumi were talking to each other. As Kasumi was searching for other members of Maple Tree while riding on Haku’s back, anyone who saw her would recognize her in an instant. And yet it had been Shin who came, and not any of the members of her guild.

And then a great wind came and enveloped the forest that the two were in. And everyone who was there was teleported into a dungeon.

Both of them had also just received a message about acquiring a medal. They had a good idea of what that meant.

“I don’t know why it was activated, but I suppose I should be thankful that there’s enough space for Haku to move in.”

“Yes. But... I can faintly hear screaming. We should be careful.”

Kasumi walked next to Haku’s huge body so that she could hide behind it if necessary as she moved through the forest. It was dark here as well, and had the kind of eerie atmosphere that made you feel like anything could jump out of the shadows. For a while they heard nothing but occasional screams, but then the ground suddenly shook, and they prepared to fight.

“...! Kasumi!”

“Yes, it’s coming! “Mind’s Eye’!”

Kasumi used the skill in order to predict the enemy’s attack. What she then saw, was

that everything around her was red. That's how big the damage area was.

"Shin! Over here!"

"Uh, okay!"

Kasumi realized that they would not be able to escape in time, and so she had Haku surround them and then had the scales harden.

Immediately after, they heard the sounds of something hitting against something that was hard. And the two of them looked up. A giant centipede had bounced off of Haku and was now moving over their heads. Then the ground shook again, and the damage area disappeared. They sighed in relief.

"Uggh. Its shell looked really hard. Can we defeat something like that?"

"Judging by the screams, other players are being sent here too. In the first place, this isn't something you can defeat alone."

"That's true. How troublesome."

"Still, I think we won't be able to do anything until we defeat it. We can't just stay here forever."

"Yeah. Alright, let's kill this centipede! Wen, 'Awakening,' 'Destructor'!"

With a burst of effects, Shin's sword multiplied as they floated in the air. There were more of them now than there had been during the 4th event. It was quite impressive, since he could freely control them.

"You have more now?"

"Yeah. The number of moves is important with Wen. I'm probably a bad fit for someone like Sally."

"I think Sally would look at you coolly and avoid you..."

"Well, I agree. But I would still like to fight her one day."

"You should come to the guild home. Frederica visits us a lot."

“Maybe. Anyone who can beat Sally is first-rate! Oh, we should get started then!”

“Yeah, let’s do that.”

Kasumi turned off Haku’s defense and called out ‘Arm of the Warrior’ on both sides, in preparation for combat. In the meantime, her vision was covered by the damage area once again.

“It’s coming from the front!”

“Okay. Wen, ‘Wind God’!”

As Kasumi gave the signal, Shin unleashed wind blades and ‘Destructor.’ They shot towards the giant centipede’s head and body, tearing it up. But it continued to move.

“Tsk. It’s pretty hard!”

“Haku!”

In order to prevent it from diving again, she had Haku ram it from the side and bite into its body. Kasumi used the opening to jump up onto it and ready her blades.

“‘Second of the Blades, Cutting Iron’!”

The blades swung down and cut through the centipede’s defenses. Its shell cracked open, creating a deep wound. Clearly this was very effective. Haku continued to strangle it and bite everything from its head to its body.

“Hey, hey. How strong is that snake?”

“Hehe. I’m quite proud of my buddy.”

However, just as Kasumi got off of the centipede and tried to return to Shin, the shredded body and head began to thrash around. It tore away from Haku’s grip and dove back into the ground.

“I thought that it was too early for it to die. I guess this is where the real fight starts?”

“Probably. The effect of Mind’s Eye also ran out. Shin, don’t let your guard down.”

As the two of them concentrated on the tremors, they sensed that the giant centipede was approaching them again. And they were right. Two centipedes burst from the ground. The only difference was that they were smaller now, and both were whole and completely healed.

“Kasumi!”

“I know!”

Without saying another word, they each faced one of the monsters and swung their weapons.

“I won’t let you go. Wen, ‘Wind Cage’!”

“Haku, hold it down.”

Along with the two arms at her sides, Kasumi unsheathed her swords and slashed at the monster once again. As for Shin, Wen had the centipede suspended in the air, and he cut through it with his flying swords.

“It’s not as tough as before.”

“Yeah. Instead, it seems to be faster.”

“It split up again. And now we can’t stop them from escaping...”

Regardless of Haku’s binding or Wen’s Wing Cage, they were able to escape and then attack again. As this repeated, the number of centipedes increased until there were 16 of them. By the time there were eight, they were able to slip through the attacks and damage Kasumi. This made it harder to face them head on.

“Tsk. They still hit hard even when they’re small...”

“However, they have less HP. It looks like I’ll be able to do more now! Kasumi, you can finish off the ones that I miss!”

“Yes, I’ll leave the rest to you.”

And so the next attack came, and they were surrounded from all sides.

“If there are only sixteen, then it’s quite easy!”

Wen’s Wind God created wind blades that tore up the centipedes. And those that survived were skewered by the flying swords.

“You’re out of luck with that HP!”

Ultimately, they could not escape Shin’s attacks, and all 32 and then 64 centipedes were killed without Kasumi having to help.

“This would be hell without wide-area attacks.”

“Do you think it will be 128 next?”

“I don’t know. Well, they can’t beat me with numbers.”

As they said this, the ground shook harder than it ever had before. And then a centipede that was even larger than the first came out of the ground as its sharp mandibles glimmered.

Shin had not been expecting this at all, and his reaction was delayed. But Kasumi quickly pointed her sword at it.

“‘Purple Phantom Blade’!”

And then a storm of high-speed attacks were unleashed as if to push the centipede back. The two warrior arms at her side reacted by also swinging with incredible force. The shell of the centipedes head began to crack.

At the end of the skill, multiple blades appeared around the centipede’s head and came together. It was similar to the force of the centipedes that had surrounded them and jumped forward. And just like that, the centipede turned into light and disappeared.

“Haa... I see. It would exceed a hundred if it doubled again. So they stopped it there... Still, you got really small.”

“Shut up. I’ll cut you if you keep staring.”

Kasumi had activated her most powerful skill. However, it had the demerit of making her body shrink. She tried to avoid using it when she could, but this was not a time

when she had any choice.

“Haku, let me ride on you. Tsk... it’s too high.”

“Uh, do you want me to help you?”

“I’ll be back to normal soon. Stop looking at me as if I’m a child!”

“Hahaha. Kasumi, people from your guild really do have the most interesting skills.”

Just then, they both got the notification that they acquired the medal. And then they were enveloped by light.

“I won’t be able to fight until my body returns to normal.”

“Yeah, that’s fine. I’m sure Mi is heading towards us. And I think your snake could deal with most enemies.”

Once Kasumi had managed to climb onto Haku, the two of them teleported back to the field.





# CHAPTER 307

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND REUNION

While battles were erupting all around them, Maple and Mai were having a peaceful tea party on top of Syrup's back.

"Woah! Mai, we got another medal!"

"You're right... Do you think everyone is doing it alone...?"

"Hmm. It's strange that no one comes. We should be sticking out a lot right now..."

Maple didn't want to waste too many of her weapons, and so changed into her green clothes and used 'Poltergeist' to unleash a thick laser beam into the sky.

Because of this, even from far away you would be able to see a pillar of light swinging around in the dark sky.

"Ah, another monster is flying towards us!"

Of course, since it was a laser, it could be a beam saber when swung around. And so the flying devils would have their wings burned, which slowed them down as they flew. Regardless, it was Mai's turn to act.

She took out some of the iron balls that were under the table on Syrup's back, and flicked her wrist as she threw the ball.

It found its target with precision, as the light of the laser reflected off the heads of the devils. And they exploded like popped balloons.

"Nice throw!"

"Th-thank you."

“Hmm. I brought out the table because I thought they would be here by now... They must have been sent very far away.”

“But at least they seem to be safe. And they’re all very strong. I’m sure they will arrive soon.”

“Yes, it’s not like we know where they are... Ah, do you want more tea?”

“Uh, yes. Thank you.”

And like that, the two enjoyed their tea party as if completely oblivious to the hell down below.

While the sky was relatively safe, it was hard to even find a place on the ground that wasn’t covered in monsters. There were times when it felt like you would be safer inside the dungeons. Within all that, Kanade and Yui were the Maple Tree members who were lucky enough to find each other. They had escaped the monsters and made use of their smaller frames to hide in the hollow of a tree. It would be quite difficult for Kanade to protect Yui by himself. And even now, monsters were moving towards the tree they were in.

“Phew. That was close. I doubt we would have been able to survive if it was just me.”

“You’re one to talk. Well, we were kind of in trouble too.”

It was Drag who now stood in front of the tree. As he generally only moved with Frederica, he was not able to live up to his full potential without someone supporting him.

“Give and take, alright? We can part ways once we get out of this alive.”

“And Frederica is in the area anyway. Sally is apparently with her, for some strange reason.”

“You can contact them?”

“Yeah. Sort of.”

“I think we just need to survive a little longer. If Sally’s with them, we should be able to go to Maple.”

They weren’t that far from the area with the laser. They just needed to survive this wave of monsters.

“‘Holy Armor,’ ‘Holy Enchant.’”

First, Kanade enveloped Drag’s armor and weapons in light. This would minimize the damage if he was hit, and it would also increase the damage that he dealt.

“Sou will also use damage reduction skills, so you can fight without worrying.”

Kanade said as he called out Sou and had it transform into him.

“Oh, that would be a great help. Earth ‘Earthquake’!”

The Golem that was next to Drag slammed both arms into the ground. And the area around them began to shake. While this had no effect on the devils in the air, it made the zombies stop in their tracks.

“‘Earth Wave’!”

Drag activated the skill and the ground rippled and rose, violently pushing the monsters back.

Furthermore, as all of Drag’s skills had a knockback effect, the monsters were thrown even farther away. Aside from using knockbacks to break his enemy’s stance, Drag also had many abilities that pushed the enemy away, making it hard for them to get close enough to attack.

As long as Drag attacked them, the knockback effect would occur, and the enemies were kept at bay.

“That’s amazing! I would be able to fight a lot more if I could do that...”

“Well, everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. You just need to wait until it’s time for you to use your strength.”

“Yes!”

“Oh, ‘Defense Barrier’!”

“Nice guard! You’re certainly not worse than Frederica!”

“...I won’t help you anymore if you keep saying things like that.”

It was just as Drag said this, that Frederica appeared, pushing her way through the bushes.

“Oh!? You’re here already. What a relief! That was quick.”

“Uh, but you just said that you weren’t going to help me anymore... Hmph. ‘Multi-Barrier’!”

Now that Frederica was supporting Drag, Sally went to Kanade and Yui.

“I didn’t expect to find you two here. Well, I’m glad that you’re alright.”

“We were so close to reaching Maple, but then these monsters appeared.”

“At first, we were fighting with Drag, but I was in danger and... Oh, right! Sally, could you help Drag?”

While Frederica had come, it was still two against many. And so Yui looked very worried as she watched Drag. Especially since she had not done much but be protected. She had an apologetic expression on her face.

“Don’t worry. It’s not just Frederica and I that came.”

“Huh?”

“‘Area Expand,’ ‘Holy Blade of Conviction’!”

“‘Whirlwind Slash’!”

They heard a voice from the other side of Drag’s dirt wall, and immediately after, a current of light washed over the field. There were also sounds cracking, and the trio could tell that monsters were being annihilated.

“They’re so much stronger than before... Even without the tamed monsters. I’m so glad this event isn’t about PvP.”

“I expected no less from them. Payne and Dred.”

It was Payne and Dred that had erased the monsters from the field. They then put their weapons away and started to talk with Drag and Frederica.

“It’s no use. Nothing from the other party members... Besides, they were great shield wielders and buff-debuffers... maybe they were unlucky in terms of where they landed.”

“I see. What about our base?”

Frederica shook her head at Payne’s question. As Payne’s party had made their base near the edge of the map, it was now overrun by powerful monsters.

“We’ll have to look for a new place. How annoying...”

“Well, we have no choice. It’s too dangerous to spend the night out in the field.”

Sally overheard this conversation, and she thought about it a little before walking towards them.

“Um, there’s something I’d like to negotiate with you. Do you have a minute?”

And then Sally made a certain suggestion.

“What do you think about this snack? I bought it on the 7th layer.”

“It’s delicious! I’ll have to tell Yui about it later...”

“Hehe. There’s still more. Ah, wait! Something is coming!”

Maple saw that something was flying towards them from the darkness. And so she directed her weapons at it so she could burn it with the laser if necessary. Mai also picked up an iron ball and looked in the same direction.

“Huh? That...”

As Maple squinted, she saw that it wasn’t a monster, but Ignis and Ray. And on their

backs, were the members of the Congregation of Holy Swords, Flame Emperors, and the remaining members of Maple Tree.

“I didn’t expect us to meet again so soon, Maple.”

“Mi! Everyone! Payne and... Huh? Did-did something happen?”

“I didn’t expect us to have the same timing, but apparently Sally and I were thinking the same thing.”

“It looks like it.”

In other words, what both of them had suggested was the sharing of their base. Maple Tree’s base was close to the center of the map, and so it wasn’t overflowing with monsters yet.

And so in exchange for being able to stay there, the others would help defend it.

“Ohh! That’s great! It will be more fun with all these people. And we’ll be able to kill more monsters!”

Said Maple with a big smile. Then the other member of Maple Tree got onto Syrup, and they flew off towards their base.

“Hmm. Sally, it was around here, right?”

“Yes. The mountain’s position hasn’t changed. So it should be down here.”

And so Maple had Syrup slowly descend until they landed on the ground. They searched the area for a while until they found the sign, which led them to the familiar cave.

“Phew. What a relief. Alright, let’s return once before going out to explore.”

“But it took us a lot of time to reunite, so depending on management, the monsters might be coming out soon.”

In that case, it was best to start work on the base immediately. And so they all went inside. As it would take time to set up the traps again, they did it on the way.

“Woah... Who thought of this deadly trap...”

“Marx. Why don’t you set up traps too?”

“Yeah, I’ll ask. Also, I think we should make at least one route where the traps won’t trigger when we go through... After all, it will be over if you step on one by accident.”

As Maple constantly had Dedicated Affection activated, there was no problem if the members of Maple Tree were in the poison mud, but it was not the same for the other guild members.

And so Marx joined them in setting traps as they made their way deeper in. Since there were eight more people now, they had to use the space differently.

“Let’s do this quickly! Everyone, help me, okay? And I mean everyone.”

Izu ordered as they remade the living area. Since they had already finished setting the traps, they were able to finish building their camp in no time.



# CHAPTER 308

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND INTERCEPTION

The base was completed just a short time before the strengthened monsters were supposed to appear. While it meant they would have less space to intercept them, Marx's traps raised the overall quality of the place.

"Huh? A screen? Are you going to watch something?"

"I'm going to make it appear on this screen..."

Marx said. And then the image appeared on the screen he had set up. It showed every room of the ant's nest dungeon.

"Woah! That's amazing!"

"Ii-it will make it easy to know which traps have to be reset. And we'll know how strong the monsters are... Later then."

Marx told Maple that the fighting would be left to the other guild members, and then he returned to his space that had been partitioned.

The newly created living space had a large open area in the center, which connected to every guild's district. This was also where Marx's screen was set up.

As it was still Maple Tree's base, it was only their members who were loud and active. But since she had visited them a lot, Frederica blended in with them quite naturally.

"I'm so bored. We can't go into any dungeons... But we also have to keep our guard up..."

"I see you've made yourself at home... Don't forget that you still have to help guard the place, okay?"

"I know, Sally. Flame Emperor is here too. So we won't lose."

“Sally! It seems like something has come inside!”

And just like that, the image of the invader appeared on Marx’s screen. Their first monster was running on four legs. It looked like Maple’s ‘Savagery’ but with fewer legs and more eyes. As they watched, more and more of them started entering their base. It was like watching some incredible avalanche, and their sheer numbers allowed them to pass through the traps. And while the traps did make their numbers go down, they weren’t killing all of the monsters.

“Ahh. They will likely reach us at this rate. They must be stronger than the ones we fought last night. Payne! You’re up!”

As Frederica headed to Congregation of the Holy Swords’s district, Mi came out of the Kingdom of the Flame Emperor’s district.

“I’ll go. You can stay behind me.”

“Mi. Are you sure?”

Maple asked. Mi laughed confidently.

“I’m a Guild Master of a large guild too. Besides, aside from Shin, Marx and Misery are usually in the back supporting me.”

If a horde of monsters with high endurance were going to flood into here, Mi would have the easiest time if she fought by herself.

“I’ll come in if you need help!”

“Yeah. But don’t worry. That won’t be necessary.”

As Mi said this, Payne arrived and agreed.

“Yeah, I’ll go too. I swore to do my part, since you allowed us to stay here.”

“Yes, yes. Then I’ll just cast some buffs on you and you can do the rest.”

Aside from Frederica; Marx, Misery, and Izu also cast buffs on Payne and Mi. The two were surrounded by numerous auras as they prepared.

“Let’s go, Mi.”

“Don’t hold back this time, Payne.”

“Yeah, there are so many... And it’s better to overkill than accidentally let one escape.”

Mi and Payne then called out Ignis and Ray. They held their weapons ready as they walked to the interception area.

There, loud footsteps started to echo, and then a crowd of monsters flooded in from the entrance.

As soon as the monsters saw them, black magic circles appeared in front of their eyes. It seemed to be the start of some kind of attack. However, the pair started their own attack before the magic circles could do anything.

“Ignis, ‘Flame of the Phoenix,’ ‘Fire to my body.’”

“Ray, ‘Torrent of Light,’ ‘Unleash all Magic.’”

Mi’s body was surrounded in red fire, and it spread through the ground. Payne’s sword was enveloped in a pale light, and loud sparks could be heard.

“‘Murderous Inferno!’”

“‘Light Sword of the Holy Dragon!’”

The moment that the black light came out of the monsters’s black circles, the area was filled with red and white that far surpassed it. The red flames unleashed by Mi turned the whole area into a damage field, burning everything in front of her. The light that Payne created was especially effective on devil monsters. It erased them from existence as if purifying them.

The flames and light shot through the passages, even blowing away the items that were left there. The entire dungeon was filled with a violent storm. After a while, it finally faded away.

“Bah. In spite of it being the second day, they weren’t even that strong.”

“We had an advantage in terms of terrain. It was easy for us to use wide-area attacks

on them.”

“Mi and Payne! That was amazing!”

“I’m sure that they’ll attack again. But it will be easy to take turns fighting, since there are 16 of us. You can call any members of our guild any time.”

“Same with us.”

“Thank you!”

As Maple continued to gush over how impressed she was, Frederica turned away from the monitor and walked towards them.

“Hey, Payne! Did you have to blow away Marx’s cameras too?”

Aside from the area near the entrance, nothing else was showing up on the screen now.

“...? Maybe one of the buffs included extended my range, and I didn’t realize... I’m sorry.”

“Mi too... Those things took me a long time to set up.”

“Uh, yeah. Sorry.”

As they heard the others talk about the need to reset the traps, Chrome and Kasumi thought about what they had just seen.

“Are all Guild Masters like that?”

“No, these one-man armies have to be rare. It just so happens that a lot of them are close to us.”

As they thought about their own Guild Master, they went about resetting the traps in case there was a second attack.

Maple and Sally took Marx with them, and they reset the items that Payne and Mi had destroyed.

“I didn’t think we’d be making such a dangerous dungeon like this...”

Marx muttered as he set down the items that would allow them to see the rooms.

“Hmm. Payne and Mi really do a lot of damage. It was more than I had imagined.”

“It really was crazy.”

“Though, we might fight them again, so I can’t be too optimistic about it.”

“Th-that’s right. Yes.”

The two of them had become so much stronger since the 4th event. And Maple clenched her fists and swore that she would do her best if she had to fight them later on.

“While they did have all those buffs, I was still surprised. Mi isn’t really the type who you can beat by just being able to do similar attacks... or knowing a weakness.”

Of course, the Flame Emperors were also looking at the Congregation of Holy Swords. Being able to see the power of their rival was a big deal for all three guilds that were present.

And gathering the most medals during this event was an important part of being one step ahead of the others.

However, Mi’s party had already been halved. Their only player who fought on the frontlines was Shin, which put them in a dangerous position.

Marx wondered about this as he finished resetting the traps. He was still thinking about it as he returned to the back of the dungeon. The other two followed after him.



# CHAPTER 309

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND A CHANGE IN DIRECTION

Some time had passed, and after they were attacked several times, they decided that it wasn't worth the trouble of resetting the traps every time, and so they switched directions. They would immediately crush the monsters as soon as they entered. All of the 16 players here were so strong that they could compete for the title of strongest player in the game, and so there was no problem if they took turns fighting.

As an example, Yui and Mai would hit the monsters with their great hammers the moment that they stuck their heads out. Those that jumped out too quickly or survived through some skill, would then be subject to Izu's cannons or Frederica or Mi would shoot them down with long range attacks.

When they realized that this made things so much easier, the members of Flamer Emperors and Congregation of Holy Sword started to discuss something in the shared space.

"Did something happen?"

Once she was sure that no monsters were attacking, Maple went to talk to the other two guilds.

They were talking about the same thing. They believed that it would be a good idea to go out during the night and finish a dungeon.

"While tonight's monsters aren't exactly weak, they are not so strong that we can't deal with them. And considering that we were forcefully teleported today, who knows what will happen tomorrow."

"Payne is right. The night is supposed to be more dangerous than the day. However, I'm willing to bet that the third day is more dangerous than the second night."

"I-I see..."

As large guilds that fought for the top spot, they would want to get their hands on as many medals they possibly could. And since they now had a decent grasp on how strong the enemy was, they decided that four people would be enough. And they wanted to go out and explore.

“Ah, that’s right! Then we’ll help you too!”

Payne and Mi were quite surprised by this. They thought about it for a minute, and then decided that Maple didn’t have any hidden motives, and she was purely suggesting this as a friend.

“Yeah, it will be a great relief for us if more want to join. Besides, the medals go to everyone. So there are merits for your guild too, Maple...”

“Well, you should discuss it with the others. See if they think it’s worth the danger to go out and collect more medals. I’m grateful for the offer, but you’ve done enough for us by letting us stay here.”

They said that they would be glad for Maple Tree’s help. And then they started to think of a strategy for when they did go out.

And so Maple went and gathered the other members of Maple Tree together and repeated the conversation to them.

“Well, that might work. We really have no guarantee of what the third day will be like. And it’s true that these current monsters are still manageable.”

“And we should try and get as many medals as possible.”

“We’ll help too!”

“We’ll help too!”

“I think it will be fine as long as we can return here by the morning of the third day.”

“I agree. While Kasumi and Izu acquired some medals, we didn’t do any exploring today.”

“So we’re all in agreement about it. After all, we may not have time to search for more during the third day.”



After they all agreed, they decided to split the members of Maple Tree, Flame Emperors, and Congregation of Holy Swords, and explore the area.

“I have a map with likely dungeons marked out. You can see it now.”

“Ahh. You sure are resourceful, Sally. Hmm. So where is it?”

“Don’t be so impatient.”

Sally then sent the map she had made to the others. They would have to use it to decide which direction they would go in.

“Looking at it like this... Places with special objects seem to be close to the corners of the map. We already checked this area.”

“They are probably considering what happens after the second day. And given the need to go to the corners where the monsters are stronger, that seems right...”

Payne and Mi’s guilds looked over the map and thought about the risks and rewards. It was decided that groups of four would be the most balanced and allow them to cover the most space. And like that, each of the four groups had members from the other guilds, and they searched for dungeons in the north, south, east, and west.

Mobility, endurance, and attack ability were all considered, and each team would be strong in their own way. And with that, everyone left the base and went out into the field.

# CHAPTER 310

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND TO THE EAST

The four who went east were Dred, Marx, Mai, and Yui.

They rode on top of Tsukimi and Yukimi as they dashed through the field.

“Woah. They really are fast.”

“Yes. Like this, we might be able to outrun any monsters we encounter...”

As they said this, one of the four-legged monsters that had attacked their base, suddenly appeared in front of them. Even Marx’s Clear was not able to erase every single one, and so it now rushed towards the four of them.

“‘Power Share,’ ‘Bright Star!’”

“‘Power Share,’ ‘Bright Star!’”

As Tsukimi and Yukimi’s masters had higher attack ability, sharing their STR caused theirs to rise, and they unleashed a spherical light that caused damage.

The monster in front of them was hit by two of them, and stumbled.

As it lost its balance, Tsukimi and Yukimi dashed forward on both sides of it. And just as they were about to pass it by, the two swung their great hammers right into the monster, erasing it with a burst of light.

“What a horrible hit and run.”

“It really is incredible, seeing it up close...”

The general strategy for these four was to allow Mai and Yui to get close to the monsters in order to destroy them. Furthermore, since Tsukimi and Yukimi were with them,

they were guaranteed a decent amount of speed as well. With Marx's trap setting abilities put into the mix, they didn't have too much to worry about.

The four of them looked at the map that Sally had made, and tried to figure out the location of the mark, relative to Maple Tree's base.

"The terrain hasn't changed, at least. According to Sally, it should be around... here?"

The shadows of the night were so dark and vast that you couldn't see any stars. But the moon's reflection could be seen on the lake's surface. And since there was no moon to be seen in the sky, it was clear that there was something very strange about this lake.

"Should we go?"

"Yeah. We'll just get attacked by monsters if we stay here looking. Besides, Marx said he finds it easier to work inside of dungeons."

"Yes. Clear's abilities won't work as well out here..."

"Then let's get going. Though, we still don't know if it really is a dungeon."

"Understood. Tsukimi!"

Mai and Yui then had Tsukimi and Yukimi run down to the side of the lake.

"For now, let's try going to the center."

"Should we... use a boat?"

However, Tsukimi and Yukimi were able to swim, so there was no need for that. But as their feet stretched out towards the water's surfaces, a most strange thing happened. Their feet did not sink, but stopped perfectly on top of the water. And after that, they were able to walk on it like it was normal ground.

"This... it looks like we were right."

The four continued on until they reached the center of the lake. And when they arrived, their bodies were enveloped by light.

“That was pretty quick. Well, just try not to die.”

“Yeah.”

“Yes!”

“Yes!”

As they waited excitedly, their bodies were covered completely, and they were teleported off to the dungeon.

The place they came out in had a ground that was covered in water. Even the walls were damp. The overall atmosphere was damp and humid. It was a circular area and it was easy to see that this was the starting point.

There was only one passage leading away, so they had no choice but to follow it.

“Well, let’s go then.”

“Yes. Alright, Clear... “Transparent.””

“Are we invisible now?”

“Yes. But be careful, it doesn’t work on every monster.”

“I don’t know if I would be able to deal with this during PvP. Even if I knew about it.”

“...Maybe.”

They cautiously made their way down the passage. Then they saw an eel that was about a meter in length, coming toward them from the other side. It was enveloped in water as it swam through the air. A trail of water was left behind it, and they could hear sparks of electricity as pale light flashed.

And while the four brandished their weapons, the eel had not seen them, and passed them by.

“Mai!”

“Yes!”

The two stepped forward and swung their great hammers as hard as they could.

The leisurely swimming eel felt the full force of this attack as it was pounded out of the air. There was a loud popping noise as it slammed into the ground and exploded with electricity and light before disappearing.

“What an extravagant assassination...”

“All the better with ‘Transparent.’”

As they would be exposed when attacking, he and Izu had had to use it when entering the dungeon. But it had a very different effect for Mai and Yui. For the monsters, it was as if an invisible, instant death attack was coming out of nowhere. And since they died in one hit, there was no fear of getting caught.

“That’s something that couldn’t be done in our guild.”

“Well, it’s just a skill for ambushes...”

“Ah, it seems we’re visible. Can you put it on again!”

“Ah, it seems we’re visible. Can you put it on again!”

“They might come out in the boss fight. So we should kill every new monster that we meet along the way.”

Whether or not they died in one hit from Mai and Yui would greatly affect their strategy. And like that, the four were off to a very good start.

Marx cast ‘Transparent’ on them again, and then used a trap skill on May and Yui that would create a barrier when they were attacked by enemies.

“It was leaking electricity... Even if it can’t see you, it might still attack everything around it. So you should be careful.”

“Maple’s Dedicated Affection, was it? We don’t have that kind of defense ability. So we’ll have to dodge attacks when we can.”

And if that failed, Marx’s defense wall would be their last fortress. Mai and Yui also knew that when they teamed up with someone besides Maple, they needed to have all

their attacks hit their targets. So this was a good time to work on their skills.

“Let’s keep going at this pace then!”

“Remember, we have to be careful, Yui.”

They said happily. Aside from the electric eel, there were all kinds of fish that swam in the air. And after they had walked for a while, a huge room appeared before them. Here, the place was filled with fish that swam in the air while leaving a trail of electricity.

It was easy to imagine what would happen if you attacked one carelessly. They would all turn towards you at once and unleash their attacks.

“Wha-what should we do... It would be very hard for us to kill them all at once.”

“I wish we could slip through, but I don’t know if it’s possible.”

“Oh, well. Shadow, ‘Awakening.’”

Dred said. And then the black wolf was summoned.

“Marx isn’t the only one who can help you avoid battles.”

As Dred activated the skill, he told the other three to run straight to the corridor on the opposite side.

Upon hearing this, May and Yui go on top of Tsukimi and Yukimi. Then they told Dred that they were ready.

“Let’s go. Shadow, ‘Shadow World.’”

And just like that, the ground underneath all four of them turned black, and their entire bodies sunk into the ground. The other three were stunned for a moment, but then they remembered Dred’s order and began to dash forward. Above them, they could see the semi-transparent ground they had been on earlier. After a while, they were pushed back up, and they got closer to the surface.

Somehow, the four of them had succeeded in reaching the other side without being seen.

“Haha. That means you would be able to go right through my traps... How could I even

deal with such a skill?"

"...Hmm. I don't know."

Marx looked quite stunned at this display of power from a member of the Congregation of Holy Blades. Mai and Yui could not hide their surprise either.

"That was amazing! That skill looks like it would have so many uses!"

"You saved us. Thank you."

"It's nothing. I'll have to show my firepower during the boss fight as well. But still..."

Dred scratched his head. Mai and Yui always reacted so honestly to everything, it was hard to imagine they were the same people that were fighting.

"It's very... Maple Tree... I guess..."

"Ah... I think I know what you're thinking about."

Well, this kind of dungeon crawling was not bad for a change. That is what he thought while looking at their shining eyes. And with that, they headed for the boss room.

With Clear and Shadow's ability to avoid combat, and with Mai and Yui's ability to one-shot monsters when necessary, the four of them were able to reach the boss room without too much trouble.

"Marx. Are you ready?"

"Yeah, I'm fine."

"We're fine too!"

"We're fine too!"

"Alright. Let's open the door then."

Dred was in the lead as they stepped inside. In the back of the room, there was a giant catfish that was nearly 10 meters in size and covered in water. Electricity crackled from its long and thick whiskers.

The catfish's HP bar appeared above its head, and at the same time, its body shuddered, sending the water around it flying towards the four intruders. While they were floating in the air, the electricity in the catfish's whiskers increased in intensity, and the water became electric as well.

“Remote Set, Earth Wall.”

Marx had a bad feeling, and so he created a wall of dirt, blocking the spheres of water from reaching them. Immediately after, there was a loud crash, as thick tendrils of electricity connected the spheres. After a while, they disappeared again.

“Don't worry. I'll make an opening for you. You fight alongside Sally a lot, don't you?”

“Yes, we're fine!”

“Yes, we're fine!”

Dred was like Sally in terms of speed and weapons. And so it would be easy for Mai and Yui to coordinate with him. They had trained with Sally for quite a long time.

And so it was not hard for them to see the similarities.

“Shadow, ‘Shadow Pack’”!

As Dred started to run forward, he called out several wolves from his shadow. They ran ahead and charged into the catfish that floated slight above the ground. However, before the wolves could deal any damage, they hit the water that enveloped the catfish, and with the buzz of electric shock they vanished.

“How annoying... I guess I'll have to use magic then.”

He would get shocked too if he got too close. But since he had a skill that would allow him to survive with 1 HP, he could test it if he wanted. But it wasn't worth the risk.

As he used magic to attract its attention, he tried to think of how they could beat it, now that it was so much harder for Mai and Yui to attack it. For now, he tried to get it to turn its back on Mai and Yui. Just then, there was a thunderous sound that was as loud as the lightning attack, and something crashed into the catfish's stomach.

The catfish staggered greatly. Whatever it was that hit it, now fell on the floor and



made the room shake. When Dred looked in the direction that it had come from, he saw that Mai was throwing something, and Yui was hitting it with her great hammer as if they were playing baseball. And while he didn't see it, Marx was standing near them as well, and looking a little put off by how strong they were.



Then there was another crash as something came flying. To be precise, this mysterious sphere that was the result of combining the hardest materials in the game and was able to withstand Mai and Yui's attacks had only been completed on the first night. And luckily, the catfish had moved in order to dodge the second hit, which resulted in the sphere catching it right in the face. The damaged catfish lost its water power and fell down to the ground.

"Dred! Now!"

"Please do it...!"

"What the hell... 'Septuple Slash'! Shadow, 'Shadow Pack.'"

Deciding to test it, Dred attacked the catfish's whiskers, which were no longer unleashing electricity.

They said that there was power in numbers, and the pack of wolves descended on the catfish with rapid and repeated attacks that dealt real damage. During the attack, large cuts appear on the catfish's whiskers. While the main body was still alive, Dred was sure that its electric attacks would be weaker now. Just then, the catfish's body started to crackle with electricity again, and so he moved away.

"Those two... they won't make it in time, even on their bears."

The catfish had not been down for long, and since they had been getting ready to hit it again, they would not make it in time.

"Mai, Yui! Can you hit it again?"

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

Dred moved to the other side of the catfish so that he wouldn't be hit accidentally, and then he concentrated on dodging its attacks. Unlike Sally, he wouldn't die by taking just a little damage, and so he bought time until it went down again, by making use of the damage reduction effect, and the walls that Marx continued to make.

"This... is getting dangerous. Shadow, 'Shadow Wall'!"

He predicted the next attack and kept the damage to a minimum. And when he was attacked by electricity that was too big to dodge, he would escape by using his shadow skill.

It was this combination of skill and technique that allowed him to buy time. And then, the catfish was hit by the ball again, and went crashing to the ground.

“We can reach it this time!”

“We can reach it this time!”

This time, they were ready to rush towards it, and so they jumped on Tsukimi and Yukim’s backs.

“Double Strike’!!”

“Double Strike’!!”

They jumped off of Tsukimi and Yukimi and unleashed their attack. Unlike their batting attack, which was only effective because of their ridiculous power, their damage output now was what you would expect from a proper attack skill.

This destructive power came at the expense of everything else, and it was by no means inferior to what Payne or Mi could do.

After all, ordinary attack skills that anyone could buy on the market would now result in instant-kills.

However, the catfish managed to survive with just a little HP remaining, and now its body was unleashing more electricity than ever before. But judging by how unnatural its movements were, Dred sensed that something was coming, and so he moved away.

“It’s still alive!?”

“It’s still alive!?”

“Stand back! I think it’s a gimmick!”

The two got back on Tsukimi and Yukimi, and with Dred, they retreated to where Marx was waiting.

When the three looked behind them, they saw that the giant catfish had reached the peak of its electrical discharge. Several pillars of light shot up to the ceiling like thunderbolts, and huge chunks of ground were carved out.

“‘Remote Set – Earth Wall,’ ‘Remote Set – Obstacle,’ ‘Remote Set – Castle Wall’!”

Marx created barriers behind them as they ran, in an attempt to delay the lightning from catching up to them. Like this, they somehow managed to reach Marx. And then Marx created the fortress he had made when he was with Izu.

“‘Set – One Night Castle’! It still won’t stop...!”

“How long will this hold!?”

“At this pace... maybe 30 seconds!”

Everything outside of the fortress was just white light. They had no idea what was happening outside. However, they could not allow themselves to be killed here.

“Oh, well. It’s just one more hit. If we’re going to die here anyway, I might as well try it. As annoying as it is.”

As if he had no choice, Dred jumped out of the fortress and into the electricity.

“‘Super Acceleration,’ ‘Top Speed,’ ‘Godspeed,’ Shadow, ‘Shadow Dive’!”

Dred accelerated all at once, and then used Shadow’s skill to dive into the shadows. It all happened so quickly. And like that, Dred was able to go through the electricity.

The giant catfish was on the other side, and while an immense amount of electricity was raining down, it wasn’t necessary to get through it. Instead, he used earth magic to create a stone bullet.

“Hah. I’m glad that it’s not too thick.”

The stone bullet hit the catfish right between the eyes and pierced through its flesh. And this time, its HP went down to 0.

“Hah... we somehow did it.”

“Are you okay, Dred?”

“Mm, yeah. Don’t worry about me. No problem at all.”

The fight was over, and they all received a medal each. Dred looked at the overjoyed Mai and Yui, and he hoped that the next dungeon would have an easier boss.

# CHAPTER 311

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND TO THE WEST

The four that went to the west were Payne, Misery, Izu, and Kanade. And their mode of transportation was Ray, who could fly.

“It seems like Dred’s team have succeeded in finishing a dungeon.”

“I’m not surprised. But judging by this speed, Mai and Yui must be doing well.”

The four were headed to an island that floated in the sky. There were many floating islands, and most of them were just there for the atmosphere, and could not be entered. However, there was one island that had a narrow area where you could just barely slip through.

“It’s very strange that there’s just one. There must be something here.”

“Yes. But... Ah, I knew they would come.”

As you could just barely invade it, it was no surprise that it was at the very edge of the map. And that meant that even from the sky, strong monsters would appear. Just like the four had predicted, devil monsters with bat-like wings and two horns on their heads came flying towards them.

“I saw these on the ground too. They like to summon their minions. What should we do?”

“We’re not far from the island. We should be able to get through if we can distract them for a second.”

“Fine. It’s settled then. Let’s go, Sou. ‘Sleeping Bubble,’ ‘Paralyze Shout.’”

An electric effect came out from the book, and bubbles that shone like the rainbow blew out. Every skill that Kanade could use, Sou could use as well. And while it didn’t work on all of them, the devils that were affected by the paralysis and sleep began to

drop out of the air. And a path to the floating island was opened before them.

“Ray, ‘Shooting Star’!”

A light then enveloped Ray, as they all sat on it, and the tamed monster suddenly flew forward with accelerated speed.

By using a charging skill, they would throw any monster who got in their way into the air, and reach the floating island at top speed.

It went better than expected, and they were able to shake off the surrounding monsters as they approached the island.

“Leave the enemies behind us to me!”

“You should focus your skills on defeating the monsters that are ahead of us.”

And so Izu and Misery took on the roles of dealing with the monsters that pursued them. Payne and Kanade dealt with the rest.

“Good. We can descend now.”

And like that, they safely arrived on the island. Payne returned Ray to its original size and then they inspected their surroundings. They had come down on a corner of the island that had a wide clearing as if it were just begging them to come down here. But the entire island itself was not that large, and you could walk from one corner to the other in a few minutes.

“I guess we’ll have to go in this forest up ahead.”

“Yes. But keep your guard up.”

Payne took the lead as the four of them entered the forest. Apparently, monsters did not enter this forest, and it was clear that it was quite different from the other places.

“Is that a mansion...?”

“It looks like it. Should we go inside?”

“Yeah, it’s not like we have a choice.”



And so they opened the front door and walked in. A vast entrance was before them, and in the center, there was a large magic circle that looked like it was drawn with blood. It was hard to look away from it.

“I see. Well, it’s a good thing they made it easy to find.”

“I already made preparations for damage nullification in case it is a trap.”

Their support was ready. They had come all this way to complete dungeons, so there was no way that they would turn back now. However, it turned out that their worries were unfounded, and all four were soon surrounded by that familiar light. They waited for the light to die down and then they opened their eyes. What they saw was a long passage made of stone bricks. Behind them was a wall, which made it easy to know which way they were supposed to go.

“Well, I guess we better go forward for now.”

“Yes. And I don’t sense any monsters.”

Just like before, Payne took the lead as they advanced. Then they came upon a wide open room with three doors. Each door had a different mark on it, a sword, staff, and spear. Clearly, they were supposed to mean something.

“Maybe it’s supposed to tell us what kind of monster is behind it?”

“I think so too. Then we should choose something that would be easy to deal with.”

And so the four discussed it and decided to choose the door with the sword on it. When they opened it, they came out into an arena without any obstacles. On the other side, there was a monster who wore armor and a helmet and wielded a great sword.

“So, it really was about the monster.”

“Yeah. And if all of them have just one monster, that will make things easier.”

Indeed, their strategy involved Payne being the main attacker, while the other three did what they were good at, which was casting buffs. They would create a one man army. Everything from status effects, recovery, resurrection, support fire. They would cover him.

“I can’t lose after receiving this much support. I’ll fulfill my role.”

Like that, Payne unsheathed his sword and faced the monster. First, he needed to check if his strategy would work. And so the three cast buffs on Payne. None of them affected the enemy, and they wouldn’t exactly be considered rare skills either.

Once they were finished, Payne dashed forward before the monster could approach him.

“Ray, ‘Breath of the Holy Dragon,’ ‘Holy Blade of Fragmentation’!”

The blinding breath that Ray unleashed not only damaged the monster, but staggered it.

Payne rushed towards it all at once and cut deeply into its body with his sword. Then he swung again to the side, this time cutting through its shoulder and reaching its stomach. The monster was also carrying a greatsword that looked like it would deal a lot of damage, and it swung it wildly. However, it was either blocked or dodged. And it was not able to hurt Payne.

Part of it was because of the buffs, but when it came to pure swordsmanship, this monster was not on the same level as Payne.

“‘Holy Blade of Conviction’!”

As Payne’s voice rang, a light flashed from his sword, and when it swung down, it easily separated the monster’s torso from its lower half. And so ultimately, without ever being in danger, and without ever not overwhelming the enemy, Payne’s battle with the warrior had ended.

“That exceeded my expectations...”

“I’m reminded of the boss on the 10th floor of the tower. Just pure strength.”

“If this is what they are like, then buffs will likely be enough, unless there are a lot of enemies at once.”

As they thought about his strength, the four of them went through the door that was at the back of the arena. This time, they were greeted by two doors. One had a katana on it and the other a bow.

“Which should we choose?”

“Let’s go with the katana. It will be easier than someone with a ranged weapon.”

They decided to choose the katana, and then they went through the door. What they were greeted to, was a similar arena. This one had a single samurai who was sitting down as he waited for them.

“I see. I’ll attack him while the buffs are still active. Can you support me?”

“Of course.”

“Whenever you need it.”

“I’ll be ready to heal you.”

Upon hearing this, Payne held a sword in one hand and a shield in the other as he approached the enemy. He made sure to protect himself by holding his shield up as he got close. Just then, and with a speed that even Payne could not follow, the katana was swung, and a damage effect exploded from his arm, where his shield and sword could not cover. Payne flew in the air from the knockback effect. But since Misery immediately healed him, he did not suffer any real damage. However, the two now glared at each other.

“I see. This one really is quite different from the last warrior.”

“Let’s follow the plan then.”

“Yeah, let’s do that. ‘Immovable’!”

Payne then used a skill to nullify knockbacks, and then he charged forward. This time, he didn’t bother to raise his shield.

“Sou, ‘Cage of Gravity.’”

“Fay, ‘Tangled Grass.’”

Since the enemy just kept his hand on his sword without moving, it was easy to target him with magic. Kanade had Sou set down a field that greatly reduced one’s moving speed, and Izu grew plants that would get in the way of a monster that was trying to

move. These measures would prevent the Samurai from escaping, should it try.

And so Payne closed in the gap between him and the samurai. The samurai repeatedly slashed with his katana before returning it to its sheath. And it did this at a speed that the eye could not follow. However, Payne ignored him and raised his sword. Of course, the katana dug deep into his body as it hit him, but Payne continued his attack on the monster.

“‘Light of Healing’!”

Payne had the advantage of numbers. And there was no way that he wasn’t going to use it. Even though knockback was now nullified and Payne continued to attack him, the samurai might still have won due to incredible attack speed and overwhelming amount of HP. However, not when Misery was there. Misery’s healing kept Payne from sinking, and he continued to unleash his heavy attacks.

There was no way for the samurai to win against a player that was so strong that he could continue to be hit by him.

“‘Holy Blade of Wall Breaking’!”

The sword came down with a flash of light. It stabbed into the samurai’s neck before he could block it. And like that, the enemy disappeared into light.

These four were already among the strongest in the game. And so there was no way that a single monster could win.

“Now, let’s keep going. I think there should be more of them next time.”

And like that, they headed to the next door.

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Ultimately, Payne was right, and the enemies increased with every room. Two and then three. And then four. Sometimes, the enemy outnumbered them.

However, it meant absolutely nothing. These enemies would have been perfectly manageable by Payne, while the others focused on buffing him. And a few more coming out now just meant the others could finally make use of their own attack power.

Bombs rolled all over the room, magic books were pulled out one after another, everyone needed to attack and defend now, and the buffs and healing started to really show their worth. You would have to get past one of the strongest of advance guards to reach the rear guards, who were wreaking havoc in the arena. And that was too tall an order for a monster.

“Phew. We’re finally at the boss. There were more rooms than I was expecting.”

“Yeah. I wonder what kind of boss it will be?”

“I can’t imagine. The road here didn’t really give us any hints. But they were all humanoids, so maybe the boss will be the same.”

“We’ll find out when we enter. Hmm. I hope it’s easy to kill.”

And so all four of them summoned their tamed monster and then they opened the door and stepped inside.

The room was shaped like a rectangle, and it extended farthest from the entrance. At the very end, there was a giant, floating stone slab that was also rectangular and had no decorations. Just as the door shut behind them, a HP bar appeared above the stone slab.

All four of them looked surprised at this unexpected enemy. In the meantime, the marks they had seen on the doors on their way here, suddenly appeared around the stone slab.

But they were all from the doors that they had not gone through. Judging from the marks, there were sorcerers, archers, gunners, and others with ranged attacks.

The marks then started to glow, and this was followed by the actual monsters coming out.

“...I see.”

“There are going to be a lot of enemies with ranged attacks.”

“Then there is only one strategy we can use.”

“Alright, I’ll buy you all some time.”

Kanade stepped in front of the others and took out one book after another.

“‘Paralysis Powder,’ ‘High Waves,’ ‘Sticky Bullet,’ ‘Magic Obstruction.’”

He calmly and quickly chose the most effective ones and activated them. These were not Sou’s, which were slightly weaker. He used his own stored books to paralyze, call out waves with knockback effects, and bound them to the ground. Like this, the few of the advance guards were stopped in their tracks.

As for the sorcerer in the back, he hindered him by using a skill that would weaken the force and range of his magic.

“Ahh, that stone slab seems to summon them at regular intervals...”

He could do nothing about that. And so he kept using more books in order to prevent them from getting close.

“‘Large Scale Magic Barrier,’ Sou, ‘Large Scale Magic Barrier’!”



As he blocked off the advance guard, the number of rear guards only increased. And now there was an immense amount of magic, arrows, and bullets flying towards them. Kanade and Sou created two layers of barriers in order to stop them completely.

At this point, Payne's skill that took so long to activate, was finally ready.

"Light Sword of the Holy Dragon'!"

This skill that he had used in Maple Tree's base in order to drive back the monsters was simply a wide area attack skill with high power. But there was strength in simplicity. This had always been their trump card, and so it was incredibly convenient that the boss monster should summon so many enemies for them at once.

As the lights and shock waves raged, erasing the monsters from existence, the four of them jumped onto Ray's back and through the use of 'Shooting Star,' reached the stone slab in a flash.

"We have to launch a counter attack too."

The three rear guards took out the bombs they had been given in advance.

Once Ray charged into the stone slab, damaging it, they all unleashed their own attacks. The stone slab was good at rapidly summoning, but could do nothing else but moderate magic. And without being able to overwhelm Misery's healing magic, it could do nothing as its HP started to decrease.

There was nothing to be done if everything it summoned could be killed with one hit.

"Holy Blade of Conviction'!"

"Holy Spear'!"

"Fay, 'Item Strengthen,' 'Recycle'!"

"Tornado'!"

The flashy attack effect enveloped the stone slab. And since it was already being hit by Payne's powerful area attack, cracks began to loudly appear on its surface. And then it shattered.



“I guess we had the better strategy?”

“I think we were a good match for it. Even the shape of the room worked in our favor.”

“I admit, I was a little frantic when I first saw that row of sorcerers and archers, but we ended up winning pretty easily.”

“Yes, that was amazing.”

Just then, they heard the notification sound that told them that they had received the medals. However, since they still had more time, the four of them decided to search for another dungeon. Since their powerful skills were reset every day, it made sense to try and use them up before the day ended.

And like that, the four returned to the mansion.

# CHAPTER 312

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND TO THE SOUTH

Drag, Shin, Chrome, and Kasumi were the four that headed to the south. Of course, Kasumi was the one in the team that had a mode of transportation that all four of them could use. Kasumi made Haku 'Super Enlarge,' and they traveled towards the dessert that Maple Tree had teleported to on the first day.

The reason for this was that the four had gone around to all of the suspicious spots on Sally's map, but had found nothing. Even though the spots were all close together on the south side, making exploration easier.

And since they had now gone to all of the places with high priority, they decided that it must be somewhere that was hard to find. And so they had come to the wide open dessert.

"I was thinking this while riding Payne's dragon as well, but it sure is nice to have a monster that can carry you."

"Yes, Mi said the same thing."

"Well, having mobility will allow you to get through areas faster... Now, is there anything here..."

"There really isn't. But things seem to be going smoothly for the teams that went in the other directions..."

The four of them sat on Haku's head and scanned the area. They were able to see worms and devils in the distance. It appeared that they were fighting some players, as they saw explosive magic effects.

"So there are players near the edge of the map as well."

"We weren't the only ones who thought to come here then. Well, who wouldn't think

that there must be something in a dessert that's this big?"

As they continued their search, the weather suddenly took a turn for the worse, and a powerful sand storm began to blow. And while they were wary, the devil monsters that were near the edge of the map did not come close to them. Chrome was especially cautious, as he was the shield-bearer. But he could not sense any enemy presences coming near.

"There must be something... Kasumi! Let's get off for now."

"Yeah, let's do that."

The four of them sensed something and so they got off of Haku, and she returned it to normal size. Then they started exploring on foot.

"It really is a crazy sandstorm. I can barely see in front of me."

"Maybe I should unleash 'Destructor' around us. At least then we'll know if something is coming towards us."

And so Shin activated 'Destructor,' causing the multiplied swords to rotate around them in a wide circle. As long as it was a decently large monster, it would get hit, no matter what side it was coming from. So an ambush would be less likely.

As they walked like this for a while, Shin's 'Destructor' caught something.

"Oh, it's hit something... But it doesn't seem like a monster."

"Then let's head over to it. I wonder what it could be?"

When they reached it, they found a rocky area that was covered in sand from the sandstorm. But there were cracks between the rocks that looked like they led to an underground chamber.

"Let's go then. We finally found something that looks promising."

"Yeah, let's go. I won't be able to enlarge Haku down there, but that can't be helped."

As they moved between boulders and descended, they entered an underground chamber. The sound of falling sand echoed around them. The ground also looked like

sand. And while they wouldn't sink into it, it was still difficult to walk.

"Woah, it looks like we really found it. Awesome."

"Anyway, I think I should go in the lead."

"Hmm. Yes, we'll leave it to you, Chrome."

"Now, what will we find..."

Chrome moved to the front and took the first step. Just then, the sand in front of him moved, and a single giant scorpion jumped out of the ground. But before the others could reach it with their weapons, it stung Chrome and then returned into the ground.

At the same time, an effect burst on Chrome, showing that the item he had received from Izu earlier had activated. It took the damage of an instant death attack for you.

"What? Are you kidding!? That scorpion has an instant death attack!"

"This is bad. We better retreat for now!"

"Then get on these! We'll move away from the sand."

Shin said as he used 'Destructor' to create blades that they could ride on. Once they were able to temporarily escape the danger, they held a quick strategy meeting.

"Shin. I didn't know you could use that skill like this."

Kasumi said as she pointed at the sword.

"I got the idea while watching Maple. There are a lot of ways to use a flying sword."

"But what should we do? We have instant death resistant items from Izu... but they're not something we can keep using on monsters that aren't even bosses."

"No, don't worry. Just leave it to me. We just need to know the position of the scorpion inside of the sand, right?"

Drag said as he called out Earth. Earth was a Golem that had a lot of skills related to the ground. And so Drag had a way of dealing with this enemy.

“Earth, ‘Earthquake’!”

As Earth began to make the ground shake, they saw that damage effects were coming out of the sand. That showed that there was something inside.

“Shin, now! You can go safely if you’re on that sword.”

“Aye!”

Shin used one of the swords that wasn’t being used as a platform, and sent it into the sand. Then he pulled it back.

What came out was a skewered, black scorpion. It thrashed around in order to free itself. But instead, there was a pop, and it faded into light.

“I guess we were lucky that it had low HP. Still, we’ll have to continue to move on these things as long as there is sand on the ground.”

“It can’t be helped. But this gives me a bad feeling about the boss.”

If the ordinary enemies were giant scorpions with instant death attacks, they could assume that the boss would be very powerful.

“Well, at least we have a way of dealing with it. It was also good that it was Chrome who was stung.”

If it was someone else, they might have died before they knew what hit them. And so they were all reminded of the risk of entering a dungeon. And with that, the four of them continued on their way.

After that, Earth and Drag had to skewer and pull out a number of scorpions so that the other three could kill them and secure a safe path ahead. And then they finally reached an area where the ground wasn’t covered in sand.

“Haa... What a relief. Things should calm down a little now that we’re here.”

“Really, those scorpions were annoying. I wouldn’t want to go there again...”

“‘Destroyer’ really saved us. So, do you think we’re about half way through now?”

“Considering that the ground is just rocks here, we’re definitely in a new area.”

Now they just had to be careful, instead of constantly fearing for their lives. This meant that they could move much faster. And as Chrome led them forward, a new monster appeared before them.

“Oh, so this one is a snake. It came out of a hole.”

“I bet it has an instant kill poison attack. Let’s hurry up and kill it.”

This snake also seemed to have low HP, and so the four of them understood that this dungeon had enemies that tried to ambush you and kill enemies with instant death.

“This makes me nervous...”

“I’d really like to just rush towards the boss, but... What?”

Chrome had just turned a corner, when he noticed that several flowers were growing out from the rock walls. At this point, they were starting to think that anything and everything had instant kill attacks, and so they went past without stimulating it or touching it. However, as if to ruin their plans, a snake slithered out of a hole and rubbed against a flower.

And then a ‘sound’ like a ringing bell filled the air. It was shockingly loud, and with that, snakes began to slither out of holes all around them.

“Ah, damn it! And we were so careful not to touch it!”

“Wen, ‘Wind God’!”

Shin had no choice but to unleash his wind blades in order to fight against the wave of snakes that rushed towards them. Of course, this meant stimulating the flowers again. But they wouldn’t survive unless they did something about the first wave.

And then Shin used ‘Destructor’ to slice up the snakes with spinning blades.

“Attack the ones that get past me! I still can’t control them precisely yet!”

“I’ll get the ones on this side! ‘Earth Wave’!”

“Necro, ‘Flame of Death’!”

“‘Blood Blade’!”

They all used skills that could attack multiple enemies in order to ensure that they weren’t bitten by the snakes. This tactic of standing their ground and not running away proved to be successful, and they were able to kill all of the snakes.

This was unlike any other battle, since they could not be hit even once, and so they all sighed in relief when it was over.

“Let’s hurry on to the boss. The road to it is so tiring.”

“I agree...”

And so they quickly moved on before the flowers could summon another wave.

Their prayers were answered, and it did not take them long to reach the boss room after that. They just had to deal with a few more snakes before the familiar door came into sight.

“Now, let’s open it. Are you ready?”

“Yeah, no problem.”

“Sure. I’m fully prepared!”

“Ready when you are.”

As he had everyone’s permission, Chrome jumped into the boss room first. In this room, sand trickled down from the ceiling and created piles all over the room. The entire floor was covered in sand.

The four of them froze and waited, but since nothing appeared, they became very suspicious.

“There’s nothing... here?”

“No, something is hidden in the sand pile to the back. It’s suspicious as hell.”

Shin seemed to have found something. And so as if to say he would never go and see it for himself, he sent out a flying sword to go and dig it up. Kasumi watched and used her skill to find out what it was.

“Farsight’...Human bones? No, there is something... A crystal snake and... a scorpion?”

She saw something glimmering inside of the skull, and she realized that it was a crystal snake and a scorpion. At the same moment, the two creatures crawled out of the skull and buried themselves in the sand.

And with that, familiar-looking snakes and scorpions came crawling out of the piles of sand.

“Again!”

“Again!”

“Again!”

“Again!”

It was what they had expected, but desperately hoped would not happen. And so all four of them shouted in unison. It was clear that this crystal snake and scorpion were the bosses. However, they would first have to deal with this horde of monsters that had instant kill attacks.

Everything that they didn’t want to appear in the boss room had appeared. Still, there was nothing for them to do but fight.

“The scorpions are clearly more dangerous! Shin and I will handle them. Kasumi and Chrome. You two deal with the snakes!”

“Aye!”

“Aye!”

“‘Earth Wave’! Earth, ‘Earthquake’!”

“Wen, ‘Wind God’! ‘Destructor’!”



Drag caused the ground to shake, dealing damage to the scorpions across a wide area. Furthermore, the knockback effect threw them into the air, while dragging others out of the sand.

Shin used 'Destructor' to multiply his swords to the limit, and then made them hover just above the ground as they slashed through the enemy.

"'Flame of Death'!"

"'Arm of the Warrior'! 'Blood Blade'!"

As for Chrome and Kasumi, Chrome stood one step in the front in order to lure the enemy in. By doing so, they were able to burn all of the monsters at once. Any those that remained were cut down with the liquid katana.

However, more scorpions and snakes kept coming out of the sand. There was no end in sight.

"We're using skills to deal with them! If this continues, we'll be killed by the cooldown time!"

"The two bosses should be somewhere! Those crystal bastards are the boss right! We have to find them!"

Kasumi and Chrome could not spam area attacks. And while Shin could continue to use his flying blades, things could easily crumble with one mistake.

"Tsk. Damn it. I'll have to use my trump card. Earth, 'Raging Earth'!"

Drag ordered, and nearly the entire floor of the room turned a glowing red, and sharp rocks came shooting out. Of course, they skewered the snakes and scorpions as they dragged them out of the sand.

"There they are! There!"

"Aye. Leave it to me!"

Kasumi moved around in order to find the bosses, and it did not take long. Shin immediately attacked them with his swords.

“How is it!?”

“No, it’s not finished yet.”

After taking a certain amount of damage, the two monsters dove back into the sand. The four of them waited warily for more snakes and scorpions to flow out, but that did not happen.

They thought it was very strange. Just then, they noticed that the sand pile towards the back of the room was moving, and so they turned their heads to look at it.

While they assumed that the avalanche of enemies would start at any moment now, instead, the two sand hills began to harden until they formed a large snake and scorpion that were made of sand and were bigger than all four of them combined. On their foreheads, they could see the small crystal bodies were exposed. At the same time, the small snakes and scorpions that covered the place disappeared.

So, they could transform. Normally this would have made them worried, however, they happily brandished their weapons as if they had been waiting for this moment.

“Now we can fight head on.”

“I’ll lure them in. You three get them when there’s an opening.”

“Let’s start with the scorpion. That being said, it’s going to be a nuisance.”

“Yeah. But I can use ‘Arms of the Warrior’ to hit it.”

The two enemies finally looked like real bosses. And while they didn’t have that much HP left, the four of them rushed forward as if the fight had just begun.

“‘Provoke’! Necro, ‘Impact Reflect’!”

“‘Earth Shatter’!”

Chrome attracted their attention while approaching the sand scorpion. It attacked with pincers and a stinger like an ordinary scorpion, but also summoned sharp thorns from the ground, much like Drag had done before. However, since Chrome was attacking while blocking them, even if the thorns hit him, they could not keep up with the speed of his healing.

While Chrome distracted the scorpion, Drag shattered the ground around the snake, stopping it from moving.

As they fought like this, Kasumi and Shin ran past Chrome. They would target what was obviously its weak spot. The exposed main body.

Shin concentrated all of his swords into one point, and then fired them at a high speed. Kasumi used Arms of the Warrior along with her own swords to attack it.

There was a loud crack, and all of the swords pierced into the crystal body. And just like that, the newly created body of sand crumbled to the ground.

“What? That was disappointingly easy.”

“Alright, next.”

“Oh, looks like we won’t have to worry about who it targets.”

And so the three joined Drag, who was already attacking it.

Ultimately, the outcome was not very different from that of the scorpion.

# CHAPTER 313

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND TO THE NORTH

The last four were Maple, Sally, Mi, and Frederica. And they were headed to the north.

As for methods of transportation, they had Syrup, Ignis, and Savagery Maple. However, it was Ignis who was fast and least unpredictable.

“Ah! Another medal! They sure are fast...”

“In the first place, we haven’t even found a dungeon yet. We did clear one area, but it wasn’t the right one.”

“I was wondering why it was so easy. And then I understood.”

“Well, I think it was mostly easy because Maple was there. With Dedicated Affection and high defense, we can easily defeat bosses.”

“Hmm. But it isn’t almighty either... I know after fighting together a few times.”

Maple’s skills only worked well in certain circumstances. ‘Machine God’ and ‘Hydra’ were not good fits when up against monsters with poison resistance or high defense ability. While Maple could deal damage in spite of having put everything into defense, she had no way of raising her damage. Mi had said this about her on the seventh layer. As everyone’s attack ability went up, her damage output would start to become average.

“In the first place, it’s not right that you can deal so much damage.”

“Really?”

“That’s true.”

“Ah, even you, Sally!”

Sally laughed and said that at the end of the day, Maple was a very reliable Guild Master. Without a doubt, it was because Maple constantly had Dedicated Affection activated, that they could talk in such a carefree way right now.

“So, what should we do? Currently, we’ve seen all of the objects in the north that Sally marked out on her map...”

“I guess we’ll just have to go to any location that seems distinctive from the sky. The map itself is quite big, and we haven’t seen the whole thing yet.”

Sally had been mainly focused on getting points during the preliminary, and she had only marked her map on the way. It wasn’t her main objective.

“Alright then. We’ll just have to search every area. Hmm. This is going to be tough, isn’t it?”

“Yes, I think so.”

“Ugh. We really need to hurry up and decide...”

“In that case, let’s go down once. You can’t see anything with much detail from the sky. Besides, there won’t be any situations where we accidentally enter a dungeon either.”

The others agreed, and so Mi had Ignis descend towards the ground so that they could get off. Immediately, they started to hear the rustling of something approaching them. And what came out was one of those devil monsters that moved on four legs, that were the main monsters of the second night.

“Ah, it appeared. The Fake Maple.”

“Huh? Me-me?”

“Well, I can see the resemblance.”

The monster that Frederica called ‘Fake Maple,’ tried to slash at Frederica with its claws, but Maple protected her from all of the attacks.

“Really, it’s so nice to be able to feel safe when outside.”

As Frederica began to smack the monster’s head with her staff, Mi threw a fireball

from the side in order to burn it up.

“Aren’t we going to explore?”

“Yes, yes. I’ll do my best.”

“Me too. ‘Deploy all Weapons,’ ‘Commence Attack!’”

Sally moved away for now and watched, as she did not want to get in their line of fire by accident.

As long as they didn’t take any damage, it would be a very one-sided fight. That could not be helped.

Like this, they killed monsters while walking for a while. And then Mi suddenly noticed something.

“There sure seem to be a lot of monsters in this area.”

“Maybe it’s because we’re on the corner of the map?”

“...Yes, it does seem like there are a lot.”

The four of them had already cleared a whole dungeon, and had searched the area around it. Compared to that time, there seemed to be more frequent attacks.

“Is there something here?... Like a device that creates monsters!”

“I hope not. But I guess we should look around? There isn’t much time left, so this is likely our last chance.”

They wanted to return to their base early, considering the possibility of unexpected events. Besides, it would hurt their performance if they had to face the third day without getting to rest. And so it was with all of this considered, that they knew it was nearing the time for them to return.

“Okay, let’s go find out why there are so many monsters!”

“Hmm. I hope it doesn’t take long.”

Mi and Sally did enough damage, and so as long as they were within reach of Dedicated Affection, exploration was easy for them. They killed monsters and walked around in order to search for areas where there were a lot of them. After a while, their suspicion turned into certainty.

“It’s true! There really are a lot!”

“Yes. There’s something here, no doubt.”

When they arrived at the spot that was brimming with the most monsters, they saw from between the trees, there was a swirling, purple, circular light that floated in the air like a gate.

There were not only a large variety of devil monsters coming out, but even the dinosaurs and alligators Maple had seen during the preliminary were also appearing.

“It’s not quite... a dungeon, if you ask me. What should we do, Sally?”

“Hmm. Yeah, it doesn’t look like one.”

“Well, we really don’t know yet. Besides, since Maple is with us, we can go and touch it, right?”

“I think that it’s worth a try.”

It seemed foolish to just leave without finding out if they were right or wrong.

“Still, there are a lot of types of monsters. I wouldn’t be surprised if some had piercing attacks.”

“Oh, that’s right. Hmm. That means it will be scary unless we do it quickly and then run away... maybe we should just fly?”

“On Ignis? But there are so many trees. We’ll probably have to go around... I don’t think we can reach it from here.”

“Maple. Do you mean the other kind of flying?”

“Yes! This!”

Maple said as she patted the giant weapon on her back. Sally didn't think it was a bad idea, and accepted it quickly. Frederica and Mi trusted Sally's judgement, and so they accepted it as well. They just assumed that perhaps it was not so strange for such a large weapon to have flying capabilities as well.

"If you say you can do it, I don't mind."

"Alright. Then you all have to hold on tight, okay?"

"Huh? Uh, like this?"

"Is this fine?"

The three of them surrounded Maple and held onto her. And then Maple took out a rope from her item box and strapped them to her.

"Phew... good. We're ready when you are, Maple!"

"What's with that resolve... ah!? Don't tell me it's like during the guild battle where you fell..."

Frederica got flashbacks of explosions that were impossible during normal flight.

"'Commence Attack'!"

"I-is this bad? What!?"

The laser weapons on Maple's back filled up with energy, and when they were charged to the limit, the weapons exploded. At the same time, the four were launched into the air like a bullet. They shot past the trees and went straight into the purple light.

As they had assumed, it was a gate, and they went right through. But thankfully, their momentum died, and they landed gently in front of the gate on the other side.

"We arrived! Thank you! It was a very short trip!"

"I-I see... I don't think I like flying this way..."

"...I've never been less jealous of someone's mobility."



“Phew. I’m still not used to it.”

“Sally’s oddly calm. You’re not surprised at all, are you!”

“This is normal for Maple.”

That’s not what I mean. Frederica muttered. However, they were through the gate now, and so they switched gears. This was the other side of a mysterious gate that spat out monsters.

“I don’t see anything in particular yet...”

The four of them had been dropped into a wide space with dark purple walls and floor. It seemed like the walls and floor would move occasionally, and it was clear that this was no ordinary dungeon.

“Still, I’m glad we didn’t get ambushed by monsters as soon as we got in.”

“That’s true. I guess we should explore this place now.”

And so the four of them started walking in order to reach the deepest part of the dungeon.

There were many branching paths. They took right and left turns as they made their way forward. It did not take long for them to be attacked by Fake Maples and the devil monsters with bat wings. It seemed like they had some way of seeing players that should have been out of their vision, and they kept coming even when the group stood still.

However, these ambushes were futile.

“There is no way we could lose to these two types when Maple is here.”

“It’s great for earning experience. So great.”

“And I don’t have to worry about MP, because Izu gave me so many potions!”

“...If these things are in the dungeon, I guess the gate appeared after the second day? It would have attracted a lot of attention if this was around during the preliminary.”

While Mi wasn’t quite as bad as Maple, she was also terribly inefficient. And so she had

to use several potions after killing a number of monsters.

Sally also cut down monsters as she walked. Because Maple's abilities were so extreme, she was either able to nullify everything and battles ended quickly, or things became very difficult for her. It tended to be one or the other. This dungeon seemed to be the former. However, there seemed to be more to this dungeon than monsters being set on them. And after traveling for some time, they came upon an open room that was similar to the one they had started in. But these walls were not the same purple walls, as there were now white spots that swelled out.

"Hmm... there are white bumps on the wall."

"Should I try shooting them?"

"No, we shouldn't do that if we don't know what will happen."

"It seems like they'll come to us even if we don't move."

Mi said as she pointed to one of them. If she had to describe it, she would say that it looked like a pupa or a cocoon. It reacted when they had approached. The things tore open and the monsters came out.

The sheer number of them reminded Maple and Sally of the monster house in the tower. And so they gave orders to Frederica and Mi.

"We'll start by killing the ones with pointed weapons or horns!"

"As long as they don't have defensive piercing attacks, it will be fine!"

"I see. That's true. Okay."

"Now I can go boldly forward. And if I see anything like that, I can target them easily."

And so they started with hunting the devil monsters with spears and the ones with sharp fangs and claws. On the other hand, the ones with incredible muscles that looked like power fighters were left for later. As you could not get past Maple with brute force, they had low priority.

"'Flame Emperor' Ignis, 'Chain Fire'!"

“Oboro, ‘Fire Child,’ ‘Cross Fire!’”

Their skills caused the fire to spread, and the monsters burned. These were skills with chain damage, which really showed their worth when there were a lot of monsters. And so it was especially effective against hordes like this, that were overflowing in the room.

“‘Hydra!’”

“Maple really is strong against large numbers...”

Her defense ability was so high that it shut out anything that didn’t have area attacks and effective hits. And this was made even worse with other players around. No matter how far Maple went, defense would always be her strongest suit.

Once they got rid of the monsters that looked like they might have piercing attacks, the rest was easy. Sally killed the rest, as they wanted to save their resources, and Sally could deal a lot of damage without using MP.

“Phew. All done.”

“Good work, Sally! There were so many of them, but it seemed like you didn’t have a problem!”

“Yes. It was easy thanks to you, Maple.”

“Ehehe. Really?”

“We’ll be able to go farther in now. At this rate, we’ll have no trouble getting to the boss.”

“That’s true. Now, let’s go. Let’s go.”

They advanced while making sure to stay within range of Maple’s Dedicated Affection. At this point, the white bumps on the walls were increasing in number, and the monsters were much more numerous than they had been in the beginning.

“Oh, I know! Might as well use it today... Savagery!”

As the day would be ending soon, Maple activated her skill. Surely it would not be wasted if they were in a dungeon. And through her activation of Savagery, Maple, who

had up until now been mostly quietly unleashing lasers or deadly poisons, could now join the battle and stand in the front.

“Ah, the true Maple.”

“True? Hey, what do you mean by that?”

“I felt the same thing when I saw Haku. But size really is important...”

Maple opened her giant mouth as she ran down the passages. As the place had not been built with ‘Savagery’ in mind, she had to lower her posture as she ran. But it also meant that monsters couldn’t circle around her.

As Maple opened and closed her mouth, monsters in front of her were torn apart without discrimination. Those that somehow managed to survive started to crawl out of her mouth. But they were then just trampled by Maple’s six legs, and they came out the other side looking like some discarded rags.

“‘Multi-Wind Blade’!”

However, any who survived Maple weren’t going to be shown any mercy. And the three that could use magic were sure to deal the final blow.

“In this form, it becomes a really one-sided fight against the weaker monsters.”

“Yeah... Most players don’t even have other forms.”

Maple also breathed fire as they ran over the monsters. And just as they had predicted, the four reached the boss room in little time at all.

“Our strategies are so different when you’re with other guilds.”

“Just so you know, we’re only fighting like this because you’re here, Maple.”

The others in Maple Tree were not like this. Even though some were starting to feel a little similar, they were still not at that level.

“Can I open it?”

“Yes, go inside.”

And so Maple pushed the door open with her head and stepped inside. The room was filled with the white bumps that gave birth to monsters. And in the far back, there was a white mass that was far larger than any of the others. It was clearly a cocoon.

As soon as all four were inside of the room, the giant cocoon was torn open, and a purple light burst out from it. Then out came sharp claws attached to more than a dozen limbs. And then a head with no face. Wings with torn membranes. It looked like a mutated version of the monster that Frederica had called a Fake Maple.

“It’s the real Fake Maple! Don’t you think so?”

“Stop talking nonsense and fight!”

“Yes, I won’t hold back.”

“Everyone. It’s coming!”

The monster was fully out of its cocoon now as it flapped its wings and slashed with its claws while moving towards them.

Whenever the boss threw its arms, they would stretch like rubber, and now they were being flung at them on both sides at a great speed.

“‘Multi-Barrier’! Knots, ‘Singing Round’!”

Frederica created a barrier around her and Mi. Sally would be able to dodge the attack without a doubt, and it was impossible to cover something as big as Maple.

“Tsk, it’s so strong...!?”

The force of the arms was much higher than she had expected. And Frederica’s barrier crumbled down. However, it wasn’t meaningless, as it had delayed the monster’s arrival.

“‘Flare Accel’!”

Mi accelerated all at once and reached Frederica. Then she picked her up and carried her as they escaped the reach of the claws.

“Nice, Mi!”

“Don’t let your guard down, okay?”

As Frederica has guessed, Sally had no problem dodging it. But Maple was too big, and the claws hit her before she could escape.

Damage effects burst all over Maple, and her skin had as many wounds as there were claws.

And while it hadn’t resulted in ‘Savagery’ getting deactivated, it seemed like just a matter of time.

“Uhhhh. They pierced all my defenses...!”

“Let’s get it from above first! Mi, Frederica! ‘Ice Pillar’!”

“Ignis, ‘Undying Flame’!”

“Yes, yes. ‘Multi-Pressure.’”

As the boss tried to mete out its attacks, Frederica used magic to slow down its movement.

From the left came Sally, and from the right was Mi and Ignis. As soon as they were above its head, they began to attack it as if to hammer it into the ground.

“‘Quintuple Slash’!”

“‘Flame Emperor’!”

Once Sally was above its head, she activated her skill, slashing at it from head to back, before rolling away. Mi used Ignis’s mobility to dodge and then launch a counterattack. After taking damage, the boss was slammed down onto the ground.

The Maple jumped on it as if she had been waiting for this moment. It was her revenge for earlier. She tore into its arms with her teeth and shredded its wings.

However, the boss was not going to take this quietly. Its claws cut into Maple, and the purple light rays from its mouth burned her skin.

“...”

“ .. ”

“ .. ”

It was like watching cannibal monsters. The other three were stunned at the sight. But they quickly joined Maple. With the support of the other three, Maple was able to deal even more damage. It recoiled when all three attacked, and yet it kept clutching Maple and showering her with its heat ray.

As Dedicated Affection was activated, the three were able to join the fight in spite of there being two giant creatures going wild. However, as this was a boss, it tore away Maple's Savagery before Maple could eat it. And Maple was thrown to the ground.

All of a sudden, there was a huge size difference between them. And so the boss moved over her as if to crush her with its body. Maple could easily survive something like that, but what was surprising to the others, was the area around the boss's stomach began to squirm, and then sharp needles appeared.

“Ah, uh, ‘Pierce Guard’!”

Maple somehow managed to nullify the piercing attack with the skill that she clearly wasn't used to using. And right after, the giant body fell on top of her, and the others could no longer see her.

“Maple? Are you okay!?”

Sally asked, but they could not hear an answer. But after a brief pause, they heard the sounds of a dull ring coming from inside of the boss's body. Then there was a great burst of damage effects as black fog and five tentacles stretched out of its body.

“Is it hurting itself to transform?”

“No, that's...”

“It's Maple.”

“Huh...?”

The tentacles moved skillfully, and before they knew it, Maple had pulled herself out of the hole in the boss's body.

“Phew. I escaped! Wo-woah! ‘Cover Move’!”

Maple jumped back in order to gain some distance, as the boss started to get up again. Then she teleported right next to Sally.

“What do you think? I think I damaged it quite a lot...”

“Maybe about halfway... It’s pretty tough. I think that fire attacks aren’t very effective.”

As Maple’s tentacles had nothing but attack abilities, she returned her left arm to normal in order to deal with the boss’s next attack.

“I can still use Bizzare Eater!”

Her second day had mostly been spent either in the base, or exploding in order to be a mark for the others.

And so while she didn’t have much left when it came to ‘Machine God,’ it was a different story when it came to ‘Bizzare Eater,’ ‘Hydra,’ and ‘Predator.’ And she had plenty of power left.

The four of them watched and waited to see how the boss would move next. The boss was flying in the air above its cocoon. It was taking in a purple light that emanated from it.

“Something is coming!”

Once it had taken in enough of the purple light, the same light shone from the boss’s body, and numerous magic circles appeared. And from these, purple fire shot out towards the group.

“‘Multi-accelerate,’ ‘Multi-barrier’!”

By raising their movement speed, the three of them tried to dodge the attacks. On the other hand, Maple raised her great shield in order to block them.

While Bizarre Eater was able to absorb the purple flames, there were so many of them that she was overwhelmed. Maple could do nothing but block as the entire area around her started to burn. And her HP began to chip away.



“Really!? I hate fire!”

Nothing good happened when fire was involved, or so Maple thought. And she quickly developed her weapons and detonated them in order to launch herself into the air.

“We can dodge them! You heal yourself while we distract it!”

“Yes! Thank you!”

Sally raised her concentration as she slid past the exploding flames and approached the boss.

“‘Path of Water’! ‘Freezing Area’!”

A pillar of water stretched out in front of Sally, and at the same time, a pale, freezing current was unleashed from her body. Everything around Sally began to freeze at a rapid rate. One of Sally’s blades was enveloped in fire from Oboro, and the other was covered in ice from ‘Freezing Area.’

As fire and ice flew around her, she froze the path and charged towards the boss in order to slam it into the ground once again.

“I can move a lot better in the air now! ‘Icicle’!”

With skills to make footholds in the air and skills that shot webs, she made her way through the boss’s storm of fire with all the agility of someone running on the ground. Using hit and run tactics, she dealt damage to the boss.

“Alright, it’s looking this way now...”

For the moment, Sally was the only one who was attacking, and so the boss turned towards Sally, and all of the flames were directed towards her.

However, that was what she wanted. Now, she just needed to dodge all of them.

“Concentrate...!”

As it was a large boss, its attacks weren’t very intricate. It was more about burning everything. And so Sally concentrated on staying in the air in order to avoid the fire on the floor.

Besides, there had been a stronger and more precise boss in this vein during the previous event on the tower's 10th floor. And so Sally was able to dodge the attacks as if she could predict the future.

"Frederica, Mi, Maple! Are you finished preparing yet?"

"Yes! I'm fine!"

"No problem here."

"I finished casting the buffs!"

"In that case, 'Super Accelerate'! Oboro, 'Spirited Away'!"

Sally accelerated, using Oboro's skill to disappear as the claws shot towards her back. And then she dashed to where Maple and the others waited.

Here, the enlarged Syrup and Iginis stood. Maple had her weapons, and Mi was surrounded in fire.

"Alright. As a finishing touch, Knots, 'Amplify'!"

"Murderous Inferno'!"

"Commence Attack'! 'Hydra'! 'Oozing Chaos'!"

As Frederica strengthened the force of their skills, the others used their powerful skills, and Syrup and Ignis unleashed fire and light rays.

They crashed into the purple flames, causing a magnificent display of effects. However, the power of the buffs that had been cast while Sally distracted the boss had an effect, and the attacks pushed back the flames, destroying the cocoon and causing a huge explosion.

By the time that the lights faded away, the cocoon was in small pieces, and black smoke rose from the boss's body as it splattered on the ground before crumbling away and disappearing.

"Phew. Yes! We won!"

“Yeah, it was a good fight. Thank you, Frederica.”

“It’s worth casting buffs when you take it down like that!”

“It looks like we got medals too. Now we can go back with smiles on our faces.”

“Alright, now let’s be careful on our return so that we don’t die!”

They would likely be the last ones to return. But the four believed that the others would make it back safely. It was with such thought that they left the dungeon behind them.

# CHAPTER 314

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND THE FINAL DAY

When Maple and her team returned to the base, they found that the other twelve had already arrived. They had all made it back safely. Maple waved happily and rushed towards them when they came into view.

“Good work everyone! Things went so well!”

“Ah, so you did well too. Our dungeon was... a little annoying. But we managed.”

“Our strategy involved buffing Payne most of the time, so it was pretty easy.”

“Everyone was strong, so we had no trouble!”

“Everyone was strong, so we had no trouble!”

“That’s great! Ah, thank you for exploring with us today. Thanks to you all, we got so many medals!”

Maple happily thanked ‘Congregation of Holy Swords’ and ‘Kingdom of the Flame Emperors.’ But Payne and Mi said that it was they who were thankful.

“We would have been lucky to just get one medal if we went by ourselves. So you really did us a favor.”

“Yeah. Cooperation isn’t bad after all.”

They said with smiles. Maple was so happy that she smiled too.

“Let’s do our best on the third day too!”

“Of course.”

“Yeah, we’ll do our best to survive until the end.”

While they were rivals, they were also friends. And so it was only normal for them to root for each other.

“I’ll take the night’s watch. Think of it as a thank you for the base and the medals.”

“Me too. We’ll work to make up for the shared space.”

“Ehehe. Thank you!”

But Maple said that she would come to help if anything happened, and then she ran to the shared space.

While they took turns watching for enemies, they were all able to rest quietly. And so they were in good condition on the third day.

Maple got out of bed and stretched before heading to the next room where Sally was.

Sally was just coming out of her room, and so they bumped into each other.

“Morning! We’re in the third day now.”

“Yes. And since we already gathered enough medals, we should focus on survival.”

“Oh, right! The map and messaging...”

“The message feature is still disabled. However, things seem to be a little different with the map. Well, you’ll understand when you see it.”

When Maple opened the map, she saw that there were numerous blue spots displayed all over it. And there were some red spots as well.

“What is this? Oh, there’s something written. Uhh, the blue dots are players and the red ones are special monsters?”

“Yes. So you can team up with others in order to survive. But for them to appear on the map, these monsters must be boss class. After all, anyone who survived this long would be able to kill normal monsters quite easily.”

“Hmm. I see.”

It was unlikely that Maple and the others would leave their base today, unless they absolutely had to. The only thing they could see on the map were the players, and not which guild they were from. And so it was unlikely that ‘Congregation of Holy Swords’ or the ‘Flame Emperors’ would leave either.

In other words, they would stay here and prepare to drive any enemies back. They just needed to stick to the strategy that they were the best at.

“It also bothers me that the third day is shorter than the first and second. I doubt they just made the time that we need to survive shorter and that’s it.”

“It’s okay, Sally. I’m sure we can win if we all fight together!”

“...Hehe. I suppose so. There’s no point in overthinking it.”

It was necessary to have a degree of flexibility in order to adapt to different situations. After some time, the others all got up and came out of their rooms. And then they prepared so that they could fight at a moment’s notice.

Maple and Sally went to check the screen that Marx had set up.

As they had gone through the trouble of going out last night, he had set up even more cameras outside, which gave them an expanded view of the area.

“How useful... I think I might search for a skill like this.”

“I bet you could make good use out of it, Sally. Ah, there’s a monster.”

“It looks like it’s not coming inside... I guess something is different now?”

Even though it was the third day, it was still dark outside, and the devil monsters were crawling all over the place. As they sat in the shared space and watched the screen for a while, something very interesting popped up on the screen.

“Ah, Sally! There!”

“Hmm? It’s the thing from yesterday...”

On one of the feeds, they could see that a purple mist had suddenly broken out. And after a few seconds, the familiar gate made of purple light appeared.

Their eyes were glued to the screen. The Fake Maples were now coming out of it and walking around.

“Did it move over here then?”

“Maybe... or there are more?”

They didn’t know if this one also connected to a dungeon, but Sally thought it was more natural to assume that they were multiplying. The easiest way to raise the difficulty was to change HP and statuses or increase the number of enemies.

“If they are appearing in other areas too... this could be bad. There is a limit to how many we can deal with.”

Maple and the other would need skills and magic in order to fight so many monsters. Unless they were very powerful ones, they wouldn’t be able to kill monsters in one hit.

Payne and Mi had trump cards like ‘Light Sword of the Holy Dragon’ and ‘Murderous Inferno,’ but they could not be used repeatedly.

“We might be forced to go out. After all, we won’t be able to do anything if so many monsters attack so that the place is filled up. But if we’re outside, we could at least run away.”

“That’s true...”

However, Sally added that they wouldn’t know until the time came. And so she took out an apple from her inventory.

“Well, it’s important to be able to adapt. Oh, do you want one too?”

“Yes, thanks! Where did you get them?”

“Uh, it’s just that you’re always bringing food like this. So I thought that I should return the favor once in a while.”

“Hehe. Then I’ll give you something too...”

Like this, they spent their morning peacefully. The other members also had nothing to do until the monsters attacked, and so they all rested.

However, they were in the middle of an event where the objective was to survive. The monsters were not so kind as to allow them to relax for long.

The monster ambush was approaching.



# CHAPTER 315

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND THE GREAT FINAL BATTLE

After some time had passed, the monsters began to move like an avalanche. Mi and Payne were staring at the screen now as well, and watched their number increase.

“This... It might be more dangerous inside of the cave.”

“Yes, I agree. Besides, I think there’ll be a difference in how long this day lasts.”

“Even now, it takes so many people to deal with them.”

Mi and Payne had been able to use powerful attacks to wipe out hordes in one go on the second day. But now monsters were accompanied by buffs and debuffs. They would have to cooperate and carefully make their way forward if they wanted to survive.

Sally had been apprehensive about it. Would these two be able to survive the onslaught?

“Thankfully, we have a few emergency escape methods. Depending on the situation, we can escape from here.”

Ignis, Ray, and Syrup could fly. Of course, there were monsters coming out of the gate that could fly as well, but it still meant that there would be fewer enemies to deal with.

“Sally. Let’s discuss it with the others. I think it would be best if all 16 of us stuck together if we wish to survive!”

“That’s true. Let’s do that then.”

After they gathered together and discussed what to do, they decided that they would escape the cave after getting through the first wave.

They would head to the mountain in the center of the map. Once they were near the top, it would be easy to see which monsters were coming. And it would also be easy to

escape.

“Alright, let’s get this first wave over with and go outside!”

Maple said, and then they waited for the ambush. As there was a set time between attacks Izu started to retrieve all of the items she had used to set up the living space. Once the cave returned to its former, empty state, the awaited ambush finally arrived.

However, there weren’t as many monsters as they feared. And since they were a group of 16, they were able to annihilate all of the enemies without getting hurt.

“Now’s the time!”

“Yes, let’s go!”

Those who were the fastest took the lead. The three who were the slowest rode on Tsukimi and Yukimi in order to quickly escape.

Once they were outside, it was decided that ‘Congregation of Holy Swords’ would ride on Ray, ‘Flame Emperors’ on Ignis, and Maple Tree on Syrup.

But as Syrup wasn’t originally meant to be able to fly, it was quite slow. Furthermore, unlike Ray and Ignis, Syrup was not able to dodge the attacks of the flying monsters.

However, as long as Maple was riding Syrup, and as long as they didn’t have piercing attacks, the hordes could be dealt with easily.

Even if the monsters could get close, they couldn’t hurt them. As they fought the monsters and flew, they saw the mountain ahead of them, where the 8 others were waiting.

“Alright, let’s kill these monsters and go down!”

Maple changed her equipment and activated ‘Poltergeist.’ Then she used the lasers from her weapons to target each one and burn them out of the air.

The other members helped her. And once they were finished, Syrup descended on the top of the mountain.

“Phew. Now we just have to survive here!”

“Yes. We’ll be able to tell if something is wrong immediately if we stay here. And it will also be easier to deal with it.”

While it was a little dark, they could see the varied landscape around them. Their vision was wide enough that they would be able to notice and tackle anything that appeared.

“I’ll set up some items in the area. I don’t want them to reach us without a little resistance.”

“Then I’ll go and protect you.”

“Me too. Then it won’t matter if you’re surrounded.”

“That will help. Thanks.”

Chrome and Kasumi accompanied Izu as she went to set up some items to intercept the enemy. Marx also went with them and made some preparations of his own.

There were places where the paths were narrow or unstable. And it was these places that they would set up a great amount of traps.

That meant that the first wave of monsters that came crawling up the hill, would probably end up rolling back down.

While some of the members made preparations, the other members watched their surroundings from every direction.

“Nothing here!...? Sally? What is it?”

“Mm. Uh, open up your map.”

She obeyed Sally and opened her map. What she noticed was that there were fewer players on the map, and there were more red dots, which represented special monsters.

“I guess it’s because everyone really is just running away. The red dots aren’t decreasing at all.”

“Well, you have to survive.”

“Yes. We haven’t been going out and killing them either. But... I have a bad feeling about this.”

Was it really alright to ignore the special monsters, when they were being pointed out to them on the map? Sally wondered about this, but there was no definite answer based on the information she had.

“We’ll just have to wait.”

“Don’t worry! If something happens, I’ll protect you!”

Maple said as she raised her shield.

“Hehe. Thanks. You’re so reliable.”



As they were on top of the mountain, their strategy would be much the same as when they were in the cave. They would fight the enemy from an advantageous position. Sally decided that there was no point in thinking about special monsters that they couldn't touch, and so she focused on joining Maple in intercepting the monsters that flew towards them.

Having such an open view was a great advantage. They could detect monsters in advance and it was easier to react.

Like this, the 16 of them were able to survive until the final monster strengthening time arrived.

It would be one hour. This was significantly shorter than previous times, and it made them even more nervous.

There would be some kind of surprise. And they were right.

As soon as it started, they saw that purple flames were appearing all over the map and shooting up to the sky.

Sally quickly checked her map and saw that they aligned with the positions of the special monsters.

There were dozens of them scattered all over the place.

Then the flames gathered in one point and created a giant gate. And from there, a familiar monster appeared.

"Sally! Doesn't that look like the thing we defeated!?"

"But the size is incomparable!"

It had many arms and shot fire from its wings. It looked a lot like the monster that had come out of the cocoon on the second night. The only difference was that this one looked more full grown. Its limbs and body were thicker. And even from far away on top of the mountain, they could see that the body that was enveloped by fire was huge.

"Fifty... no, a hundred?"

“What? Why does it look stronger than the real one now?”

Mi and Frederica also reacted to the sight. Once its body was completely out of the gate, it stretched its arms out wide and let out a deafening roar that shook the air.

At the same time, the body that was surrounded in purple fire underwent a change.

“Something is coming...! Above!”

“Huh!? That!?”

From the starless sky, giant balls of purple fire shot down like a meteor shower.

It seemed like they were targeting places with players. And of course, they came down to the mountain as well.

“Maple!”

“Uh, yeah!”

If it was the same as the boss on the second day, it would deal damage that Maple’s defenses couldn’t nullify.

But she and Sally could practically read each other’s minds. Maple immediately knew what Sally was thinking, and changed her equipment accordingly.

“‘Heal’!”

She received Sally’s healing as she put on her archangel equipment. Then Maple looked straight at the falling ball of fire.

“‘Aegis’!”

Right before the fireballs hit them, a dome of light appeared and nullified all of the damage, protecting Maple and the others from the rain of fire.

“Earth! ‘Earth Control’!”

As the ground continued to burn, Drag dealt with it with Aegis, before the effect died down. By returning the burning ground to its original state, he was able to nullify all

of the flames.

“Nice one, Maple!”

“Yes! But...”

If the next attack came right away, she would not be able to use the same tactic. From up on the mountain, they could see that the rain of fire was burning the fields. It was clear that this initial attack alone had wiped out a lot of players off of the map. Even worse, pillars of fire were rising out of the special monsters again. And the giant devils walked around, searching for more players and spreading their fire.

“Payne, Maple. We won’t survive an hour of this. I think we should take the risk and hunt down the special monsters.”

“Ye-yes. I agree!”

“And not just that. I’m pretty sure that it will be difficult to survive this hour if all you do is run. I think you’ll need to take down that giant monster.”

The giant devil had an HP bar that was displayed. So unlike the snail that had chased Maple around in the second event, this was clearly something that you could defeat.

“It’s possible. In any case, we have no choice but to move quickly around the field and kill the special monsters. Marx, Misery, Shin!”

Mi called the three of them and they got on top of Ignis. Similarly, Payne called Dred and the others and they got on Ray. As it seemed like the fireballs were targeting larger groups of players, they decided it would be best to split up here, and focus on taking down the horde of special monsters.

“We’ll go too. It’s best for those with great mobility to take them down quickly.”

“Let’s survive this and reunite to take down that huge devil!”

And so the eight of them left in order to crush the monsters. Maple Tree also had something they had to do.

“Wh-what should we do, Sally!?”



“With our speed, it will be difficult to move around on the ground and kill the monsters. And Syrup is too slow... So the only thing we can do is prevent that huge boss from killing other players.”

Every time the fire fell, the number of players went down. That meant it would take even longer to annihilate the special monsters. In that case, it would be the most effective if they slowed the boss down and tried to stagger it.

“You know, we’re better at fighting bosses than running around.”

“Ah, that’s not a bad idea. We can take it down and be the center of attention.”

“If there’s no point in running around, then we might as well face it with all of our power.”

If they were going to do it, they had to go all out. Maple nodded firmly and they all got on top of Syrup. Then they flew straight towards the giant devil.

# CHAPTER 316

## DEFENSE SPECIALIZATION AND THE GREAT FINAL BATTLE 2

Up close, its size was incredible. If you weren't careful about where you were going, you would easily end up getting crushed under its feet. Maple had Syrup descend a short distance away. Then Kasumi called out Haku, which they rode towards the boss.

"Alright, let's do it according to plan!"

"Yes. And we'll move back if it gets dangerous."

"Alright, let's do it, Sou."

"'Savagery'!"

"'Phantom World'!"

"'Phantom World'!"

"'Phantom World'!"

Maple's body turned to that of a devil. Furthermore, Oboro, Kanade, and Sou made her multiply. There had been seven Maples during the fourth event, but now there were ten including the main one, and they all rushed forward at once.

They dug their claws into the boss's legs, and then began to climb up its body.

"Maple! Be careful of the fire!"

"Yes!"

Maple listened to Sally's voice as she avoided the parts of the body that were burning. Both she and her clones tore at its flesh as they climbed towards its head.

“Woah! That was close!”

While the giant devil attacked the players at its feet, Maple added wounds all over its body. However, as the body was so big, its HP bar had hardly depleted at all.

As the clones would only last for three minutes, they wanted to deal as much damage now as they could.

However, it soon noticed Maple, and the area around her feet began to glow purple before erupting into flames.

“Huh!? So I do take damage...”

Her clones were also getting burned. However, that wasn’t enough to deactivate Savagery.

“Let’s keep chipping away!”

Even now, Payne and Mi were working hard to debuff it. So they had to keep its attention and take the damage.

At this point, the giant devil had stopped walking. And its large arms seemed to be targeting the other members of Maple Tree.

“All of you, don’t give up!”

Maple kept making new wounds on it as she thought about the other seven.

Letting Maple go wild, the others split into groups of three and four and began their attack.

In order to avoid accidental death by falling, Mai and Yui decided to attack its feet from the ground. And Chrome was the one to protect them.

“Leave the defenses to me! It’s feet aren’t moving now! Get him!”

“Yes!”

“Yes!”

The two of them used Doping Seeds and then charged forward while riding Tsukimi

and Yukimi, their great hammers swinging.

“Double Strike’!”

“Double Strike’!”

Damage that was incomparable to Maple was dealt, and tremendous damage effects burst around them.

“Double Impact’!”

“Double Impact’!”

The damage that resulted from the two with top class attack ability and dual-wielding hammers was tremendous. It was the kind of damage that would usually take many players in order to reach, and yet they did it with one hit. If they could focus on attacking, the damage would be even greater.

However, the monster would not allow it. And as if it were the most natural thing, one of its giant arms came out and swung their way.

“Multi-Cover,’ ‘Heavy Body’!”

“Chrome!”

“Chrome!”

Expecting a knockback from the huge body, Chrome used his skills to take the hit and parry it with his shield. The arm was enveloped in fire, and while Chrome was burned as he took the hit, his astonishing recovery ability allowed him to continue surviving the barrage of attacks.

“Haha! Maple usually does this. So let me protect you once in a while!”

“Thank you!”

“Thank you!”

And then the powerful great hammers were swung again and again. Then there was a thunderous roar that was louder than any before it. Before they knew it, one of its feet

was covered in wounds, and the devil fell to one knee.

“I see...! You did it! It’s working!”

In that case, they should do the other foot next. Chrome got on Tsukimi and the three of them dashed ahead in order to destroy the other foot.

As for Sally and the others, they were riding on Haku’s head. Haku was wrapping around its body, giving them a place to stand as they attacked the monster.

“‘Arms of the Warrior’! ‘Fourth of the Blade – Senpu’!”

“‘Quintuple Slash’!”

Kasumi and Sally added their attacks, and Sou transformed into Mai and accelerated the damage.

Kanade and Izu did their part by using magic to defend the others from the fountains of purple flame, while also healing everyone with items.

“It’s easier to attack its back. Let’s fight where the arms can’t reach us!”

“Yes. That being said, I don’t think it’ll be that easy!”

When Sally looked up, she saw that a familiar purple magic circle had appeared. Immediately after, massive amounts of fire rained down on them.

“‘Body of Fire’! ‘Light of Protection’!”

The magic that Kanade used enveloped everyone including the tamed monsters with red fire before the fireballs reached them. This gave them strong resistance to fire attacks, however, Sally could not survive like this. And so he cast nullification magic on Sally alone, and they all made it.

“You saved us! Thanks, Kanade!”

“It’s nothing. I can do it again if necessary.”

“Leave the healing to me. You go and attack!”

As they continued to attack, the devil was staggered once again. This was due to the attacks that Mai and Yui had unleashed on its other knee. Sally looked down at its wounded leg and understood what they needed to do to beat the monster.

“Kasumi! I’m going up! If we hurt its wings, the fire should stop!”

“Ah, okay!”

Sally made a foothold in the air and then used ‘Path of Water’ to swim towards its back. Once she reached it, she found Maple, who had activated ‘Bizarre Eater’ while slamming bullets into its back.

“Maple! You’re already here.”

“Ah, Sally! You came!”

Sally told her that she was going to attack the wings, and Maple decided to go with her.

“‘Dedicated Affection’!”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. I told you. I’ll protect you, Sally!”

Sally decided then that she needed to take it down before she took any damage. And then the two rushed towards the wings.

“I’ll make a foothold! Oomph. There!”

Maple made her shields hover in the air with ‘Helping Hand,’ and placed them around the wings. Sally would be able to use them to fight effectively.

“Okay, here I go!”

“Yes!”

As Maple started to fire, Sally went through the water road up to the wings and started to slash at them. Flames burst out as if to follow her, but they could not keep up with Sally’s speed. She swam around the pillars of water that extended around the wings, turning her body as she cut and slashed. Both of them attacked the wings at the same

time, desperately trying to destroy them.

However, there were soon signs of something different happening. And then a purple light shone from all over the monster's body.

"Sally! Over here!"

Sally jumped over to where Maple was by using the shields in the air. Maple immediately summoned Syrup and had it hover. Immediately after, the devil's entire body burst into flames. The two only barely escaped in time.

However, they both knew that this was where the fight really began. This was because balls of fire would start to fall from the sky.

After enveloping its body in fire, the devil let out a great roar. The effect came with a sonic wave that caused piercing damage. And so Maple suddenly had to take damage for Syrup, Oboro, and Sally all at once. Aside from the shields, Maple still had on her angel gear, as she wondered if she might need to use Aegis again. Still, her HP was carved away, and 'Indomitable Guardian' was activated. As she was too close to the source, she had trouble dodging, and her HP was at a dangerous level. This was most unexpected for both of them, and even the usually calm Sally could not hide her surprise.

"Ughh...!"

"'Heal'! Maple, take a potion!"

As Sally frantically healed Maple, the balls of fire rained down on them from the sky.

They were too big to dodge, and she didn't have Aegis now. Sally tried to think of ways to keep Maple alive, including having Oboro or Syrup take the damage. As they had nullified the first attack, she didn't know how much force it had or what the range of damage was. So there was no sure way.

"'Super Accelerate'!"

"Wawaa!"

Sally suddenly grabbed Maple and ran. But she could see the light of the fire getting closer to them from behind. As she could not allow Maple to be hit directly in the

damage field, Sally's plan was to lure it as much as she could and throw Maple out of range in the last second. As long as Maple was safe, there was a chance that Sally could use her skills to survive.

However, before she could put this risky gamble into action, blazing fire and white light pierced the damaged wings. Just as they thought that they had been destroyed, something came to where they were and snatched them off of the ground in the nick of time.

"Payne!"

"Mi!"

"Ah, that was perfect timing. It's been weakened quite a bit. Hard to imagine that it was done by just eight people."

"In that case, we might be able to defeat it if we all attack at once."

What had flown towards them was Payne riding Ray, and Mi, who rode on Ignis.

The two had left the annihilation of the special monsters to the other guild members, and flown back here. The reason for this was that they had realized that the giant monster regularly created new special monsters every time its health went down. So there was no point on focusing everything on the special monsters.

The two of them dodged the swinging arms and flew out of its range.

"The situation will only get worse for us unless we can stop this rain of fire. There are still some other players left, but once their numbers go down, it will start using that attack more often."

"We'll target its head as soon as there's an opening. You two be prepared."

If they went and attacked the head now, the four of them would be hit by the thick, swinging arms and the fire from the magic circles. However, they needed to get in somehow, or they had no hope of dealing huge damage.

Maple changed her equipment in order to attack. Her weapons came out and she even prepared Spirit Cannon for Syrup.



They continued to dodge for some time after that. The devil's HP decreased again, and it staggered with one limp leg. The other leg had lost all of its power as it fell forward. But it used one of its many arms to prop itself up.

Here, the flames began to spread once again. However, before it hit them, the flames that were supplied by the special monsters stopped. Right before the third rain of fire, Dred and the others had managed to finish killing all of the special monsters.

This was too good of a chance to miss. The four of them moved in all at once. They dodged the fire that flew towards them along with the arms. And once they reached the faceless head, they unleashed their most powerful attacks.

“‘Light Sword of the Holy Dragon’!”

“‘Murderous Inferno’!”

Payne and Mi's attacks barely skimmed the sides of their heads as they slammed into the enemy and dealt tremendous damage. Immediately after, Sally jumped off of Ray and used her skill to kick the air and get closer. She avoided the gaping mouth and targeted its forehead.

“‘Quintuple Slash’!”

Sally was enveloped in a blue aura as her chain of attacks cut deeply into the boss's head. Then Maple jumped off of Ignis and onto Syrup. And without missing a beat, she directed her weapons at the devil. With this timing, she could shoot it up with everything she had without hitting anyone else.

“‘Commence Attack,’ ‘Hydra,’ ‘Oozing Chaos.’ Syrup, ‘Spirit Cannon’!”



総攻撃のチャンスにて

【攻撃開始】！

【聖竜の光剣】！

【殺戮の豪炎】！

「クイントプルスラッシュー！」





Mi's attacks made it burn, Payne's attacks caused damage effects to burst everywhere as if it was being purified. And Sally's chain of attacks pushed it even further.

Then there was the rain of countless bullets, poison, and lasers. In the end, Maple raised her great shields and detonated the weapons on her back.

"Here I go...!"

The devil's mouth opened wide in order to crush her. But she continued her charge with the shield that also swallowed up everything.

When Maple hit the sharp fangs, they were swallowed up, and she pierced the back of its throat. Immense amounts of damage effects exploded as she came out the other side.

Sally, who had just finished her own attacks, grabbed Maple and used her webs and footholds to get away.

"Wh-what happened!?"

"Nice one, Maple. Look."

Maple looked towards the devil. Its HP bar had gone down to 0. The purple flames were dying down. Then the giant body turned into light and disappeared.

At the same time, the darkened field began to return to normal. And all the devil monsters that had been on the map had vanished.

But what was surprising to them, was that they received medals for killing it.

"Sally! Medals! I got medals! Three of them!"

"Hahaha... Well, somehow I feel like we deserve more. But I'll take them."

Then the other six members of Maple Tree joined them. By the looks of it, they were all fine. They were tired, but relieved to know that the threat was gone.

"Hey, everyone! What a relief!"

Once Maple had reunited with them, a buzzer sounded, and it was announced that the

third day had ended.

They had succeeded in surviving for three days. And with that, they were returned to the original field.

The event was finished, and management looked at the results.

“Huh? What? It was taken down that easily?”

“Yes... Uh, I guess we misjudged how much HP it should have. I thought that it wouldn’t do to set it too high.”

It was an especially vicious monster that had powerful attacks that affected the entire map. And it was so huge that most players wouldn’t even want to get close to it. They had assumed that players would just run around and dodge the rain of fire. However, if a monster had HP, that meant it could be killed.

If they all charged together and attacked it at full force, its size would then be a disadvantage, and it would not be able to do more precise attacks.

“We’ll have to think harder the next time we use a huge monster...”

“Indeed... Maybe lower its attack power but raise its HP.”

And like that, while the event was finished, management’s work continued.



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