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Kumanano
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novel
KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR

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MANGA FROM SEIGI

KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR

NOVEL 20.5

WRITTEN BY
Kumanano

ILLUSTRATED BY
029



Seven Seas Entertainment

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Name: Yuna
Age: 15
Gender: Female

▶ Yuna's Status_



▶ **BEAR HOOD (NONTRANSFERABLE)**
Can see the effects of weapons and tools through the beary good eyes of the hood.

▶ **BLACK BEAR GLOVE (NONTRANSFERABLE)**
Attack glove, increases power based on the user's level. Can summon the black bear Kumayuru.

▶ **WHITE BEAR GLOVE (NONTRANSFERABLE)**
Defense glove, increases defense based on the user's level. Can summon the white bear Kumakyu.

▶ **BLACK AND WHITE BEAR CLOTHES (NONTRANSFERABLE)**
Appears to be a onesie. Reversible.
Front: Black Bear Clothes
Increases physical and magic resistance based on the user's level.
Gives heat and cold resistance.
Reverse: White Bear Clothes
Automatically restores health and mana while worn.
Restoration amount and speed is based on the user's level.
Gives heat and cold resistance.

▶ **BLACK BEAR SHOE (NONTRANSFERABLE)**
▶ **WHITE BEAR SHOE (NONTRANSFERABLE)**
Increases speed based on the user's level.
Prevents fatigue walking long distances based on the user's level.
Gives heat and cold resistance.

◀ **KUMAYURU (CUB FORM)**
▼ **KUMAKYU**

▶ **BEAR UNDERWEAR (NONTRANSFERABLE)**
Won't get dirty no matter how much they're used.
An excellent item that won't retain sweat or smells.
Will grow with the user.

▶ **BEAR SUMMONS**
Can be summoned from the bear gloves.
Can be changed into cub forms.

Skills

FANTASY WORLD LANGUAGE
The fantasy world's language will sound like Japanese.
Spoken words are conveyed to the other party in the fantasy world language.

FANTASY WORLD LITERACY
The ability to read the fantasy world writing.
Written words become the fantasy world's words.

BEAR EXTRADIMENSIONAL STORAGE
The white bear's mouth opens into infinite space. It can hold (eat) anything.
However, it cannot hold (eat) living things.
Time will stop for objects that are inside of it.
Anything that is put into the extradimensional storage can be pulled out at any time.

BEAR IDENTIFICATION
By looking through the bear eyes on the Bear Clothes' hood, one can see the effects of a weapon or tool.
Doesn't work without wearing the hood.

BEAR DETECTION
Using the wild abilities of bears, can detect monsters or people.

BEAR MAP 2.0
Any area looked at by the bear eyes can be made into a map.

BEAR SUMMONING
Bears can be summoned from the bear gloves.
A black bear can be summoned from the black glove.
A white bear can be summoned from the white glove.
Summons, Beast Cubification: The bear summons can be transformed into bear cubs.

BEAR TRANSPORTER GATE
By setting up a gate, can move between gates.
When more than three gates are in place, can travel to a location by picturing it.
This gate can only be opened with the bear hand.

BEAR PHONE
Can have long-distance conversations with others.
Phone persists until caster dispels it. Physically indestructible.
Can call people a bear phone is given to by picturing the person.
Incoming call is announced by the sound of a bear's cry.
By using mana to turn the phone on or off, user can make calls.

BEAR WATER WALKING
Gain the ability to traverse water.
Summons gain the ability to travel on water.

BEAR TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION
You can call your summoned beasts from a distance.

Magic

BEAR LIGHT
Mana collected in the bear glove creates a light in the shape of a bear.

BEAR PHYSICAL ENHANCEMENT
Routing mana through the bear gear allows for physical enhancement.

BEAR FIRE MAGIC
Gathering mana in the bear glove gives one the ability to use fire elemental magic.
Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.
When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

BEAR WATER MAGIC
Gathering mana in the bear glove gives one the ability to use water elemental magic.
Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.
When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

BEAR WIND MAGIC
Gathering mana in the bear glove gives one the ability to use wind elemental magic.
Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.
When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

BEAR EARTH MAGIC
Gathering mana in the bear glove gives one the ability to use earth elemental magic.
Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.
When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

BEAR ELECTRICITY MAGIC
Gathering mana in the bear glove gives one the ability to use electricity elemental magic.
Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.
When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

BEAR HEALING MAGIC
Can give treatment by means of the bear's kind heart.

VOLUME 10



LABILATA
Sanya's fiancé. Leader of a group of elves that guard the elf forest. Total hunk.



MUMULUTE
Sanya and Luimin's grandfather. Head of the elves' village. Was once an active adventurer.

LUCCA
Sanya and Luimin's younger brother. Was born while Sanya was away from the village and first met her when Yuna visited.

TALIA
Sanya and Luimin's mother. Has a youthful appearance and often messes with newcomers by saying she is Luimin's older sister.

ARUTUL
Sanya and Luimin's father. As Mumulute's son, he is next in line as head of the village. Has made a contract with Yuna to keep her secrets.

VENA
Sanya and Luimin's grandmother. Wife of Mumulute. A charming elf.

LAVAKA
One of the elves who protects the elf village.

VOLUME 11



TEILIA
Princess, Flora's older sister, and Shia's classmate. Hasn't met Yuna at the castle yet, so she doesn't get many tasty treats.

SHYLA
Youngest chef at the royal capital's version of the Bear's Lounge restaurant. Reveres Yuna and says that meeting her was an inspiration. Zelef's niece.

COUNT LUTUM ROLAND
A noble who resents Cliff. Tries to get Shia to marry his son and also has his knights injure a friend and classmate during the school festival's mock battles. Gajurdo's distant relative. Oversees the third order knights.

LINEA
Shia's classmate and friend who aspires to become Teilia's personal knight. Is injured because of Lutum, who doesn't want women to become knights.

ROTAS
Knight who bullies Linea during their match.

FIGO
Knight of the third order who spars with Yuna. Strongest of the third order and seems like a good man despite being under Lutum's command.



VOLUME 13



KARINA
Daughter of the lord of Dezelt, a town in the middle of the desert. Is able to operate a special map of the labyrinth.

LASA
Woman who serves Karina's house. Teaches Yuna the recipe for curry.

NORRIS
Karina's younger brother. Three years old. Extremely shy.

BARLIMER ISHLEET
Lord of Dezelt. Was injured in the desert labyrinth in order to protect Karina.

LISTIEL
Barlimer's wife. As a descendant of the first lord and adventurer who conquered the labyrinth, she can operate the crystal panel.

URAGAN
A vulgar adventurer who pushed Karina away. Party leader who accepted the quest to guard Karina.

VOLUME 15

KRYUNA HALK
A well-known, A-rank adventurer. Left behind a book on the Talgwei. Very talented, and has made high-value magical items such as one that can make a book appear from a stone monument.

VOLUME 16



LILYKA
Lojina's daughter. Helps him out around the shop.

KUSEHLO
Blacksmith in the dwarf city. Forged Jade's sword. Tests Toya before forging him a mithril sword.

LOJINA
Mentor of the blacksmiths Gold in Crimonia and Ghazal in the royal capital.

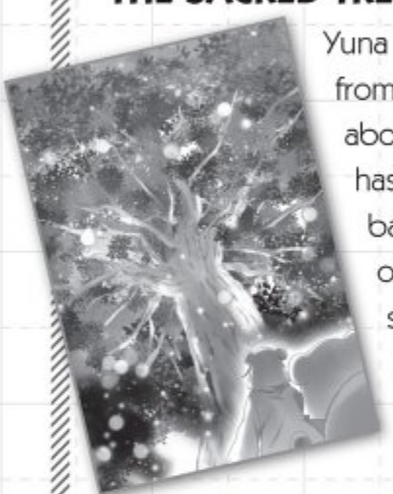


STORY

KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR 10



SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE SACRED TREE?!



Yuna arrives at the elves' village. After hearing from Sanya and Luimin's grandfather, Mumulute, about the barrier, Yuna learns that a parasitic tree has infested the sacred tree, the source of the barrier's mana. When Yuna heads off in search of a good place to set up a bear house, she senses monsters nearby. She ventures out with Labilata, the barrier's watchman, in order to help slay the monsters.

THEN SHE SAVES THE ENTIRE VILLAGE!

Once Yuna has gained Mumulute's and Labilata's trust by saving the village from the monsters, Yuna goes with the elves to check on the sacred tree. Unfortunately, even the elf who cast the barrier can no longer enter it! Mumulute and the other elves almost give up, resigning themselves to watch the sacred tree wither away, but for some reason Yuna is able to enter the barrier! Yuna can't use any powerful magical spells or else she might put the sacred tree in danger. On the other hand, the parasitic tree also recovers from any attacks quickly…so when things are at their bleakest, Yuna decides to change tactics by

changing her clothes. Though Yuna successfully fights off the parasitic tree, she ends up in another unexpected emergency????

AND WHEN HER SECRET TO DEFEATING THE TREE IS REVEALED, SANYA CAN'T STOP LAUGHING!



In order to stop Sanya from spilling her secret about her bear underwear and to make sure she doesn't seem suspicious when she visits the elves' village in the future, Yuna makes Sanya, Luimin, and Mumulute promise to keep her secrets under wraps. She forms a magical contract with Mumulute's help, but the punishment for breaking the agreement ends up being dangerous… Yuna's solution is to set the conditions for the contract, so that any time someone tries to reveal her secrets, they end up laughing and not being able to stop—talk about a harrowing punishment!

THE SECOND PICTURE BOOK COMES OUT!

Yuna comes home to find a very upset Fina in Crimonia! After finding out that the picture books that Yuna gave the orphanage feature her, Fina feels too embarrassed to show her face in the castle ever again. Not only that, but Shuri is disappointed that she hasn't shown up in the picture book. In order to soothe Fina, Yuna sets out to write the second volume for Princess Flora.

Chapter 1:
Going to Crimonia
Ellelaura Chronicles

WONDERGOOD BONUS STORY

ZELEF AND I met to discuss the restaurant we'd be opening in the capital. We would serve gourmet meals alongside dishes Yuna had devised herself, with Zelef training the chefs and teaching them Yuna's recipes.

According to Yuna though, she also served a variety of other dishes in her own restaurants.

"We'll need to see them for ourselves."

"Yes, indeed," Zelef readily agreed.

"It seems a trip to Crimonia is in order then."

I relayed my conversation with Zelef to His Majesty.

"What do you mean you're going out for an inspection?"

His Majesty's face all but said, "*What are you talking about, you fool*?" as he stared straight at me.

"Your majesty, if we plan to serve Yuna's recipes at the restaurant, we need to sample the real dishes and see the location for ourselves."

"What are you talking about? You've already tried the dishes that Yuna brings us when she visits."

"That may be true, but it is nevertheless imperative that I experience the ambience of the venues for myself."

"I doubt that." His Majesty refused to budge on the matter.

"Aww, I wanted to talk to my daughter. Thanks to *a certain someone*, I never had the time when I was in Crimonia earlier," I complained.

"How was that my fault?"

"Trying to settle things there was so difficult. It wouldn't kill you to give a hard-working employee a vacation every once in a while."

I glanced at His Majesty. He looked peeved, but he thought it over. Then he let out a small sigh.

“You have a point. But this is still work, so make sure you actually take a look around Yuna’s shops. And of course, I’ll be expecting a report.”

“Yes, certainly.”

“Are you bringing Zelef along?”

“Oh, may I?”

“By all means. Just don’t keep him for long.”

His Majesty waved me away. I thanked him and left the room and went to inform Zelef that we had permission to leave. He was ecstatic.

“I’d like to maximize our time there, so we’ll be traveling by horse,” I told him.

“Horse? I would have preferred traveling on Masters Kumayuru and Kumakyu, but I suppose we have little choice.”

When Zelef returned from Sheerin with me in a carriage, he’d told me all about what wonderful steeds Kumayuru and Kumakyu made. My daughters had both said similar things. I must admit that I’d thought of asking to ride the bears sometime as well.

“...I’ll be returning to Crimonia for a while.”

“That’s not fair, Mother!”

When Shia came home, I told her I was visiting Crimonia.

“Didn’t you just see Noa?”

“I did, but we weren’t able to spend much time together. All because of that fool.”

It was the first time in a while that I was seeing my daughter, and yet Misana’s kidnapping had stolen most of my time away from Noa. Then again, I was grateful that Gran and Cliff would no longer need to deal with that idiot. In truth, losing time with my daughter was a small price to pay to rid ourselves of that cretin of a man.

“I want to go to Crimonia too. I can take time off from the academy.”

“No. I can’t allow that. You need to go to school and focus on your studies.”

“Ugh, okay…just please take me with you next time.”

Shia looked disappointed, but I couldn’t take her with me when the academy was still in session. Once summer came around, she’d have a long break. She’d be able to visit home then.

After that, Zelef and I collected a few guards and headed out to Crimonia.

“Is this Crimonia?” Zelef asked. He looked tired, which was no wonder as it seemed like he wasn’t used to riding on horseback.

“It’s a wonderful place, isn’t it?” I replied.

First, we headed to my home. I was thrilled at the thought of seeing Noa. I hadn’t told her I would be coming, so Noa was bound to be shocked. Surprising her would be so much fun. Then again, Cliff might complain… I hadn’t told him I was returning home, either.

Once I arrived, our maid Lala greeted us, looking the picture of surprise. I asked her to see to Zelef and the guards, then made my way to Noa, filled with anticipation at the thought of her surprised face.

“Noa, I’m home!” I flung open the door.

Noa looked at me, shocked at my sudden and unexpected appearance. I was ecstatic to see her reacting just as I’d anticipated.

“Mother?!” Noa dashed over my way. “Is that truly you, Mother?”

“Did you forget your own mother’s face? Why, you’ll make me cry.”

I feigned sobbing. However, as I did, Noa’s disposition changed suddenly.

“What are you doing here, Mother?!” she pressed me. Honestly, I wanted to see her panic a bit more.

“Why, I wanted to come visit you no matter what it took, of course.”

“You didn’t tell His Majesty that you were quitting, did you?”

Noa looked sad. What was she talking about? I poked her forehead.

“Mother, that hurt. Why did you do that?!” Noa complained, rubbing her forehead.

“Because you’re speaking nonsense. I’m just back in Crimonia for some work.”

“For work? But Father never told me you were coming home.”

“That’s because I didn’t tell him.”

“That’s right. I only learned of this just now.”

I turned to see Cliff standing in the doorway.

“Oh, Cliff. I’m home.”

“If you’re planning to come back, give us some prior notice, will you?” Cliff said, seeming exasperated.

“Well, it all happened so quickly and I was in a hurry, you see. I didn’t have time to tell you. Besides, why would I need to inform anyone that I’m returning to my own home?”

Why, they were about to make me cry.

“Look, I have my own schedule to maintain. If you visit for work and let me know in advance, I can make time for you. By the way, what are you here for? Is it anything I can help with?”

“My job was to see my daughter’s surprised face when I came home.”

“Mother!” Noa pouted.

“Oh, don’t look so scary! You’ll ruin your adorable face!”

I tugged at her cheeks as she pouted. Oh dear. Now she looked even cuter.

“Mother, that hurts.”

“What did you really come here for?” Cliff asked, still looking utterly exasperated.

“We’ve decided to serve some of Yuna’s recipes at a restaurant in the capital. Zelef and I are here to experience what

Yuna's shops are like in person," I explained to Cliff, who seemed to be growing impatient.

"Wait a second. Did you just say Zelef is here?"

"I did. Lala is probably serving him tea right this moment."

Cliff held his head in his hands.

"You mean to say the head chef of the palace, Zelef, is *here in our house*?!"

He immediately rushed out of the room. Oh my. It seemed he cared more about Zelef than his beloved wife. That made me a little sad.

"Will you be able to stay with us for long, Mother?"

"Yes, for a few days. I want to stay for a while, especially since I wasn't able to be there for Misana's birthday party last time."

Noa seemed happy to hear this. My daughter was so cute. Honestly, all I wanted was to whisk her away with me right back to the capital.

"I can show you the way to Yuna's shops!"

"No, that's all right," I said.

"Wh-why not?!"

"Well, you go to her shops all the time, don't you?"

"Yes, I've been there lots of times, so I know all about them."

"Then I'm sorry Noa, but you really can't show me around. I need to see everything as if I were a commoner."

If anyone working at the shops learned I was a noble, they would treat me differently, and I wouldn't be able to see the way the shops run on a regular, day-to-day basis. Also, I didn't want to disturb the other customers.

"I'm sorry." I tousled her hair as Noa hung her head.

"I wanted to show you."

"We can't go together, but could you tell me more about Yuna's shops? It'd be a big help."

"Of course!" Noa replied happily.

Chapter 2:
Together with Mother
Noa's Chronicles

EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL BONUS

MOTHER SURPRISED US ALL when she came back from the capital with Chef Zelef! It seems she'd come to see Yuna's shop in person. I told her I could show her around, but she said everyone would become nervous if they learned she was a noble, so she would be visiting without letting anyone know who she was.

I guess even Fina, who speaks to me normally now, used to be nervous when we first met. When I went to another shop with my father, it felt as though we were being treated differently from the other guests. I understood what Mother was saying. Since everyone at Yuna's shop knew I was the lord's daughter, I couldn't go with her. Even though Mother had finally come home to visit, I still couldn't spend time with her.

Once I finished eating, I collapsed onto my bed. I wondered if Mother was eating at Yuna's shop right now? Actually, she might have already finished eating. I *so* wished I could have been there with her.

I grasped toward the bear plushies on my bed and held them close. They were the ones Yuna had given me. I had two: The black one was Kumayuru and the white one was Kumakyu. I hugged Kumayuru and rolled around on my bed, thinking about my mom.

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door and it swung open.

"Noa, I'm home!"

My mother came into my room.

"Did you finish seeing Yuna's shop?"

I righted myself and sat up on my bed.

"Yes, I had many things to eat," Mother said. "They were all so marvelously delicious, I overdid it. I'm quite uncomfortable."

She said she was uncomfortable, but she still looked very pleased with herself. Mother came close and sat down beside me.

“Yuna’s shop is very unique. There were bear ornaments, and even the children working there were dressed as bears. I was right to come to see the atmosphere in person.”

She was right. The bear ornaments were cute and so were the uniforms. The food was very good too.

“I’m sure His Majesty would have a good laugh at the sight of it. I should bring him along next time.”

His Majesty? In Crimonia? It was a frightening thought, considering my mother seemed serious. If that were to actually happen, my father might very well collapse.

“Ugh, I am so full,” Mother said, collapsing onto the bed.

“Mother, that’s so improper.”

“Oh, how could you scold your poor mother when she’s in pain?”

Mother brought her hand to her eyes and pretended to cry.

“It’s your own fault for overeating,” I said.

Mother was usually so proper, but sometimes she could be so slovenly. I loved my mother both ways, but she would be ever so strange when she got into one of these moods, and I didn’t know how to react most of the time.

“Who is this cute little creature?”

Mother eyed the Kumayuru plushie in my arms.

“Th-this is—” I tried to hide it quickly, but it was too late.

“You don’t need to hide it. It’s the one you wanted at Misana’s birthday party, isn’t it?”

“It is, but it’s a little embarrassing.”

“Yuna made good on her promise to gift you one. Good for you. Did you thank her?”

“Yes, I did. But when I told her that I wanted more and would even pay for them, she said no.”

I wanted at least five more, if possible.

“Ha ha, this one is important to you, isn’t it?”

“Yes, that’s exactly why I need backups.”

“That’s not the right way to think of it. If you have multiples, they wouldn’t be as important to you. They’re important because they’re irreplaceable. If you have many, then they won’t feel as precious to you anymore. If you have backups, you might abuse them. Or you might let them get dirty.”

“I wouldn’t…”

“Now, don’t give me that. The more of them you have, the more likely the unused ones will collect dust, so make sure you care for the present Yuna gave you.”

Mother patted my Kumayuru on the head.

“I promise.”

Of course I would take care of it. I clutched my Kumayuru stuffed animal close.

“It really is well made,” Mother said as she picked up the Kumakyu plushie from my bed.

I thought the same. That was why what I really wanted was a stuffed animal as big as the real Kumakyu.

Mother started talking with me about all sorts of things. She told me what she and my sister had been up to. I really wished I could see my sister again. While we were talking, Mother suddenly stood up.

“Oh, now what is that?”

Mother looked at my shelf, then started walking toward it. She reached out and picked up something on the shelf. Mother had found the bear ornament Yuna had given me. When I told her I wanted the big bear statue in front of the shop, she gave me a bear ornament the same size as one of the bears decorating the shop tables.

“Noa, let me have this.”

“N-No, you can’t. Yuna gave it to me. It’s important. It’s precious to me! I won’t give it to you, no matter how many times you ask me, Mother.”

I ran up to Mother and tried to snatch it back from her, but she held the ornament high in the air so I couldn't reach it.

"Mother, please give it back."

"Just let me look at it a bit longer."

"Ugh…fine, just for a little bit." I finally gave up and told her it was okay.

"It is *such* a cute bear. They had these at the shop as well."

"I begged Yuna to make me a big bear for the garden, but she told me to make do with this. I *really* wanted a big one though," I explained.

At last, mother gave me my bear back.

"Hee hee," Mother smiled. "If you put such a large bear in the garden, Cliff would tear his hair out."

I suppose Father would probably scold me if he were to find a giant bear in the garden. Even so, I still wanted a bear large enough to decorate my room.

"So… Noa."

"What is it?" Her face told me she wanted something. "No matter how many times you ask, I won't give the bear ornament to you."

"This is the last time I'll ask, Noa. Can't you at least let me borrow it for a bit?"

"Borrow it?"

"I just thought of something fun. I'd like to place similar decorations in the capital shop."

Mother was wearing her mischievous look. It was futile to oppose her when she was like this.

"We could ask craftsmen to make them, but it won't work unless we have the original, will it? It's not as though we can bring the craftsmen here at this time, and Yuna likely wouldn't make them for us if I were to ask. It'd be really helpful if we could use this bear as a reference to make others."

A restaurant in the capital. With bear ornaments.

"It's a lovely idea," I said. "But…"

I would have to let her have one of my treasured bears. I looked at the one I was clutching in my hands.

“I won’t break it. Won’t you please let me borrow it?”

Mother put her hands together. She was begging.

“Umm, you have to promise you won’t lose it or break it.”

I gave in and let Mother borrow the bear ornament.

“Thank you. I promise I won’t break or lose it.”

I was a little worried, but it would be worth it if it meant having more bears in the capital.

Mother went home a few days later, after she was done with her inspection. I was so happy to talk to her after we were apart for such a long time.

Chapter 3:
Finding Out about the Picture Book
Fina Chronicles

BOOKSTORE COLLABORATION EXCLUSIVE STORY

WHILE NEAF WENT SHOPPING and Mom talked to the director, I looked after the little kids.

“What would you like to do today?” I asked Mira and the two other kids.

“Umm… Wead us a book?”

“A book? Okay.”

As soon as I answered, Mira went to choose a book from the shelf. Yuna said that reading picture books to children can help them learn how to read. I wondered what book Mira would choose this time, since I had read all the books to them many times before.

Mira came back with a book and sat down next to me. I took it from her and noticed that a cute little girl and bear were drawn on the cover. The title was *The Bear and the Girl*. I’d never seen this book before.

The girl wore a big ribbon. She resembled someone I knew, but I opened the book without thinking about it too much. The book was about a girl whose mom was sick and couldn’t get out of bed. She didn’t have a dad either, just like me… For that matter, none of the kids in the orphanage had moms or dads. Was this going to be a sad book?

I read the next part to the kids. The girl traveled to the woods, looking for herbs to make medicine for her mom. That sounded familiar too.

“Hurry, Fina!”

Mira started to shake my arm. I had stopped reading the book, lost in thought.

“Oh, sorry,” I said.

I turned the page. The girl was attacked by wolves. She tried to run, but couldn't get away. Ah, what would become of the girl?

When I turned the page, a bear appeared in front of the girl. The bear fought off the wolves and saved the girl. Oh, good, I thought! But this felt familiar too. Why?

The girl told the bear about the herbs she needed, then the bear let her get on its back and took her to where they were growing. The girl was able to get the herbs without getting hurt. I was glad. But after the bear took the girl home, it went back to the woods. Was this the last time the girl would see the bear? It felt a little sad.

The girl got her mom's medicine made using the herbs she had gathered, and then the book ended. I felt bad for the little girl, but I was glad she was able to gather the herbs and meet the bear. It was still sad when the bear left, though. Just thinking about saying goodbye to Yuna made me sad.

After I finished reading the book, Mira gave me a new one. The cover said *The Girl and the Bear, Volume Two*. Apparently, it had a sequel.

I turned the page. Thanks to the medicine from the herbs the little girl got, her mom's condition improved, but she was still sick. Ugh. It made me think of my mom... The medicine never fixed her...

The little girl tried to care for her mom. I understood exactly how she felt. The bear was very kind. The little girl could get the herbs she needed, thanks to its help. But then, the little girl heard about a flower that could cure any sickness. If you drank the flower's glittering, rainbow-colored dew, it could cure you. If we had a flower like that, we could have cured Mom right away too.

The little girl asked lots of people where the flower was. Lots of folks had looked, but nobody had found it yet. Was the little girl going to look for the flower all on her own? What would happen to her mom? I turned the page, feeling anxious.

The girl's mom had taken a turn for the worse. She looked like she was in pain. The little girl couldn't decide whether or not to go look for the flower, so she talked to the bear instead. She

pulled out a little jar while she told the bear about the flower. Were she and the bear going to go together? I didn't want her to leave her mom and sister behind, but I also wanted her to go find the medicine.

Even I wondered what would happen next as I read the book to Mira and the other kids. When I turned the page, something I didn't expect happened. The bear disappeared. Even when the little girl traveled to the woods and yelled for the bear, it wouldn't show up. She went to the woods every day in search of the bear. No matter what the weather was like, she was there waiting. It made me sad to see her like that. The girl in the book looked just as sad as I felt. Where had the bear gone?

The girl went to the woods each day, all the while looking after her mom. She was looking more and more tired, almost as if she was about to give up. I wanted to tell her no, you can't! But then, while she was in the woods, wolves suddenly attacked her. Everything felt hopeless. The story couldn't be this sad, could it?

But when I turned to the next page, the bear was back! The bear fought off the wolves and saved the girl. The girl called for the bear over, and hugged it. They both were happy to be together again. I was glad, but it looked like the bear had been hurt. What happened to it? While the girl was crying, the bear handed her a small jar. It had a rainbow droplet inside. The bear had gone off on its own to find the rainbow flower's dew. That was why the bear was injured. The flower must have been really hard to get to.

The little girl took the jar and went home to her mom. She pulled off the top and gave her mom the droplet inside to drink. Suddenly, her mom looked better. I was glad.

That was how the second book ended. It had been pretty sad at first, but then in the end, the little girl reunited with the bear and was able to heal her mom. The story ended up being heartwarming.

"The wittle girl looks just like you, Fina," Mira blurted out as I finished reading the book.

The little girl was wearing a big ribbon on her head. I touched the ribbon I was wearing. I thought back to the plot of the first book and slowly, everything came together. The little girl

was gathering herbs in the woods for her sick mother. And a bear saved her.

This book was about how Yuna and I met. The second book seemed like it was based on what had happened to us too. My mom got really sick and Yuna saved her. The more I realized the books were about me, the more embarrassed I got. Why did this book mirror my life so closely?

“Um, where did you get these books?”

“The bear girl gave them to us.”

“The bear girl…?”

The kids would only call one person that. It must have been Yuna! I turned the book over, and the author’s name was “Bear.” Yuna was definitely the one who wrote the book. Once she was back, I’d need to give her a talking-to.

Chapter 4:
The Bear Goes Mushroom Foraging

SHOSEN EXCLUSIVE STORY

WE FOUGHT OFF the parasitic tree and the sacred tree was back to normal. Mumulute, Sanya, and Arutul kept thanking me. Sanya had fulfilled her role, but they still had to discuss what they'd do next. They knew about my bear transport gates, so there was no hurry to get home. We decided to stay for a while. That morning, Mumulute, Arutul, and Sanya all went out to take care of a bunch of stuff.

I had time until Sanya would be back, so I took Luimin and Lucca out foraging for mushrooms and wild plants with me. We decided to bring Kumayuru and Kumakyu with us as we headed off into the woods. I looked over at my bears.

"The black bear is so cute."

"That's Kumayuru."

"What about the white bear?"

"Um, I think that was Kumakyu."

"So they're Kumayuru and Kumakyu then?"

Four little kids had gathered around my bears and seemed excited to walk alongside them. I saw Lucca there too.

Apparently, the kids had noticed them while we were walking through the village. For once, it hadn't been me who drew the attention—it seemed like the kids were interested in my bears. Lucca had asked me to bring them, so I'd summoned them. We were all supposed to be heading out of the village together.

But when Lucca told everyone he was leaving, all the kids told him that they wanted to go too. I tried to warn them that there were monsters there, and that it was too dangerous, but Labilata, who had happened to pass by in that moment, quipped that they were fine with me there. He told us that he was guarding the woods with some others, and, much to my dismay, we ended up getting permission for all the kids to join us.

After all of that, I headed off to the woods with all the elf children in tow. I felt like a nursery school teacher.

The kids led me over to a foraging spot.

“Okay, we’ll go foraging, so you stay around here, Yuna. It would be nice if Kumayuru and Kumakyu could come with us, though.”

I had no experience with foraging, so I made sure to do exactly as Luimin told me. Plus, the kids would all be safe with my bears at their side.

“Kumayuru, Kumakyu, make sure to look after everyone,” I said. They both crooned their reply back to me.

“Everyone, make sure you don’t wander too far away from me or the bears, okay?” Luimin said. All the kids agreed in unison. “Let’s compete to see who can forage the most,” Luimin announced. That was all the signal the kids needed. They all dashed into the woods.

They sure had a lot of energy. Unlike me, a bona fide shut-in, the kids raced around the woods like it was their backyard. Ah, youth...

I broke out my detection skill, and used it to watch over the area. If any kids wandered too far, I could have my bears bring them back. It took a while, but all the kids made their way back on their own.

“We found some stuff.”

“I found a huge one!”

“I found these ones.”

“Look how many I got!”

“Wow!”

I overheard them chatting away as they brought their mushrooms, plants, and fruit over to me. They all laid their findings in a pile in front of me. There was something I hadn’t seen before in the mountain of stuff, though. It wasn’t poisonous, was it?

“Just to make sure, Liumin... This one is okay to eat, right?”

“Yes, you can eat everything the kids brought. We all grew up in the woods, so we can identify what’s edible and what’s poisonous. Our parents made sure to teach us ever since we were small. You don’t have to worry about that.”

In other words, they all knew what was toxic, too. I made a mental note *never* to make any of the elves angry.

“This is best when it’s grilled. You can stir-fry this with vegetables.”

Luimin started teaching me the tastiest ways to prepare all the food.

I imagined cooking everything with rice and as hot pot. Maybe I could make mushroom pizzas too! I’d try once I got home.

Everyone wanted to play with Kumayuru and Kumakyu after gathering the food, so we headed to a meadow. The kids climbed onto my bears. They were fighting each other to get on. I tried to break it up, but Luimin ran out before I could.

“Wait, everyone. Be mindful of poor Kumayuru and Kumakyu! You can’t climb all over them like that. None of you would want to carry multiple people on your backs would you? Take turns,” Luimin scolded the kids. “If you don’t take turns, you can’t ride them.”

When Luimin was looking after kids, she acted like an older sister, which was strange for me to see. She *was* Lucca’s older sister, I guess, so it made sense, it just felt weird to see Luimin with her act together.

The kids climbed aboard Kumayuru and Kumakyu and raced across the meadow. Everyone looked like they were having fun. They’d all race over to a tree a little ways off, come back, and then let another kid on.

“Looks like fun.”

“Everyone’s excited to ride on your bears,” Luimin replied.

The kids who had finished riding were already waiting for their next turn.

“Are Kumayuru and Kumakyu okay?”

“They’re not going fast and the tree isn’t that far away. I think they’re fine, but it’d be nice to let them have a break after a while.”

My bears could run pretty far. I was pretty sure they could do a few laps to a tree and back without any issues. Plus they weren’t going all that fast since they were carrying kids.

“Got it. After a few laps, I’ll have everyone take a break.”

Luimin headed back to the kids, while I watched them playing with my bears for a while. It was nice watching them having so much fun, they were all so energetic. Being a shut-in just isn’t healthy.

I felt a pang in my chest just from saying that. As a former shut-in, I had no right.

After a while, the kids finished playing and came over to me.

“I’m hungry,” one of them said.

Oh right, it was past mealtime by now. Time really had flown by while we were all foraging for mushrooms and playing with my bears.

“Should we go back to the village?”

“Hmm, since we’re here, why don’t we eat the mushrooms and fruit you all gathered?” I said. This made the kids happy too. I started pulling out my cooking gear from my bear storage and whipped up a little something using the mushrooms. It wasn’t anything fancy, though.

According to Luimin, these were ideal for grilling, so I decided to make meat and veggie skewers with them. I also cut some other mushrooms into bite-size pieces, then grilled them up with the meat and veggies. Naturally, I seasoned them with soy sauce, giving the meal a fragrant scent.

“Everything looks so good,” Luimin said as she watched me work. She seemed truly impressed.

“Luimin, hand out the skewers as they finish. Let’s keep ’em coming.”

“Okay.”

Luimin started serving the skewers to the kids. I started to stick the stir-fried mushroom and veggie mix between slices of bread and handed those off to the kids too.

It seemed like the kids were enjoying the food. They all gobbled up their bread and skewers. Before long, all the mushrooms they'd gathered had disappeared into their bellies. After our meal, we had to go look for some more.

Chapter 5:
Using the Bear Phone
Luimin Chronicles

ANIMATE EXCLUSIVE STORY

YUNA AND MY SISTER had used a strange door to go home. I walked over to the sacred tree on my own and looked up at it. It truly was a beautiful tree, precious to us elves. Not only was it huge, but it also protected the entire woods from danger.

When a parasitic tree started growing on it, we knew we were in trouble. When the barrier began to fail, monsters started to pour in as well. I never saw the parasite on the sacred tree myself, but Grandfather said that it was horrible. My grandfather couldn't handle the parasite, and neither could my dad and sister. But even though the three of them had failed, Yuna managed to get rid of it all on her own.

They said they hadn't even been able to pass through the sacred tree's barrier, because the parasite had taken it over. But for some reason, Yuna was able to pass through. From then on, even when we put up a new barrier, Yuna was still able to go through it. Even Grandfather seems confused how that could be possible.

After all the commotion, I was designated as one of the people who could enter the barrier, since my sister was living in the capital. In times of emergency, the village really needs people like me in case we need to create a new barrier. I wondered why they picked me, but apparently it was because I was the granddaughter of the village chief. Grandfather said that I was perfect for the job too, since I already knew Yuna's secrets.

One of those secrets was that Yuna had a magical device that allowed people to talk to each other even when they were far away. She called it a "Bear Fone." It was shaped like a cute bear and almost looked like something you could put up on display. She gave me one of them, telling me I could use it to talk to her even when she was far away. Honestly, I was a little

worried about whether I could be trusted with something like this.

I pulled the Bear Fone out of my item bag. I hadn't looked at it at all since Yuna had gone home. Would it even work now that she was gone? When Yuna and I had tested it out earlier, we'd just gone to different floors inside the same house, which didn't seem all that far to me. Yuna was now much farther away, even farther than the capital. I think the town she lived in was called Crimonia or something? The capital was already far enough as it was. It was hard to believe I could reach her from across an even greater distance, let alone have a conversation with her too.

As the days passed, I felt more and more anxious. I held the Bear Fone close and made sure no one was around. I couldn't let anyone see me using it. I gripped the phone with both hands, squeezed my eyes shut, then poured mana into the device as I thought about Yuna. *Yuna, oh Yuna...*

Supposedly, this process would let me talk to her from far away.

After a while, I heard Yuna's voice. "Hello?"

I started talking into the little bear on my palm.

"I-it's Luimin. Is that you, Yuna?"

"Luimin? What is it?"

That was definitely Yuna. I was really talking to her.

"Um, how are things over there?"

I had to scramble to think of something since I didn't have anything specific to ask her.

"I'm just relaxing back in town. Are you okay over there? There haven't been any monsters or issues with the sacred tree since I left, right?"

"Oh, no. Everything's okay. The monsters haven't been able to come into the barrier since you left. We haven't seen many monsters outside the barrier either. According to Grandfather, the parasite on the sacred tree was summoning the monsters, so now that it's gone, the monsters won't be a problem anymore. We have you to thank for that, Yuna."

I felt embarrassed as I remembered telling Yuna I would protect her as we were traveling to the village. Back then, it seemed like Yuna and Sanya were both laughing at me. Honestly, I wish Yuna would have just told me how powerful she was in the first place.

“That’s not true,” Yuna said from the other side of the Bear Fone.

She wasn’t trying to brag—she was just that nice a person. Even when she got my bracelet back for me, her words were full of kindness. When Sanya and I tried to do something to thank her for all she had done, Yuna told us she didn’t need anything and refused to let us give her a gift.

“Did you call because you needed something? Do you have a message for me to pass along to Sanya?”

“No, I’m sorry… I didn’t have anything to talk about, I was just worried the Bear Fone wouldn’t work since you’re so far away… I’m sorry.”

After I apologized, Yuna’s voice brightened up.

“That’s okay. We’re talking now, right? There’s nothing to worry about.”

“That’s true.”

She made all my worries disappear. Yuna really was such a nice person.

“Oh, by the way, have you made any of the sacred tree tea yet?”

“Not yet. We’re going to make it pretty soon now that things have settled down in the village.”

I didn’t really get it, but apparently some of the sacred tree’s leaves fell off after Yuna fought the parasitic tree. A *lot* of leaves. When I looked at the sacred tree now, though, it seemed to be thriving. Grandfather said Yuna had done something, but I had no idea what.

“Right, of course. After all that, it’s not really the time for tea, is it.”

“We’re not going to make all the leaves into tea in one batch. Since the villagers would be alarmed if we used up all the

leaves at once, Grandfather is having us do it little by little."

Grandfather and Father had that discussion back when we were setting up the barrier.

"Oh, yeah, that's right," Yuna agreed through the Bear Fone.

"I still have tea leaves from before, so if you like, I can give them to you."

"I still have some left, so I'm okay."

That was too bad. Yuna might have come back if she had run out.

"Make sure you let me know when you get the new batch, though. I'll come by to get some then," Yuna added. Normal people couldn't just stop by to get tea leaves like that, but Yuna had a special door-shaped magic device that let her visit whenever she wanted. "Also, I'd kind of like some mushrooms, so I might pick some while I'm there."

"Okay. You can come whenever you'd like. I can even pick the mushrooms for you ahead of time if you tell me when you're coming."

I wanted to help Yuna, even if it was only a little bit.

"Really? I'll ask when I need some, then."

"Okay."

Yuna and I chatted about a whole bunch of other stuff, after which I put the Bear Fone down. It was such a wonderful magical device. I really could use it to talk to Yuna even when she was far, far away. It would be really bad if I lost it or if it got stolen, so I put it away in my item bag.

After I was done talking with Yuna, I left the sacred tree and went over to the bear-shaped house. It was so cute, and it was also a very helpful house to have around to boot, since it had a door that could open up to the capital. Next time, I really hoped that I'd be able to go visit Yuna's town.

STORY

KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR 11



SAMPLING FOOD AT THE RESTAURANT IN THE CAPITAL.

Yuna heads to the capital to give Princess Flora a new picture book, but finds a charming restaurant with a bear statue in front of it! The restaurant plans to serve pudding and Yuna's other recipes to the general public, so Ellelaura makes Yuna try out the food at the restaurant! Just before they're all stuffed, Yuna treats Zelef's niece Shyla and the other chefs to chawanmushi. And that's mission accomplished!

TEA TIME WITH CLIFF.

When Yuna goes to visit the Fochrosé's manor in the capital, she finds Shia struggling to come up with something to serve at the academy festival. Yuna suggests cotton candy, and Shia agrees. Shia invites Yuna to the academy festival, and Yuna heads over to Cliff afterward to get his permission to bring Noa to the academy festival too. Yuna gives Cliff, who is dead tired, some of the sacred tree tea leaves. He's instantly revitalized, and he says he owes her a favor.





AN ENCOUNTER WITH AN UNPLEASANT NOBLE ON THE WAY TO THE CASTLE.

Yuna takes Noa, Fina, and Shuri to the capital to see the castle! They meet an unpleasant knight captain, and trouble seems to be brewing on the horizon. Once they get to Princess Flora's room, they pull out their Kumakyu and Kumayuru plushies to show them off! The queen barges in as if she was invited and asks Yuna to summon her bears. The room ends up filled with both stuffed teddy bears *and* real ones!

THE ACADEMY FESTIVAL BEGINS!

Yuna visits Shia's school for their festival. She also introduces Yuna to Princess Teilia, Princess Flora's older sister. But for some reason, Princess Teilia seems angry with Yuna. Apparently, Yuna only visits when Princess Teilia isn't around. She's upset because the rest of the royal family has already tried all of Yuna's delicious food without her! Yuna spends the day at the festival with the adorable princess. They attend a lesson on harvesting parts from monsters together, and the normally shy Fina even shows off a bit!

Chapter 6:
Reporting to the King
Ellelaura Chronicles

TORANOANA EXCLUSIVE STORY

AFTER RETURNING FROM my inspection in Crimonia, I delivered my report to His Majesty.

“What is this bear figurine?” His Majesty scowled.

“It’s just as I described in the report. Yuna has large bear statues in front of her shops, and all sorts of little figurines inside.”

I showed His Majesty the figurine Noa let me borrow. She had gotten it directly from Yuna herself. It looked identical to the figurines on the tables in Yuna’s shop.

I held the figurine out to His Majesty, and he plucked it from my hand.

“She’s been making these things too? How much can one person love bears?”

Yuna dressed as a bear, drew bear picture books, had bear plushies made, and now had a shop filled with bear figurines. It was a safe assumption that she liked bears a fair amount.

“This is a small version,” I said, and then indicated a point in the air higher than my head. “The ones in front of her establishments were this big.”

“So, you plan on setting up a bear statue like this in the capital too?”

I’d submitted the proposal along with my report. “Isn’t it a great idea?”

The king looked appalled.

“You won’t reject the idea, will you?” I asked.

“Well, I’d sure like to. Why does it need to be a bear? This hardly seems necessary.”

I objected immediately. “The bear statue is of utmost importance. You need to hold yourself accountable for your own words, Your Majesty.”

“For what words?”

“Did you forget that you said you would protect the chef who created the recipe for the pudding you served during your birthday festival?”

His Majesty himself had declared that he would not reveal the recipe to the general public. He had forbidden anyone from approaching pudding makers in other towns if any appeared, and threatened to punish any who dared ignore his words.

“Ah, yes, indeed I did. I also ordered Cliff to protect Yuna’s shop.”

“Then you should be more careful to do just that. If the restaurant in the capital has the same bear statues as Yuna’s establishments, it will show people that her restaurant and shop are connected to the castle. This will deter them from giving her grief without us having to say anything. Cliff has his eye on things in Crimonia, making it unlikely anyone will try anything foolish, but it’s impossible to know for sure whether that will be enough. The shop’s employees are mostly women and children. For their protection, I’d like to ensure no one tries to interfere with them.”

The women and children working at the shop and restaurant were vulnerable. Not to mention the fact that the children were orphans. As one of the rulers of the territory, it was my responsibility to protect them. That was why I needed to do anything I could to help, no matter how little.

“Why are you doing this, really?”

“It sounds entertaining.”

I kept my true reasons secret and gave him another answer—which was also true. It *would* be entertaining to have bear statues in the capital, and I wanted to see Yuna’s surprise once she saw them. I hadn’t been able to surprise Yuna when I’d gone to Crimonia, since she hadn’t been there, after all, so I wanted to surprise her now.

The king, once again, looked appalled by my answer.

“I’m not wrong, am I? The simple act of installing bear statues will act as a deterrent while also lightening Cliff’s load.”

The king fell silent. He looked over the report once more.

“And the bear uniforms?”

“At Yuna’s shop, all of the employees wear bear clothes as they serve customers. They were adorable.”

“In other words, everyone was dressed just like Yuna?”

“Not exactly like Yuna, no, but they were dressed as bears.”

I pulled a bear uniform from my item bag. It was just like the uniform the kids at the shops had been wearing. These were the bear clothes Noa wore while playing with Yuna’s bears at Misa’s birthday party. Noa let me borrow them too.

I spread the clothes out, but His Majesty was quick to make a decision.

“No.”

“Why not?”

“We can’t force people to work in those. Just imagine if you were forced to wear such a getup.”

“I’d like to see others wear them, even though I’d never wear anything of the sort myself.”

“Don’t force others to do what you wouldn’t want to. Yuna only made kids wear these clothes. In the capital, adults would work at the restaurant. Don’t forget that this is an establishment directly managed by the castle. I will, however, approve the bear statues.”

“So we can have those? All right, then, I’ll scrap the uniform.”

I’d finally gotten him to agree. This was a tried-and-true method of negotiation. If you present someone with something they absolutely hate, they are more likely to approve of something slightly less unappetizing to them. I knew His Majesty wouldn’t approve of the uniforms from the start. There was no chance bear uniforms would get the green light at any establishment under the castle’s direct purview. But a few bear statues could potentially be permissible.

“I’ll approve of the statues, but you’ll need to get Zelef to sign off too. If he says no, then that’s the end of it.”

“That should be all right. Zelef was already keen on the idea.”

In negotiations, taking initiative was the key, so I’d already spoken to Zelef. Though His Majesty was no stranger to negotiation himself, I’d gotten the upper hand this time by having more information at my disposal. My objective had always been to get approval for the bear statues, so in the end, everything had worked out splendidly.

“So, regarding the kokekkos that Yuna had in Crimonia…”

“Right, I see that part of your report right here. What in the world is that girl doing with her life?”

“She’s the type to offer a helping hand to anyone in need.”

Yuna had saved our family name from being dishonored. The orphanage was currently operating on its own, without need of our funding—Yuna hadn’t just given them money, but also given the children jobs to help them become independent.

That was what impressed me the most. Anyone could throw money at the problem, and it would have been all too easy to give the kids jobs they weren’t suited to. Yuna had managed to find the kids jobs that were suitable for them, while leaving the difficult parts to the adults.

“I’d like to increase kokekko egg production, like Yuna’s farm at a nearby village. We can send funds to support them as well.”

“Yes, as I recall, there is a village nearby that raises kokekko.”

“I’d like to encourage the village to manage them properly so we can circulate more eggs. Otherwise, supplies will dwindle in the future.”

For now, we had enough eggs stored up to make and serve pudding and cakes at the restaurant. For the long term, however, we ran the risk of running out.

“With more eggs around, the price should drop as well.”

We could spread good food to the masses, in accordance with Yuna's philosophy. We needed to think about what other advantages this could give us too. Even if it took time, I hoped that we would be able to lower the price of eggs enough that a child's allowance could buy one.

"I'll leave that to you, Ellelaura. Report the estimates to me later."

"I have already completed them. Here they are."

I handed him a piece of paper, and His Majesty looked it over.

"All right. Let's go ahead with your plan."

He stamped the document with his seal. And with that, I had permission.

"Oh, and this is the amount we'll need for the bear statue."

I handed him another sheet of paper.

"That's quite a sum," His Majesty said.

"Your Majesty, you did approve it earlier..."

"All right..."

He pressed his seal on that paper too. Now everything had been prepared. *Hee hee*. Things were getting interesting.

Next, I gave him my report on the seafood restaurant. I was hoping I'd be able to inspect the tunnel and Mileela next.

Chapter 7:
The Chef
Shyla Chronicles

WONDERGOOD BONUS STORY

MY NAME IS SHYLA, and I hope to become a chef someday. It was my uncle who opened my eyes to the culinary world and gave me my dream of becoming a chef. I can still remember sampling my uncle's cooking when I was young, and the way it made me feel. He was the palace's head chef—the most important person in the kitchen. I was currently working for him.

I headed to my uncle's kitchen and waited outside until I was given permission to enter.

"You came at just the right time, Shyla. Would you like a taste?" Uncle grabbed something from the fridge.

"I'll eat anything you make, Uncle."

"Call me chef while we're in the kitchen."

"Do I have to? It's just us here."

My uncle sighed.

"So, what did you make?" I asked.

"It's a dish called pudding."

I looked over at the cup my uncle was pointing to in shock.

"Wasn't that the food served at the king's birthday banquet during the festival? I thought no one knew who made it."

During His Majesty's birthday banquet, they'd served a dish another chef had made. My uncle hadn't shown it, but he was upset. I wasn't there, so I didn't experience it for myself, but I heard everyone loved the pudding. Uncle said that once he tried it for himself, he understood why it had been served at His Majesty's birthday.

I looked at the yellow substance in the cup. This was pudding—the dish that His Majesty himself had declared so impressive that he'd ordered it served at his banquet.

Uncle gave me a spoon. He picked up his own pudding and started to eat.

“Okay, I’ll try it,” I said as I brought a spoonful up to my lips. First, the pudding was cold, but then the sweet taste spread throughout my mouth. So this was pudding! It really was good.

My uncle looked disappointed, though.

“This isn’t quite right,” he said. He set his spoon on the table and sighed.

“It tasted great to me.” I didn’t understand what he didn’t like about it.

“The real version is much better.”

“Better than this?”

“Yes. I can’t get the taste out of my mind.”

I thought my uncle’s pudding was already really good. Apparently, the real pudding was even better.

“Do you know the chef who invented pudding, Uncle?”

“I do…”

“Who is it?”

Uncle wouldn’t tell me, but there were rumors that the girl in the bear suit was the inventor. People gossiped about how lunch for the royal family would be canceled whenever she visited Lady Flora. My uncle warned me not to talk to the bear girl, even if I saw her in the castle.

After that, Uncle let me taste-test all the puddings he made and asked me for my opinion. Each batch had a different sweetness level or consistency from the last.

Whenever the bear girl came to the castle, Ange, Princess Flora’s caretaker, would bring Uncle food. She once brought him some shortcake, and Uncle made his own a few days after tasting it. I tried that too, and it was delicious.

I really wanted to talk to the bear girl, especially if she was the one who invented the cake. If she really was a chef, I felt like I had to meet her.

One day, a proposal was put forward to establish a restaurant in the capital that was run by the castle. The plan was to select some chefs from the castle to work there. The problem was that everyone who worked in the castle had ambitions of someday becoming royal chefs—including me, of course. Even if the restaurant was run by the castle, the chefs assigned to it would no longer be working *at* the castle. In short, no one wanted to work at the restaurant.

Uncle hadn't realized this when he called up two of his youngest and most promising chefs. It seemed neither of them knew why they'd been picked. Normally, they would have continued to hone their craft while working under my uncle, in the hopes of eventually taking over his position.

"Why was I chosen?!"

"Am I not helpful enough, Head Chef?"

"I'll explain in my office. Shyla, you come along too."

"Me?"

I was closer to the bottom rung than to becoming a royal chef. I hadn't expected to be called in. We headed to my uncle's office.

"Head Chef, why did you pick us?"

"Because you're the most trustworthy of the young chefs, and I know you're skilled."

"If that's true, why are you expelling us from the castle?!"

"I won't accept this."

I had to agree with them.

"I chose you because I trust you to make these dishes at the new restaurant."

Uncle brought out pudding and shortcake.

"These recipes are top secret."

These were the dishes that Uncle Zelef had asked me to taste test for him countless times. There was the shortcake he'd already brought out, bread, and pizza. They were all delicious. It was rumored that the bear girl had invented all the recipes, but she wouldn't teach them to anyone.

“We’re planning to serve all of this at the restaurant.”

“Do you mean you’ll teach us these recipes?”

“That’s right, but you must keep the recipes secret. This is why I made sure to choose people I could trust. That’s not all, though. I needed people from the castle with skill. Put simply, I need this restaurant to be helmed by young blood who can forge a new path into the future. That’s why I chose the two of you.”

“So you’re not driving us from the castle?”

“Of course not. This was an imperial directive straight from His Majesty. I couldn’t leave this to incompetent people I don’t trust.”

This was why he’d brought us to this room. Obviously, he couldn’t say all of that in the kitchen. He was basically saying the other chefs weren’t as good.

“I’ll leave the decision to you. Will you accept or not?”

“I’d like to accept…”

“I would too.”

They hesitated for a bit, but when Uncle shot them a serious look, they both accepted.

“Why did you call me here, Uncle?”

I wasn’t that skilled. I couldn’t properly prepare many of the palace meals.

“You wanted to know the recipes, didn’t you? You’re my niece. I know exactly who you are. You can do this. If you want to improve, you can study under these two. What do you say?”

“…”

In other words, I was here because he trusted me.

“I accept.”

“Head Chef, are the rumors true? Did the bear girl invent pudding and shortcake?”

“Yes, she did.”

I knew it. And she was a girl, just like me.

“But the public must never know. The recipes need to be protected as well.”

After that, he taught us the recipes for pudding and shortcake. Then he taught us how to make pizza too. I didn't recognize some of the ingredients, but it was amazing that all these foods could be created with such basic ingredients. It was like magic.

Now that I knew the girl in the bear clothes was the inventor of these dishes, I really hoped I'd meet her someday.

Chapter 8:
The Bear Takes Fina and Gang to the Restaurant

BOOKSTORE COLLABORATION EXCLUSIVE STORY

WE HAD SOME TIME before the academy festival, so I decided to visit some people I knew. Fina and the gang were coming with me, so we all headed out together. First, since I'd just fought a cockatrice, I headed to the blacksmith Ghazal to have him take a look at my knives. I was trying to keep them maintained as best as I could, but I wasn't an expert or anything. I figured I should have someone who knew what they were doing take a look every once in a while. Fina brought along her knife too.

After Ghazal was done checking out my knives, Fina said she wanted to visit Sanya, the adventurer guild master. So we stopped in to see her too.

"How about we look for somewhere to eat lunch soon?"

"Can we go to your new restaurant, Yuna? I asked Mother to let us eat there, so I think they should have lunch ready for us," Noa said. I had no idea what she was talking about.

"I wasn't planning on setting up a restaurant in the capital..."

"Um, Mother said you would have one here when she visited Crimonia the other day..." Noa looked confused.

"Yes, that's what I heard too. That's why she came to inspect your restaurant and store," Fina added.

Wait, were they talking about that place...?

"Ah, no, that's not one of my restaurants. They're just serving the same food I have at my shops," I corrected them.

Ellelaura must have made it sound like I had more involvement with the project than I did. I could probably pin the blame on three different adults who kept on saying it was my restaurant.

"I just told them the recipes. I don't have anything to do with the restaurant itself. It's not really mine."

“Really? But when I told Mother I wanted to see your restaurant, she gave me directions as though the restaurant was yours. And she said that they’d have lunch prepared for us.”

I couldn’t believe that lady... I hadn’t wanted to take Fina and the gang over there, but since there was lunch waiting for us, we pretty much had to go now. We headed over to the restaurant with the bear statues.

“Bears!”

Shuri dashed off as soon as she saw the statues. Fina ran right after her.

“Noa, I heard that you let Ellelaura borrow the bear figurine I gave you.”

“Mother asked me and I simply couldn’t refuse her.”

So this was why my bears were appearing in the capital from Crimonia.

“I’m ever so glad they turned out so cute,” Noa continued.

I didn’t see any reason to be glad. Honestly, I wished the bear statues didn’t exist.

As we were talking in front of the restaurant, a twenty-something woman opened the door. It was Shyla, Zelef’s niece.

“You must be Lady Noir’s party. We have been waiting for you. Please, come in.”

We stepped into the restaurant.

“My name is Shyla,” she introduced herself formally.

“She’s Zelef’s niece,” I added.

The three girls introduced themselves. They were all staring at Shyla’s stomach. That was pretty rude of them. Unlike Zelef, Shyla had a slim build.

“Shyla, you’re talking so weird. It’s kind of off-putting.”

“That’s so mean of you, Miss Yuna.”

When I pointed out her behavior, she started acting less formal.

“It’s just that you didn’t act like this the first time we met.”

“Uncle and Lady Ellelaura said I’d be interacting with the general public, so I needed to watch my tone. There’ll be a lot of wealthy people at the restaurant. I’m trying to practice to make sure I don’t offend anyone.”

She was right. A casual approach might have worked for a normal restaurant, but it was better to be safe than sorry when it came to customers from a higher social sphere—not to mention any aristocrats who might show up.

“Lady Ellelaura said her daughter and friends would be coming to the restaurant with you, so I thought I’d take this chance to sharpen my skills. I will be cooking for you today, so I hope you’ll enjoy your meal.”

Shyla led us to our seats and then headed for the kitchen. We sat down to wait for our meals. Noa and the others looked around the restaurant. My restaurant in Crimonia was a repurposed house, so it was pretty nice. This place was even fancier.

We admired the atmosphere and chatted among ourselves until Shyla brought in the food. Everything tasted great. But there was something that caught my eye.

“Why do you have bear bread?”

Some bear-shaped bread sat on a plate. It looked an awful lot like the bread we sold at the Crimonia bakery. They hadn’t served this back when I’d been at this restaurant’s tasting.

“Um, well, Lady Ellelaura has made this a bear-themed restaurant.”

She did. And she’d set up bear statues right under my nose. Even the restaurant name had the word “bear” in it.

“She wanted to serve bear bread, so I made it according to Lady Ellelaura and my uncle’s guidance.”

So those two were the culprits.

“And that’s how the bear bread came to be?”

“Yes.”

“Isn’t this restaurant going to serve wealthy clientele and nobles?”

“There will be children too. I wanted to make something that would be exciting for the kids.”

“Uh, I don’t think that’s necessary. You can just serve regular bread. Right, everyone?”

“I think the bear bread is adorable. It’s an excellent choice.”

“Kids would like the bear bread.”

“I like bear bwead.”

I didn’t have a single ally on my side.

“I just feel like something is missing, though. I can’t put my finger on it,” Shyla said.

No, this seemed like more than enough to me. In fact, I was pretty sure it was too much.

“How about a bear drawing?” Noa said. I had no idea what she could possibly mean by that.

“What do you mean?”

“You don’t know, Yuna?”

“Know what?”

I looked to Fina for answers.

“I think she means *that*.”

According to Fina, the cakes were normally sold by the slice, but customers who bought a whole cake would get a special pastry thrown in as an extra. That bonus cake had a drawing of a bear on it. Apparently, Karin was drawing them.

“When did Karin learn how to draw?”

“I think that she learned when you were drawing things for the orphans.”

It was true—I always drew bears on cakes for the orphans whenever they had something to celebrate. Fina said Karin had seen one of the cakes and had come up with this idea.

“Yuna, please teach me how to do it.”

Shyla bowed her head to me and didn’t raise it again. She was clearly waiting for my answer. Unfortunately, drawing a bear for her would be a fate worse than death for me.

“Why not teach her, Yuna?” Noa looked at me. Fina and Shuri both seemed to agree too.

“Okay, but you can *only serve it to kids*.”

“Yes, ma’am!”

We decided that I’d draw a bear in whipped cream after we finished our meal.

I was truly doomed...

Chapter 9:
First Day of Shia's Academy Festival
Shia Chronicles

ANIMATE EXCLUSIVE STORY

"OKAY, EVERYTHING'S ready now."

We'd just finished setting up a booth at the academy festival.

"Hope we get some customers."

"We will. Especially when we're selling something so unusual. Everyone's going to be shocked when they see it."

"You're right. Plus, our taste testers all said it was good."

Cattleya, Timol, and Maricks, who were all setting up the booth with me, seemed confident about our business endeavors. We all had Yuna to thank for that. I had no idea how she knew how to make this kind of candy. All we needed was sugar and a machine.

We heated the center of the machine with a fire mana gem and filled a small hole at the center with sugar. Then we used a wind mana gem to rotate the center, which would create fluffy candy strands. That was all we needed to do. It was mystifying.

Now that we were done with all the preparations, we just needed to wait for the festival to start. The bell rang, signaling that the festival was beginning. Just then, I was reminded of something.

"Oh, sorry. I need to go get Yuna and the others."

I had promised to meet Yuna at the entrance to the academy.

"Leave this to us. You can just focus on meeting up with Yuna."

I left the booth to the group and headed to the academy's entrance. As I walked, I saw that a few people had already filtered into campus. Everyone looked like they were enjoying

themselves. Seeing them enjoying the festival made me happy too.

Once I got to the entrance, I found Noa there. Yuna was next to her trying to contend with a crowd of children who had surrounded her. Yuna always dresses as a bear, and because of that, the kids apparently thought that she was part of the festival.

I decided to help Yuna out and asked the kids to leave her alone. The kids looked disappointed, but I couldn't let them keep pestering Yuna. She could have worn regular clothes to the festival, but she never showed any intention of taking off the bear outfit.

I knew from taking baths with her that she was quite pretty. If she wore normal clothes, I was sure that she would get plenty of attention from the boys.

I led Yuna and the others to the booth. I thought that we might have already had some customers, but I didn't see any yet. I was sure that people would come eventually though, because what we were selling was tasty. Maybe that was naive of me.

According to Yuna, the issue was that we weren't advertising enough. She pointed out that even if our product tasted good, no one would eat it if they didn't know what it was. She thought for a bit, then used her magic to create a bear statue next to the stall. It was impressive, even taller than me. It wasn't easy making something that large using magic, I couldn't imagine a girl in a cute bear suit doing something like that. Then Yuna started to whisper to me.

"I'll have Fina and the others eat the cotton candy while you talk up the customers. Since it's new to them, offer people a sample even if it's just one bite," Yuna told me. Maricks made a batch of the cotton candy and we gave it to Noa and the others to eat.

Even though it was just supposed to be an act, they all seemed to really like the cotton candy. I started talking up our stall just like Yuna had told me to. That, combined with the girls

eating the cotton candy in front of the stall, started to attract the attention of passersby. Once we had some attention, I started handing out samples.

Since it was free, some people were interested. Their first taste of the cotton candy seemed to shock them. We were only handing out enough for one bite, so the candy melted right away, leaving only its sweet flavor behind.

After a taste, they wanted more. But I held strong and only let them have a bite. That way they would have to order some if they wanted to try more of it.

Once the first person made their order, others started piling on. That small trigger really lit a spark. Apparently, Yuna wasn't just a skilled adventurer, she knew how to be a merchant too. She really was amazing, despite how she looked.

After Yuna saw that the booth was getting customers, she took Noa and the others to go see the rest of the festival. I wanted to go with her, but Lady Teilia had already asked to show them around, so I left it to her. No one would mess with Yuna if Lady Teilia was around.

We kept up our advertising to make sure the customers kept flowing in. The kids would watch in wonder as Maricks made the cotton candy.

"Is that magic?"

We were weaving sugar into clouds, so it really did seem like magic.

Everyone seemed to be enjoying the cotton candy as they carried it around the festival on wooden sticks. The only issue was that if you ate too much of it, you couldn't get the taste out of your mouth. We worked with another stall that was selling drinks to help with that. We were selling *tons* of cotton candy.

Since people could eat the cotton candy as they strolled around, our customers became walking advertisements. People flocked to our stall, curious about the candy.

"This is it. It's this stall."

"They really do have a bear statue."

The people who heard about us would use the bear Yuna made to find us. It was easy to see, even from far away, so it was a helpful marker for where the stall was.

“Excuse me. I’d like a bear candy, please.”

Before we knew it, people also started calling it bear candy instead of cotton candy. At first it was only one or two people who did, but once other people heard it, the people behind them also started using the same phrase, starting a chain reaction.

When I talked to a friend who had visited the stall, she said the bear statue had the biggest effect. We kept getting more and more customers who had heard of us through word of mouth too.

“It might melt, so be careful.”

Things were going well for our cotton candy stall. The customers who were curious when they walked up were surprised whenever they tried a sample of the cotton candy. Another selling point was that customers could split it with their friends. I even saw some couples sharing one.

People would see others carrying the cotton candy, then show up to buy their own. Then they’d tell their friends about it, spreading word of our sweet treats. While we were busy selling oodles of cotton candy, two of our classmates came up to us.

“Shia, can you come over?”

“Also, what are you selling?”

“It’s a sweet treat called cotton candy. You’ll buy some, right?”

“If it doesn’t taste good, I’ll want my money back.”

“Fine by me. Maricks, two cotton candies please.”

I was confident they’d like the candy. Maricks made two orders and passed them off to me. Then I showed them how to eat it.

“What is this? It’s instantly melting in my mouth!”

“And my whole mouth tastes sweet now.”

The two of them seemed to be enjoying it.

“Shia, you’re friends with the girl who dresses as a bear, right?” one of them asked as they ate.

“Huh? What about her?”

I hadn’t expected them to ask me about Yuna.

“Someone saw you with her.”

“Yeah, I know her. Why do you ask?”

“Well, apparently, she’s been winning every single one of the prizes at the festival. She was at the knife throwing place and got the highest score. She took home the top hair ornament prize on the very first day.”

Oh, Yuna…

“But no one is talking to her, since she’s with Lady Teilia.”

“I saw her too.”

Another friend joined the conversation after hearing us talk.

“One of the upperclassmen is hosting the ball toss game.”

That was a game where you threw balls from a distance at students who were pretending to be monsters. Yuna hit the student who was farthest away, which meant she also got the grand prize.

“Who is that bear girl? Is she a student?”

“Right… She’s a friend, but I can’t tell you who exactly she is.”

I tried to play things off. I had no idea how much I was allowed to reveal about Yuna. Even though she wore clothes that stood out, she didn’t actually like attention.

As we were making more cotton candy, I kept hearing more chatter about Yuna. Apparently, the little girl with her had done some monster butchering. That must have been Fina. I’d heard she learned how to butcher monster carcasses by helping her father with his work.

It was difficult work. It wasn’t as though I didn’t have any experience myself, but I wasn’t any good at it. I could harvest a mana gem, but I didn’t know any other specifics about how to

butcher monsters correctly. According to someone else who'd been at the butchering session, the little girl was *really* good at it. And apparently, Yuna had also stood out because she was with Lady Teilia, who was royalty.

She'd also been seen eating exotic foods during lunch, which had sparked a race among the students to figure out where she'd found the food. It just never stopped.

More and more news about Yuna made its way to me. What was that girl doing?!

Chapter 10:
A Certain Newspaper Employee

EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL STORY

I'M LELAINA, a journalist for the academy's paper. I'm hoping to write an article about the academy festival.

At first, I attempted to ask Lady Teilia from the royal family to allow me to interview her, but she declined. I'd thought that an article about someone as beautiful and smart as Lady Teilia was sure to be a hit. Too bad. If I were to write about her without permission, there was a chance I would have drawn her ire, so I gave up on the thought before it cost me my life.

The day of the festival, I set out to explore it completely. Everyone looked like they were having the time of their lives, but I hadn't been able to find anything newsworthy.

While I was walking around on the hunt for anything remotely interesting, I caught word that people had seen a girl in a bear outfit around. A bear outfit? Did that mean she was wearing a bear *pelt*? Now that would be an interesting scoop.

I immediately set out to gather information about the girl in the bear outfit.

Eyewitness account: Small girl

"The bear? She was really soft and puffy."

"Hm? She was soft?"

I'd interviewed a little girl who said she knew about the bear girl, but I wasn't following what she was saying.

How could the bear girl be *soft*?

Eyewitness account: Female student running knife throwing booth

"Oh, you mean that girl in the bear outfit? She was certainly something."

“What do you mean by that?”

“So, this is off the record…” she said, then went on to dish. “Handling knives is difficult, and the three knives we’re using at the festival are all weighted differently. We prepped them to be that way so people throwing them the same way every time will have trouble hitting the target.”

“That sounds terrible.”

“It’s a game. It has to be challenging, since we have some people here who are really good at throwing knives. The bear girl threw all three knives at the furthest target. I was stunned. She won our special prize so early on the first day! Normally, we gradually adjust the knives to be better balanced and bring the target closer so things get steadily easier until someone wins the prize. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined the bear girl could hit the target at its furthest point using knives of different weights.”

So my intuition was right. The girl dressed as a bear was an expert knife thrower.

“What was the girl like?”

“She had a bear hood on, so I couldn’t see her face. But she was with Lady Teilia and some little girls.”

I still couldn’t get to the bottom of who this bear girl was, but now I knew she was associated with Lady Teilia and little kids. It seemed like her knife-throwing skills were high though.

I headed in the same direction the bear girl had been seen going. This was certainly turning out to be an interesting article.

Eyewitness account: Male student running monster target game

Next, I headed to a game where you threw balls at students who were dressed like monsters.

“A bear girl? She came by with Lady Teilia. And I think there were three little girls with her too.”

Just like my last tip. She really was hanging around Lady Teilia. If she and Lady Teilia had any relationship, whether as a

friend or as an acquaintance, things were bound to get interesting.

“What was the girl like?”

“In a word, amazing. We dress up as monsters to act as the targets, but we’re moving around so it’s pretty difficult to hit us. She’d throw the balls where we were headed, though. It was like she could predict where we’d be… On top of that, whenever we thought we dodged her, she’d already have her next throw ready to get us. The girls with her seemed normal though. Lady Teilia was with her too, so no one could talk to her.”

She was good at knife throwing—maybe she was just good at throwing things in general?

This article was really coming along.

Eyewitness account: Male student who watched the obstacle race

I heard she’d been part of the obstacle race, so I went to gather more info on that.

“She didn’t move like any human being I’ve seen. That outfit looked like it would’ve been hard to get around in, but she was quick on her feet and hopped right over the obstacles like they were nothing. She balanced on a really thin pole without breaking a sweat, scrambled up a slope in one go, and smashed all the records we only achieved after practicing the course multiple times. It was really awkward.”

Apparently, when they designed the obstacle course, they’d used their own highest scores as the standard for the prizes—but the bear girl easily broke their records and took the first prize. It seemed she was quite agile to boot.

Eyewitness account: Male student who participated in monster-butchering exhibition

“A bear girl? Yeah, she was here, but what really impressed me were the little girls she was with. They were so small, but they still managed to butcher those monsters. I was sure surprised. I feel like I’ve got more learning to do.”

While I was snooping after the bear girl, I was able to get my hands on some other scoops.

“So you’re saying that the bear girl didn’t do any butchering? It was the little girls?”

“Yeah, there was a bear girl with them, but she didn’t do anything. That little ten-year-old sure was something though. She had that wolf’s pelt off before I knew it. Watching her butcher it into individual cuts of meat was fascinating.”

The ten-year-old girl with the bear girl was a monster-butchering expert. I’d gotten my hands on a hot new scoop.

Eyewitness account: Female student who saw the bear eating lunch

“Sure, I saw her. When I went to grab something for lunch, I saw her with Lady Teilia. She was eating with her and some small kids, but I hadn’t seen any of the foods they were eating before. Lady Teilia looked like she was having fun. I do wonder who those little girls were though. The food looked so good, I wanted to try some, but I couldn’t find anything that looked like what they’d been eating anywhere.”

It appeared the bear girl had been enjoying a meal of foods unknown to us. I wish I could have included notes on what she’d eaten in the article, but no one knew any details.

I started to wonder who the bear girl and little girls were, if they were eating with Lady Teilia.

Eyewitness account: Female student who sold clothes

“There were some girls who came by with Lady Teilia. I remember them. I’ve never seen clothes with that kind of design before. I really wanted to take a closer look, but it seemed like she was Lady Teilia’s friend, so I couldn’t ask her something like that. I really wish I’d been able to get a up-close look at her bear clothes, so I could touch the fabric. Oh, her face? She wore a hood the whole time, so I never saw it.”

She hadn’t taken her bear clothes off even in the clothing store. What did it mean?

Even after hearing so many stories about her, I still didn't know much about the bear girl. I didn't even know whether she was a student at the academy.

Eyewitness account: Female student at the art booth

If she'd come here, then I was sure that I would be able to get a drawing of the bear girl.

"The bear girl? I remember her because Lady Teilia was there too. I was so nervous. The bear girl was very cute, but it seemed like she was embarrassed since she hid her face. I didn't get a good look at her."

"Do you think you could draw her for me?"

"Um, I think she looked something like this."

The student drew what she remembered.

"See, isn't she such a cute bear?"

The girl she drew for me really looked like a bear. But she wasn't like any bear I'd imagined, she was really cute. I'd been assuming she was wearing a bear pelt, but it seemed I'd been wrong.

I could see some of her face in the drawing, but I couldn't see it clearly. This was still huge progress. If I incorporated this drawing into the article, it was sure to draw attention.

After my interviews, I went around to other places and gathered more information. I must have missed the bear girl since I never saw her. The bell rang, marking the end of the first day of the festival.

I was able to discover where Lady Teilia had gone—she had headed to a booth with a bear statue. I decided to go have a look.

A bear?

When I headed to the booth, I found a cute bear statue there. Lady Teilia was there too. I worked up the courage to talk to her.

“Lady Teilia, I heard that you were with a girl dressed as a bear. Is that true?”

I showed her the drawing of the bear girl.

“Oh, you’re the person from a few days ago,” she said.

“I’m Lelaina, from the academy newspaper. I’m looking into the bear girl who appeared at the festival.”

“What do you want to know?”

I told her about everything I’d unearthed.

“Please don’t write any of that in the newspaper.”

Lady Teilia plucked the drawing of the bear girl from my hand, folded it up, and put it in her pocket.

“Hey…”

I reached for my drawing.

“Don’t write this article, all right?” Lady Teilia smiled.

Her smile was terrifying. I gave up, withdrawing my outstretched hands.

“Wh-why not?”

“She’s a very important friend to me and it would cause her problems if she were featured in the newspaper. If you do write about her, my father might even become involved.”

His Majesty… Was the bear girl that important? With Lady Teilia telling me all this, I really couldn’t write this article. But what would I write about instead?

“If you don’t have anything to write about, why not cover this stall?”

As I tried to figure out what to do, Lady Teilia pointed at the shop.

“Sorry for asking for this while you’re cleaning, Shia, but could you make one last order?” Lady Teilia said. Shia made me some candy that looked like cotton. I took a bite and, curiously, it was incredibly sweet.

I had my new scoop.



ILLUSTRATION GALLERY_


KUMA
KUMA
KUMA
BEAR
Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear
VOL.11

STORY

KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR 12



A BEAR IN A UNIFORM?!



On the second day of the festival, Yuna tours the exhibitions with Misa and Teilia. Thanks to Teilia, they're even able to watch a play from the comfort of seats reserved for royalty! Then, none other than the king, queen, and Princess Flora come to visit! At first, the king is cold toward Yuna because he doesn't recognize her in her school uniform. Yuna starts to worry about whether she's recognizable without her bear outfit…

THE BEAR V. THE KNIGHT CAPTAIN

Yuna and the gang go to watch mock battles between the academy's students and real knights. Unfortunately, the knight captain Lutum has a grudge against the Fochrosés over what happened with Gajurdo. When Lutum uses one of his knights to toy with a girl who wants to become one of Teilia's personal knights, Yuna loses her patience and Yuna challenges him to a battle. The girl's dream to become a knight, not to mention Shia and Noa's futures are all riding on Yuna's bear sword skills!



EVERYONE MAKES BATHING SUITS!

Yuna takes a break after coming back home from the capital, then has the idea to take all her employees out on a retreat. She preps for a one-week vacation and invites the orphans, Anz and her workers, Tiermina's family, and everyone else who works for her to Mileela. Yuna asks Sherry to make swimsuits for everyone so they can enjoy themselves to the fullest! Noa and Sherry confer over swimsuit designs. Yuna leaves the matter to them so she can slip away, but what kind of swimsuits will the employees end up with?!

A SPECIAL REQUEST FROM THE KING

The king summons Yuna. Apparently, he needs her kraken water gem. Yuna is recognized on sight and strides right into the castle. When Yuna gets to the king, he immediately asks her for a favor?! The desert town of Dezelt is in crisis as they face a water shortage. To make matters worse, circumstances have prevented the king from acting himself…so he sends Yuna off on a secret desert mission!

Chapter 11:
Academy Festival
Senia Chronicles

WONDERGOOD BONUS STORY

"OKAY, WE'RE HEADING off now."

"See you later."

Jade and Mel headed off to help out at the butchering booth at the academy festival. The students had all sorts of exhibits at the festival, from food stalls to events that attendees could participate in, to shows the students were putting on. There were a wide variety of shows, including stuff like sword demonstrations, magic, concerts, and plays.

One of the booths focused on butchering monster and animal carcasses, and Jade and Mel were helping out with it. Yesterday, Yuna, the girl who always dressed as a cute bear, had apparently stopped by. We'd actually teamed up with her before to slay golems in the mines. Even though she looked cute, she was strong.

I'd heard all sorts of rumors about her in Crimonia, like that she'd defeated a black viper and even a goblin king all on her own. I also knew for a fact it was all true, since I'd seen her fight a golem the rest of us couldn't defeat in the mines.

She came in a small package, but that didn't make her any less powerful. Since I was small too, it kind of made me happy, but I also couldn't help but feel a little jealous.

A little while after Jade and Mel left, I talked to Toya, who had stayed behind.

"Toya, I'm heading out. What do you want to do?"

"I'm going too, duh."

We got ready to leave for the festival. I mean, we were already here, after all. It'd be a waste to miss out.

Toya seemed to be enjoying himself when we got to the academy. Sometimes people need a break. Being an adventurer means being in danger. We could die at any moment, so we had to live without leaving regrets.

“Doesn’t that look fun, Senia?”

I slowly followed Toya, who had taken off running toward the knife-throwing booth. It seemed like you could earn points by throwing three knives at targets to win prizes. I looked over at the prizes. They were women’s hair ornaments. That explained why there were so many couples around.

“Want me to win one for you?”

“No thanks. Besides, there’s no way you could win the prize in the first place.”

I’d seen Toya throw knives before, and to be blunt, he was awful at it. He was much better suited to sword fighting. Plus, if Toya won me a prize, then the people around would get the wrong idea about us. No thank you.

He ignored me and lined up to take a turn at the knife throwing. I was a little hesitant over adventurers like us participating in a student event, but it seemed like that wasn’t going to be an issue. Actually, the audience seemed even more excited when Toya joined in. The event had a large audience too. It’d take a lot of courage for an adventurer to participate in an event like this. All of the people watching would probably think that an adventurer could hit the target. It’d be embarrassing to miss.

I looked over at the prizes. There were a lot. All the top prizes were beautiful. I looked over at the spot with the largest, most beautiful hair ornament. I saw a label that said it was the “bear level” prize.

“Bear level? What’s that supposed to mean?”

I didn’t get it. While I was puzzling over the prizes, Toya went up for his turn. He seemed confident, but he messed up, just like I’d expected. Not a single knife hit a target. And of course, he had to aim for the one farthest away. He didn’t use throwing knives regularly, so I had no idea where he got his confidence from.

I started to hear mutters around the crowd. “I thought he was an adventurer?” “Guess not.” I simply couldn’t let them go on believing Toya represented all adventurers, so I stepped up to take a turn too.

“Here are your knives. Give it your best shot.”

The moment I took the three knives from the student, I realized each one was a different weight. I had no idea whether it was purposeful or whether it was because they’d collected whatever knives they could, but a little issue like that wouldn’t affect me, since I used throwing knives regularly.

I got into position and threw a knife at the furthest target, the one that Toya had missed. Bull’s-eye. No problem. I hit the target with the other two knives too. The spectating students all cheered.

“Whoa.”

“Wow. That guy sucked, but this lady is amazing.”

I wished they wouldn’t lump me in with Toya.

I got a prize, but it was one rank below the bear level prize. Apparently, earning that prize was hard. I was still satisfied with what I had, though. It would probably look good on Mel. I made a mental note to give it to her later.

After that, we headed to the stalls because we heard the festival had some newfangled dessert. Apparently, we’d be able to spot the place easily given that it was marked with a gigantic bear statue. So there was a bear here too, huh… Maybe bears were just really popular at the academy?

“Think it’s that one?”

Toya pointed ahead at an adorable bear statue.

“That looks sort of familiar.”

I agreed. But then I remembered something.

“It’s the same as Yuna’s shops in Crimonia.”

“Oh, right. She has the same statues at her businesses. Think she’s responsible for this stall?”

We looked around but couldn't find Yuna. Maybe someone had copied her design?

Regardless, we'd found the stall, so we decided to get something to eat. The stall was making this white, fluffy, cottony-looking candy stuff. When I looked around, I saw people tearing bits of it off. It looked tasty. I was very curious to try it.

Toya and I placed our orders. One of the female students picked up a stick and started wrapping the white floss coming out of the machine around it. It steadily grew larger until it looked just like a wad of cotton.

"That is so weird," Toya murmured.

It really did look strange. When they finished making the treat, it was about as big as a person's head.

"There, all done. You should eat it quickly, since it'll melt over time."

I heeded the student's warning and took the treat. Like the people around me, I tore a piece off and popped it into my mouth. It instantly melted.

"It's sweet. It has an interesting texture too."

"Yeah, it's a really weird dessert."

Another student handed Toya his treat, and he had already started to dig in.

"It really is sweet."

I understood why it was so sweet, the treat seemed to be made of pure sugar. I still couldn't get my head around how they'd turned the sugar into floss. The person who came up with it had my appreciation.

In the afternoon, we visited Jade and Mel at work.

Wow, there were way more people around than I expected. All the students looked nervous as they did their butchering work.

When Mel had a free moment, I asked her whether butchering work was normally this popular.

“Apparently, there’s a rumor that a cute little girl was teaching butchering classes. The people who heard all rushed over. I recognize some participants from yesterday too.”

“Are you talking about the girl who was with Yuna yesterday?”

“She was a natural teacher, but I also think the fact that she was a little girl also made people believe they could be an expert butcher if she could do it too.”

I could understand that. When a kid younger than you was working hard to do something, you couldn’t help but want to cheer them on. At the same time, you didn’t want to let them show you up either.

“Why don’t you just ask her to teach everyone?”

“I’m afraid we can’t. She’s here to enjoy the festival with Yuna. She was with her friends and little sister too. It wouldn’t be right to ask her to help with this. After all, this is our job.”

Mel was right. This was our job to do.

Everyone was working hard, so Toya and I headed off to watch the student concert and play. They were really good for students. I wished Mel could be there to watch too.

The third day of the festival, Toya and I were working instead, so Jade and Mel could take their turn exploring.

Chapter 12:
A Certain Academy Festival Committee Member

TORANOANA EXCLUSIVE STORY

I'M ON THE COMMITTEE that runs the academy festival. Several students from each year are members, and we're responsible for making sure the festival goes off without a hitch.

The students were hosting all sorts of events for the festival. Some would sell things that they had made themselves, others would use them as prizes. The students who were good at sword fighting or magic could show off their skills too. Also, in order to motivate the students a bit more, there would be a popularity poll and a small prize from the academy.

The exhibits that normally used the school grounds would get first priority selecting their space. Similarly, the gymnasium was earmarked for the students who normally used it. Those with food stalls would receive meal tickets and ingredients from the academy. If they were selling general goods, they would get a set budget to use at the stores for supplies. Those making clothes would receive fabric instead of money or materials and some limited funds if they were making hair ornaments or bracelets.

Even with the limitations, the students were excited for the festival year after year.

Once the first day of the festival was over, the committee divided up the work of gathering all the votes for the popularity poll from the boxes we had set up around the campus. We had the boxes set up all around campus and were collecting the votes on a daily basis. The attendees would get voting sheets when they entered and could write in the number of the exhibit they liked best.

In the past, multiple groups put on the same exhibit, and since we couldn't tell the difference between them during votes, we started assigning numbers to each exhibit. This also helped any students who were still learning how to write. We allowed

each person to write three numbers total on each voting slip, so people could vote for the same booth three times if they wanted.

I came into the room with the voting slips I'd collected, and saw some committee members already at the table with their slips spread out.

"President, I've collected mine."

"Thank you. We don't have much time, so please get started on counting the votes we already have."

The committee president was counting even while talking to me.

I set the slips I'd collected on the desk. There were a lot, it seemed like this was going to be a big job. I pulled out one vote and set it on the table. I saw some numbers written on the first line. I needed to double-check the number written in for each line. It was a lot of work, but there was a grid for each tens space, which made the numbers easier to count.

I tallied them: 35, 22, 101, 5, 66, 22, bear.

I was expecting to work with just numbers, but something else entirely had shown up on a vote.

"Bear?!"

"Oh, I've got some of those too."

"Me too."

I'd apparently said that out loud. All the other students who were counting pulled out their slips that had the word "bear" written in. The president had told us to pull out the votes for "bear" so we could deal with them later.

After we finished counting for the first day, we kept getting written-in votes for things other than numbers. A lot of them had the word "bear" written on them. Like, a *lot* of them...

"Why do they keep writing in 'bear'?"

"I'm not sure."

Normally, we would toss any votes that weren't numbers, but when we saw that some of the votes had been written by

little kids, it was harder to throw the votes out.

We decided to pause for the time being and investigate the boxes that had gotten write-in votes for “bear.”

The next day, I saw some classmates and asked them if they’d seen anything to do with a bear.

“A bear?”

“Yeah, have you seen any exhibits with bears? We had a lot of write-in votes for bear, so we’re trying to figure out what those are for.”

“Actually, I saw that Shia’s stall had a bear statue in front of it.”

“Shia’s stall?”

Shia was another classmate. She came from the nobility, but she never rubbed her status in our faces. The first time I’d talked to her and tried to call her Lady Shia, she’d told me I didn’t need to use an honorific. Ever since, I’d called her Shia.

“Shia’s group was selling candy, weren’t they?”

“That’s right. I’ve never seen anything like it before. It’s sweet and fluffy.”

Come to think of it, I’d heard about Shia’s booth from other classmates too. I’d been thinking of paying them a visit, but I was so busy with committee work that I hadn’t managed to go.

I pulled out a map of campus and went around checking the boxes where the bear votes had come from yesterday. I found some votes for bear in the box near Shia’s stall. I decided to go check it out.

“Does Shia’s stall really have a bear statue?”

“Yeah. It’s really big and cute.”

I headed over to the stall.

I really did find a bear statue right next to the stall, just like my friend had told me I would. The bear also had something in its hands. I wondered what it was. There were a lot of customers there, clearly the stall was doing well.

Once I took a look around, I understood what the bear was holding. It had whatever it was they were selling at the stall. People were holding these sticks that had some white cotton-like stuff on the ends. The bear statue was holding one too.

“I’d like a bear candy please,” a kid energetically ordered. I saw Shia and Maricks there.

Maybe this was what people meant when they wrote bear as their vote? After the line died down a bit, I talked to Shia.

“Shia!”

“Milly, what is it? You didn’t come here to help, did you?”

“No, I’m here working as a committee member.”

I explained to her that I’d come by because of the bear votes and the bear statue.

“A bear…”

Shia seemed to fall deep into thought when she heard that word.

“Did you only find bear votes at the voting box near us?”

“No. It’s odd, we found them in lots of places. I would have understood it if all the votes came from one place, but we’re finding them everywhere. That’s why I’m looking into it.”

“Do you have a map with all the exhibits?”

I showed Shia the map. The map showed where each exhibit was and a description of what they were doing. I had also circled each box where we had found bear votes. The ones that had gotten a lot of votes were circled twice. The box near the bear candy stall only had one circle. There were quite a few votes, but it didn’t compare to the places on the map that had gotten the most bear votes.

Shia talked as she looked at the map.

“The bear votes might not be talking about our stall’s bear.”

“What do you mean?” I asked. Shia seemed hesitant to tell me.

Apparently, there was a girl dressed as a bear at the academy yesterday.

“Was she part of some sort of exhibit? I don’t remember there being one involving a bear outfit.”

Shia looked conflicted when I said that. She wouldn’t tell me any details, but she pointed out the places that the bear girl had probably gone to.

“I think if you go to those places, you might be able to get more information. I don’t think you’ll get any bear votes today.”

That almost sounded like a prophecy.

For the time being, I headed over to the places Shia had pointed out. Then I asked about the girl dressed as a bear, just like Shia had suggested. I started to feel like I understood what she was trying to tell me. The girl in the bear outfit had participated in lots of exhibits and had taken all the best prizes. People must have voted for her.

Before long, the second day of the festival ended. I reported my findings back to the president. The other committee members had heard about the bear girl too. We decided to tabulate votes from the second and third days before making a decision. But just as Shia had predicted, the bear girl hadn’t returned to the festival after that the first day. We only got a few more bear votes. Those probably were about the bear statue at Shia’s stall.

We decided to throw out all the bear votes from the first day.

Chapter 13:
The Worried Princess
Teilia Chronicles

TSUTAYA EXCLUSIVE STORY

THINGS WERE NOT going well.

I would have understood if the stakes had been lower, but Lutum and Ellelaura had wagered their occupations against each other. Lutum believed only men could be knights, and regarded women who attempted to achieve knighthood coldly. He seemed to look down upon female knights.

They each selected a champion. Lutum picked one of his own knights, and Ellelaura selected Yuna. I could not ascertain why Yuna would fight as a representative of all lady knights, but it seemed she was quite upset with Lutum. Assuming she could win her match against Lutum's knight, she requested that Father allow her to challenge Lutum himself—and that if she were to win, Father must reconsider how female knights are treated.

Father thought for a bit and accepted Yuna's request.

"What is she thinking?"

Father let out a small sigh as he watched Yuna. I felt much the same. What in the world was Yuna thinking?

"Why didn't you stop them, Father? A match against a knight will put Yuna in danger. She's just a girl."

Father could have stopped it, but made no move to do so.

"Yuna herself asked for the match. I can't stop it, considering the situation."

"Flora will be beside herself if Yuna gets injured."

Flora always spoke about Yuna with such excitement. Yuna was such a kind girl. She would bring food, stuffed animals, and even cute picture books for Flora. My sister would be so very forlorn if she learned that Yuna had been hurt.

“You may be right, but you saw the look on Yuna’s face. She hasn’t even considered the possibility of losing. She will defeat the knight and she intends to defeat Lutum as well.”

It was true, she hadn’t seemed intimidated or frightened at all. She appeared so aloof, I could hardly imagine that she was about to fight a knight. Any normal girl would be scared, but Yuna hadn’t looked frightened at all.

Shia had told me that Yuna was powerful enough to defeat a black tiger, but that had been difficult to believe considering her adorable appearance. Perhaps Father knew more about her, as he had known her for longer.

“Did you know about the black tiger, Father?”

“Yes, Ellelaura told me everything. It sounds absurd, but that isn’t the only story I’ve heard about Yuna.”

Father implied there was more to her than meets the eye. He seemed to know something about her I did not. Still, I couldn’t help but worry.

“Don’t fret. If things get dangerous, I’ll put a stop to it. That bear won’t allow herself to be defeated so easily.”

Father, she isn’t dressed as a bear right now.

Despite my misgivings, the match between Yuna and the knight began.

A scene I could hardly believe played out before my very eyes. Yuna and the knight were on par with each other in the fight. It was evident even to a layperson such as myself that the knight was not holding back. Each of his successive blows was quick and sharp. But Yuna fended them all off without fail.

“That’s amazing. She never loses her balance, despite evading his blows. I was aware her magical talents were exceptional, but I had no idea her swordplay was as well,” Father said.

This was beyond amazing. What Yuna was accomplishing was no easy feat. This was Yuna’s true power. This must have been why Ellelaura had believed in her, going as far as to stake her own position on Yuna.

“Wow.”

“Why isn’t she using magic?”

“Is she trying to match her opponent?”

Based upon what Shia had told me, Yuna was skilled at magic. Even though she wasn’t using her magic, she was still matching the knight’s level. They both maneuvered themselves skillfully. Yuna parried the knight, and he lost his balance. She attacked him with her sword this time.

Yuna had won, or so I thought. The knight suddenly grabbed her and threw her. I heard yells break out among the spectators. Yuna somehow landed beautifully on both feet and began to run toward the knight. He was off-balance. I thought the two of them would simply continue to exchange blows, but Yuna tossed the knight aside instead. I couldn’t believe it, but Yuna had won.

Now she had to fight Lutum. Though Lutum was only a captain because he was a noble, he was powerful in his own right. I wasn’t sure whether Yuna could win against him.

“It looks like they plan to start the match after a short break.”

“Father, Yuna only just fought. Even with a break, she would be at a disadvantage if she were to fight Lutum right now. Please allow her to fight him on another day.”

She must have been exhausted. Since her opponent would be fully rested, Yuna was at a disadvantage.

“Yuna requested this herself.”

“I suppose that’s true…”

I couldn’t deny that Yuna had asked for all of this. And my father, the king, had allowed it. I understood that this wasn’t a simple matter where he could stop the match. But I couldn’t stay silent either.

“Father, who is Yuna, really?”

To me, she was just a girl who dressed as a bear—a kind person who made bear stuffed animals, brought delicious food to people, and helped children. But according to Shia, she was a powerful adventurer too.

“I don’t know much about her. But what I do know is that she’s stronger than she looks. I wouldn’t dare start a fight with her.”

“Did you think Yuna would win from the start?”

“I believed she would fight on the same level as the knights, which would make people view women who want to join the chivalry slightly more favorably. Although, it seems like that will be decided by how her match with Lutum goes.”

“Is that why you approved the match?”

“If female knights are to be acknowledged, then we need proof women are powerful too.”

“Even so…”

“I know. As I said before, if it seems dangerous, I will put a stop to the match.”

Father promised me.

After the break, Yuna and Lutum began their match.

Yuna, showing no sign of fatigue from her previous match, was fighting on the same level as Lutum. Everyone silently watched their match as Yuna parried Lutum’s blows, taking each in stride. From my vantage point far away, I noticed Lutum’s right hand.

He was using magic.

“Yuna!”

I thought that the magical blow had hit Yuna, but she was able to evade it in time.

“That was close.”

“I thought he got her,” I said.

I felt relieved. I assumed the match would continue, but Yuna shouted something. Apparently, she was under the impression that the use of magic was against the rules.

“It seems she thought she wasn’t allowed to use magic.”

Ellelaura explained to her that magic was allowed, which Yuna reluctantly accepted. The match resumed.

I hardly had been able to believe the previous match, but now both combatants were able to freely use magic. Lutum was sturdy, while Yuna was nimbler. This made their fighting strategies entirely different. The entire fight was a sight to behold.

“Yuna is smiling. Lutum is too.”

It was true. They both seemed to be enjoying the match, even as Yuna was being cornered by Lutum’s magic. She suddenly made a break for it.

Get away!

Though she attempted to escape Lutum, he pressured her with magic as he pursued her. He was gaining on her. Lutum raised his sword, in an attempt to keep Yuna’s movements in check. The moment I thought Lutum was about to land a strike on Yuna, something appeared before her and Lutum’s sword was repelled. In the next moment, Yuna’s blade was at Lutum’s neck.

It had all happened in an instant. A short silence followed, which transformed into a great cheer.

“Yuna won…?”

“Yes, indeed she did.”

I looked toward Father, who smiled as though he had witnessed the impossible. He declared Lutum’s defeat. I was overjoyed.

Yuna said something to Lutum, then punched him. He rolled away from her and suddenly everything was silent.

Wh-what in the world was Yuna doing?!

Chapter 14:
Cleaning Up after the Academy Festival
Shia Chronicles

BOOKSTORE COLLABORATION EXCLUSIVE STORY

THE ACADEMY FESTIVAL was over, and it was now our clean-up day. The festival was only three days long, but so many things had happened.

The first day, our cotton candy booth had been novel and popular. The candy had sold so well thanks to the bear statue Yuna had put next to the stall. It was a great advertisement, since it was holding cotton candy and also large enough that it attracted attention. We ended up selling so much that none of us had been able to leave the stall.

After the first day, we called some friends who were free to have them help us out. We had to agree to treat them to a meal to pay them back, but since it would give us the opportunity to experience the festival, it was worth it.

Since we had help, the second day went smoothly. We still had the bear statue, and people had already bought from our stall on the first day, so from the morning on, sales were steady. That is, until Lady Teilia showed up…

She arrived a little late. She had volunteered to help us in exchange for introducing her to Yuna. I was going to refuse at first, but she kept pushing so we let her help us with advertising the stall.

“All right, I can do that.”

She seemed motivated to help, and walked around the booth to ask people to try our cotton candy.

“We have a marvelous new dessert that’s sweet and fluffy, with an intriguing texture.”

As Lady Teilia gave her spiel, complete with her winning smile, men and women alike came by. She was a natural. We received order after order of cotton candy. Maricks and I had to

keep the two machines we'd borrowed from Yuna going at full speed. No matter how much we made, the line never seemed to end. In fact, it seemed to be growing.

As we worked hard, I heard Lady Teilia calling out, "We have a marvelous new dessert that's sweet, fluffy, and has a novel and exciting texture."

Whenever she spoke, the line grew. Maricks and I were in the weeds, and it seemed like Timol and the rest of our friends were having a hard time controlling the line too.

"Shia, this is getting out of hand," Maricks remarked while he kept making candy.

"Yeah, it is. We should probably tell Lady Teilia to give it a rest," I said, preparing orders nonstop.

"Shia, you go stop her."

"Why me?!"

"You asked her to help in the first place."

I hadn't *actually* asked her though. Lady Teilia herself offered to help in exchange for meeting Yuna. I didn't turn her down though, so I guess it was my responsibility.

"Okay, okay. Timol!" I yelled for him.

"What?!"

I saw Timol's head poke out of the crowd.

"Cover my station, Timol. I'm going to talk to Lady Teilia."

Timol understood immediately and took my place making the cotton candy. Then I headed to Lady Teilia.

"We have a marvelous new dessert that's sweet, fluffy, and has a novel and exciting texture."

Whenever Lady Teilia spoke to someone, they would stop, see her smile, and join the line. If I didn't hurry to stop her, we'd be in huge trouble. I called out to her as she kept advertising our cotton candy.

"Lady Teilia, may I have a moment?"

"What is it?"

She turned around, her bright smile on full display. Anyone would stop in their tracks and buy whatever she was offering if they saw her face. I took her hand and brought her around to the back of the stand.

“What is it, Shia?”

I steadied my breathing and faced Lady Teilia to thank her.

“Thank you so very much for your help today.”

She seemed confused.

“Whatever do you mean? We’ve only just started.”

We’d already gotten into this situation, and Lady Teilia had barely done anything. Her effect as a princess was even greater than I’d expected. We couldn’t receive any more of her help.

“Um, you don’t need to help anymore. Thanks to you, we’ve been able to gather plenty of customers.”

I looked over at the line of people waiting for cotton candy. There were even more people than I’d expected. We’d get complaints from the other stands at this rate.

Lady Teilia also looked at the line.

“But I hardly helped.”

“Even that was more than enough.”

“In that case, allow me to help make the candy.”

“It’s very difficult to make.”

If Lady Teilia made the cotton candy, we would have even more trouble. I was terrified to even imagine it. I tried to convince her that she’d helped enough. She pouted at me, unconvinced. She stayed behind the stall and refused to look me in the eye. She couldn’t be acting this way, but we also couldn’t risk letting her keep helping us.

I had no idea what to do, but as I was serving customers, Yuna came by with food for us all. She asked if Lady Teilia was still around. Maybe she could do something to cheer her up? I told her Lady Teilia was behind the stall.

This was an opportunity. I suggested that Lady Teilia and Yuna could go around the festival together. She seemed

reluctant at first, but thanks to Yuna and the others' urging, Lady Teilia was smiling again as she headed out with the group.

Thanks to Lady Teilia, our sales on the second day were very good.

Then the third day came.

That day actually ended up being the most troublesome for us. My friend Linea was almost injured because the subject of engagement talks was raised for me, then Mother put her job on the line betting on a match between a knight and Yuna. Mother said the worst that could happen was that she would return to Crimonia if she lost, but that still meant that I would be left all alone in the capital.

The anxiety weighed heavily on me. I knew Yuna was powerful, but she was fighting against a knight. Fortunately, Yuna won her match against the knight and the knight captain, protecting Mother and saving me from having to marry someone I didn't want to in one fell swoop.

I was so happy. I wanted to thank Yuna, but she was whisked away by Mother and His Majesty, so I didn't get the chance. Yuna was just as cool as when she'd defeated the black tiger. I could see why Noa looked up to her.

And so the third day of the festival came to an end.

Suddenly, it was the day after the festival. The best exhibits were announced, and we ended up getting third place for best food exhibit. Maricks seemed disappointed, but what else could we have done?

After the announcements was cleanup.

"What do we do with this bear?"

We looked at the bear statue next to our stall. It had helped us a ton these past three days. Some merchants were going to help disassemble the stalls, so we didn't have to worry about our booth. But we still needed to do something about the bear Yuna had made.

"What do we do?"

“Obviously, we’ve got to break it.”

“Seems like such a waste.”

“Especially since it’s so cute.”

No one actually wanted to demolish the bear statue, but we couldn’t leave it here either.

“Maricks, you do it.”

“Me?!”

“Stab it with your sword or something.”

“I think Yuna would kill me if I did that. Why a sword? Shia could use magic.”

In the end, none of us wanted to do it ourselves, so we decided to split the job and demolish the statue together. It was a pretty melancholy moment.

And just like that, the festival was truly over.

Chapter 15:
Post-Academy Festival Banquet
Teilia Chronicles

EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL BONUS

AT THE FESTIVAL, I met Yuna, the girl who dresses as a bear (her bear outfit was different from what I imagined); helped at Shia's stall (though I wasn't much help); and watched the duel between Yuna and Lutum (which had me very worried). It was really busy, but a lot of fun nonetheless.

Today, all the people who had helped Shia's group with their stall were meeting up for a meal. I hadn't helped much, so I'd planned to turn down the invitation, but Shia told me I had done my fair share. I couldn't say no at that point, so I decided to attend.

It seemed like Yuna was connected to the restaurant in some way, so I was excited to see what it would be like.

I had some work at the castle to attend to, which meant I had to leave a bit later than anticipated. I quickly made my way to the carriage Father arranged for me. He had prepared it after hearing about the event.

"I'm sorry I'm late. Thank you for driving me."

I greeted the man waiting in front of the carriage. When he saw me, he shot me an odd look before opening the carriage door. What was that about?

Though I thought it odd, I boarded the carriage anyway.

"You're late."

I had assumed the carriage would be empty, so I was shocked to hear someone address me from inside of it.

"Father!"

Father was there in the carriage, watching me from his seat.

"What are you doing here, Father?"

“I’m inspecting the restaurant.”

“Whatever do you mean? Does the rest of the family know you’re doing this?”

Father avoided my gaze. Apparently, he hadn’t told anyone else.

“Shirking our duties, are we?”

“Inspections are part of my duties.”

“I don’t think that a restaurant inspection should be of concern to you, Father.”

My father was the king. A simple restaurant inspection should have been much too trifling for him to bother with. He had a sizable amount of work that was much more pressing.

“Furthermore, why have you saved the inspection for today? You knew that was when I was going.”

Father had been the one to prepare the carriage for me, after all.

“I’d like to meet your school friends.”

“Please don’t. It’s embarrassing.”

“Are you embarrassed that the king is your father?”

“No, it’s not that. It’s embarrassing to have a parent come to a gathering of my schoolmates.”

What kind of king would attend a gathering of his daughter’s friends?

“You’re simply using this all as an excuse to shirk your duties, aren’t you? Brother and Ellelaura will both scold you.”

“As I said, this is an inspection. Get a move on, then!”

Father addressed the driver, who acknowledged him and set the carriage moving. I didn’t have an opportunity to put a stop to it. Even if I had, Father would always be able to override me. He was the king, after all. The carriage driver couldn’t disobey him.

I let out a small sigh and gave up. We were already late, but if I continued my conversation with Father, the banquet would be over by the time I arrived.

“Please just don’t get in the way, father.”

“I know, I know.”

Father had a triumphant look on his face. Somehow, I felt chagrined.

The carriage continued on until it came to a halt. The driver opened the door for us, and Father and I disembarked together.

In front of the restaurant, I saw two charming bear statues, one holding a spoon and the other a fork. I had heard that the restaurant boasted bear statues because it had ties to Yuna. It seemed what I had heard was true.

“We’ll be too conspicuous if we stay outside for long. Let’s go inside.”

I did see some people looking at us, though it was likely Father who was attracting all the attention. He was right, however. If we stood outside, we would be conspicuous, but it was Father’s fault. Had he not accompanied me, I would have blended in.

I sighed for the umpteenth time and entered the restaurant.

“Father, I’ve asked you several times not to cause any trouble.”

“I know. Once I inspect the restaurant, I’ll leave.”

When we entered, Shia and the others froze, seeing Father there with me. It’s a bit odd of me to say this as a princess, but a king did not belong in a restaurant full of students.

“Easy now,” Father said. “I’m just here to inspect the restaurant.”

“You’re just using me as an excuse to get out of work, more like.”

“Quiet now, you’ll ruin my dignified reputation.”

Father turned to inspect the bear figurines. It seemed the bears were present not only outside the restaurant but inside as well.

“Looks like Ellelaura really did have all those bear statues made.”

From what I had heard, Ellelaura had wanted to imitate Yuna’s shops in Crimonia, which also had bear statues…

I very much wished to see Yuna’s shops in Crimonia for myself someday.

Father sat a distance away from us and ordered his meal. The chef was rather surprised to see him. If I remembered correctly, the chef was related to Zelef. That must have been why Father trusted her with his food, though I hadn’t expected him to actually eat here.

“Once you’ve eaten, please return home,” I told him.

“All right, all right. I won’t get in the way of your fun.”

Of course, Father was in the way simply by being present. All of my normally merry classmates were quietly eating their food. I felt so sorry for them. I should have prevented Father from coming, even if it had meant I couldn’t join them.

Father seemed to be entirely oblivious of my mood as he ate. My classmates wouldn’t dare speak in my father’s presence. Perhaps it would be best if I proposed that we go home. Unfortunately, it seemed to be my only option. I’d been the one to bring him here, after all.

Just as I was about to rise from my seat, a goddess came to my rescue.

“Your Majesty!”

Ellelaura had arrived.

“What are you doing here, Ellelaura?”

Father seemed taken aback, but I wasn’t surprised that she knew where he had run off to.

“You have work. We need you back at the castle.”

“Seems to me the pot is calling the kettle black.”

Yes, anyone who knew Ellelaura would agree.

“Without your presence, all the work falls to me. And for whatever reason, everyone has been asking me for your

whereabouts.”

It was probably because they both made a habit of avoiding their work.

“I have the carriage ready for you,” Ellelaura said, ushering Father away.

She looked in our direction before leaving.

“I’m so sorry, everyone. I’ll be off with the king, so please take your time enjoying your meal.”

After that, Ellelaura whisked Father away from the restaurant. She glanced in Shia’s direction before leaving. Maybe she had come to retrieve Father because she knew her daughter was here. She was such a good mother.

Once the two were out of sight, everyone relaxed and began to talk.

“I never expected His Majesty to come here.”

“I’m so sorry about Father. I couldn’t stop him.”

“No, it’s not your fault, Lady Teilia.”

I felt a little better when they said that.

“Shia’s mom is amazing.”

“Lady Ellelaura is so cool.”

“She’s so young and pretty too.”

Everyone began to praise Ellelaura, but Shia was having none of it.

“She’s not that cool.”

I disagreed. Very few could usher Father away like that.

I was so very glad that Yuna won her match against Lutum.

Now that Father was gone, the tension in the room had disappeared. Everyone began to talk excitedly as they ate the delicious food.

I felt grateful toward Ellelaura. Father really had put a damper on things.

Chapter 16:
The Melancholy of Cliff

ANIMATE EXCLUSIVE STORY

IT HAD ALREADY BEEN several days since my daughter Noa left for the capital to go to the academy festival. The house felt somewhat emptier without her cheerful voice. However, the festival had ended, and I knew she would be home soon.

"Father, I'm home."

Noa had returned from the capital.

"Did you have fun?" I asked.

"Yes, so very much fun."

Noa blessed me with a full smile. She had very few opportunities to see her mother or her sister, Shia. That was the reason I sent her to the capital whenever an opportunity presented itself.

"So, there were no problems?"

In particular, I was talking about the bear who always seemed to be at the center of everything. She was powerful all right, but the way she dressed as a bear brought trouble.

"Um..."

Noa seemed unsure how to respond.

"Did something happen? Was it that bear?"

"This time it wasn't Yuna. I think Mother wrote what happened in her letter."

"Ellelaura sent a letter?"

Noa summarily produced a letter. I took it from her and started to read.

My wife detailed an account of Lord Lutum's attempt to propose marriage for our daughters. Lord Lutum had asked for Shia's hand in the past, but I had heard from Ellelaura that she

had already rejected him. Of course, I would never allow his family to marry either of my daughters.

However, Lord Lutum ran into them at the festival. This time, he had asked about Noa. He then used my wife's rejection as a pretense to torment one of Shia's friends during the knights' practice. It seemed his aim all along was to show that female knights were weak, instead of making good on his threat of marriage.

Shia was going to take her friend's place in the duel to protect her, but Yuna evidently said she would duel instead. According to the letter, the duel then escalated into a bet between Ellelaura and Lord Lutum with both of their careers on the line.

"How did this escalate so fast?"

I had a migraine.

In the end, Yuna not only bested Lutum's knight, but also Lord Lutum himself. I could imagine Ellelaura writing the letter with glee.

"Yuna was so very gallant."

When I asked Noa to tell me more details of the duels, she excitedly told me about Yuna. In other words, we were even more indebted to that blasted bear. There was the matter at the orphanage, the ten thousand monsters, Mileela, and albeit indirectly, the terrible incident at Misa's birthday party. It seemed we were fated to continue accruing debts to that bear girl.

I was at least doing my part to protect Yuna's businesses and the orphanage, but that didn't mean that I'd paid back what she was due. She was a well-known adventurer, and that was enough to prevent anyone from disrupting her places of business. Plus, because Yuna also had done so much for the Merchant Guild, her businesses were under their protection as well. It seemed even His Majesty was ingratiated to Yuna. The entire kingdom was becoming more and more indebted to a bear.

For the time being, I really needed to thank her. I asked Noa to let me know the next time Yuna would be visiting our house.

She arrived shortly. It seemed Yuna wanted to invite Noa to a picnic she was having nearby.

“Yuna, you were of great help in the capital. I must thank you.”

“You mean for escorting Noa? It was fun for me too. Don’t worry about it.”

It seemed this bear had no idea the extent of what she’d done for us.

“No, I mean the matter with Lutum.”

Yuna seemed confused.

“Lutum? I feel like I’ve heard that name somewhere. Who’s he?”

How could she not remember after all that? My headache was getting worse.

“Lutum is the nobleman and knight you fought on behalf of Shia, Noa, and Ellelaura.”

“Oh, you mean that guy who tried to marry Shia off to his kid?”

She had remembered.

“Yes, him.”

I felt a pang of sympathy for Lord Lutum. Yuna couldn’t even be bothered to remember his name.

“You won the duel against Lutum, which helped clear some things off my plate. I must thank you for that.”

She didn’t seem to have any idea the extent to which she’d helped. “Don’t worry about it. He annoyed me too,” she said.

Yuna had won, so everything was fine, but what would have happened if she lost? I couldn’t believe Ellelaura could do this without consulting me at all.

Lord Lutum couldn’t have known that this was the same adventurer who had defeated the ten thousand monsters, not to mention the kraken. If Lord Lutum had known all that, I doubt that he would have challenged her to a duel.

I allowed Yuna to take Noa along to their picnic since I was indebted to her. I figured things would settle down for a while after that, but Noa came back from the picnic saying she was going to the beach. Apparently Yuna had put together a harebrained plan to go to the beach since it was getting warmer.

What was she thinking?

“Father, I’ll dedicate myself to my studies, so won’t you let me go?”

Just days ago, they had gone to the royal capital for the academy festival and now today, a picnic. To me, it seemed like all they were doing was fooling around, but according to Lala, Noa had still been studying dutifully all the while.

It would have been easy to simply say no, but seeing Mileela could help with her studies. Plus, who knows what would happen if I denied that bear girl.

“All right. But observe Mileela closely. It will be part of your studies.”

“Yes, I will,” she said. “Thank you, Father.”

Noa was happy. Seeing different towns would help broaden her horizons. That said, I still worried that she was being influenced too much by a certain bear girl.

A few days passed. I received yet another headache-inducing letter. This one was marked with His Majesty’s crest, a letter directly from the king. I thought it might be about Ellelaura, so I hesitantly looked at the contents. Lo and behold, it was about Yuna instead. His Majesty wanted to know if Yuna had the kraken’s mana gem, and if she could bring it to the capital. In other words, he wanted me to tell Yuna to surrender the mana gem to him. As if I needed more things in my life to cause me a migraine.

I ordered a messenger to bring Yuna over immediately. She arrived shortly, looking annoyed.

“Ah, you’re here. Please sit.”

She sat in front of me. I could hardly believe this girl in a bear costume had defeated a kraken. For the moment, I had no

choice but to accept it as reality.

“So what is it you need?”

She appeared cautious.

“I received a letter from His Majesty. He’s asked for you to come to the capital.”

When I asked her about the mana gem, she confirmed that she did, in fact, have it. If she hadn’t, then I would have needed to track it down somehow. If she’d sold it, I would have had to buy it back. The best case scenario would have been her selling it to the merchant guild, as they would have kept it on hand. However, had she sold it to anyone else, I would have needed to negotiate.

I didn’t have time for that while I was so busy, so I was relieved. It was next to impossible to find a mana gem that large. Sourcing one was difficult, and someone who had one likely wouldn’t give it up no matter the price.

I asked Yuna to go to the capital and give His Majesty the mana gem. I knew there was a possibility she would refuse, but she accepted the task. I was relieved. That was one issue solved. “You’re a lifesaver.”

When I thanked her, Yuna had an odd look on her face. Had Yuna refused, I would have needed to inform His Majesty, which would have led to a cluster of awful headaches.

Of all things, this bear girl asked me why I didn’t steal the gem from her. Of course, I never would have resorted to such a thing. Had I tried, who knows what Noa, Shia, or Ellelaura would have said to me, especially since so many of the citizens looked up to the bear.

It wasn’t as though I had any chance against someone who had slayed a kraken anyway. Honestly, it would have been easier to apologize to His Majesty.

Yuna decided to go to the capital immediately, And just like that, I had yet another debt I owed her.

STORY

KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR 13

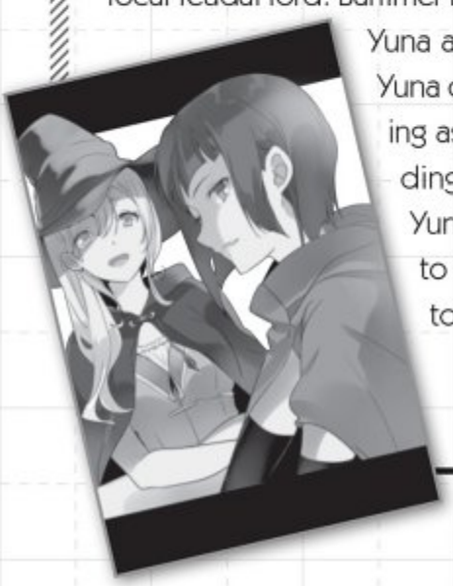


SHE MEETS THE DAUGHTER OF A LORD WHO IS DESPERATE...?

Yuna heads to the town of Dezelt. As she travels through the desert, Yuna reunites with Jade and they work together to defeat a group of sand wyrms. After safely traversing the sands, she arrives at an oasis town in the middle of the desert. Yuna heads to the adventurer guild with the kraken's mana gem in tow, hoping to learn how to deliver it to the local feudal lord. There, she comes across Karina, the lord's daughter, who has had trouble finding an adventurer to take on her quest...

CURRY IN ANOTHER WORLD

After earning Karina's trust, Yuna is invited to the estate of Barlimer, the local feudal lord. Barlimer reads over the king's letter and welcomes Yuna as a guest. Then, of all things, they serve Yuna curry! Yuna wants to know the recipe, going as far as to use her secret weapon...pudding! Lasa, one of the servants, approves of Yuna and gives Yuna the lowdown on where to buy spices. Thus, the bear girl heads into town!



TIME TO FACE A GIANT SCORPION!

In order to save Dezelt from its water shortage, someone needs to traverse the maze in the pyramid. Karina had lost a crystal tablet there, one that was passed down in her family for generations. The water mana gem in the middle of the maze needs to be replaced as well. Yuna and the gang fight off a giant swarm of sand wyrms and successfully find the tablet, but it's in the stomach of a giant scorpion! Yuna faces a battle harder than any she's faced before.

GET WATER BACK TO THE DESERT TOWN!

After defeating the giant scorpion, Yuna and company head back to the feudal lord's house. When Karina comes back safely with the crystal tablet, Barlimer is overcome with tears. However, because of Barlimer's arm injury, he can't head back into the pyramid to help replace the mana gem, so he asks Yuna and Karina to go together. The oasis fills with water again and the town of Dezelt, as well as Karina herself, are saved.



Chapter 17:
Gentz's Work

ANIMATE EXCLUSIVE STORY

MY JOB IS BUTCHERING parts from the monsters and animals that adventurers have slain. When I've got time, sometimes I do deskwork too. Generally, I'm most busy in the afternoon, when adventurers come back from slaying nearby monsters.

Some adventurers butcher the carcasses themselves and just come to me to sell them. Others bring the entire monster over in one piece. When they butcher the monster themselves, it gives us less work, but sometimes they make a mess of it. When that happens, I advise the adventurers to bring the monsters in whole next time. That way we can get more money out of the carcass.

If their butchering skills were that bad, I might as well have my little girl do the work for them.

An adventurer already came in with wolves today. Every last one was in horrible condition. They were massacred, and the pelt was ruined. Because of the shoddy work, we couldn't pay as much.

I could suss out each adventurer's skill level based on the monsters they brought in. It seemed this adventurer couldn't kill the wolves cleanly in one blow. Kid had a long way to go.

It was hard to tell these types of adventurers to keep the monsters intact when it was their lives on the line, but when the monsters came in this damaged, we couldn't sell them. Fixing the fur wouldn't be cheap either. I wished they'd take a page from the bear girl's book in these cases. Most of her kills came in with one fatal wound. The wolves and horned hares she brought in were all very valuable.

At the guild, the staff considered slaying wolves easily a rite of passage for adventurers. Among the adventurers, there was one new party that was improving rapidly. One of the party members was heading my way.

“You and your party have gotten a lot better at this, Shin,” I said to the adventurer who had brought me a wolf carcass. When he first started out, I couldn’t count on him, but now he was improving at a quicker rate than the other new adventurers.

“You think so?”

“I can tell just from the monster carcasses you bring. They used to be pretty gnarly.”

The kills looked awful, with cuts all over them. Just like something a brand-new adventurer would drag in. But now he was using fewer blows to kill monsters. Once in a blue moon, he’d even bring in one that he’d taken out in one hit.

“Gil’s been teaching me and Brute how to handle our weapons, plus Yuna taught Horn spells. That’s the whole reason why we can fight wolves now.”

Now, that wasn’t a name I’d expected.

“Yuna as in the adventurer who dresses as a bear?”

“Yes, Yuna is my magic mentor. After she gave me a few lessons, I’ve been much better with my spellcraft. I don’t drag everyone down anymore.”

Horn replied to me, looking happy with herself. She was another one of their party members, the only mage and only girl in the group.

From what I gathered, the bear girl was teaching her magic. She was also teaching her how to fight monsters and adequately prepare herself for battle. I had no idea Yuna was doing all that. I thought she avoided the other adventurers, but apparently, I was mistaken.

“Horn is our leader now.”

“She is?”

“Shin normally decides what we’ll do, but since the timing of my spells is key, I give orders from behind when we come across a monster…”

“Thanks to our tactics, I can focus on the monster in front of me while Horn covers for us. Now, it’s a lot easier to beat monsters.”

Shin was the leader, but once they were in a fight, he couldn't see everything that was going on. There are leaders who can give commands during combat too, of course, but it's easiest for the rearguard to get a full-picture view of the battle.

The whole mood in the adventurer guild had changed since the bear girl had come along. It was still as chaotic as usual, but there wasn't as much friction between the adventurers. The rookies weren't getting hazed anymore, either. It was really only a couple of adventurers actually causing all the trouble, and they'd gone quiet ever since the bear girl beat them to a pulp.

Everyone in the guild knew that our master, the merchant guild's master, and the feudal lord of the town were close with the bear girl. Nobody could pick a fight with either of the guild masters or the feudal lord; they'd be run out of town if they tried. Thanks to that, the guild was doing great.

Later in the day while I was eating dinner with my family, the girls started talking about going to the beach in Mileela. Apparently the bear girl came up with the idea to take the kids from the orphanage to the beach.

"Are you going too, Tiermina?"

"According to Yuna, it's a trip for her employees. She said that she wanted everyone working for her to go in order to bond more, so I'm going too. There will be a lot of kids, so it'll be better to have some adults around."

"Oh, it won't just be the orphans?"

"The announcement will come later once plans are finalized, but the Bear's Lounge and Bear Dining Room will shut down temporarily, so everyone working there can go with us too. She's left all the planning to me, so I'm going to be busy until the trip. I need to arrange for the kokekko to be taken care of and I need to adjust our orders so that we don't have too much food leftover in the shops. That's all in addition to preparing to actually go to Mileela. Yuna really is such a handful."

Even though she was complaining, she seemed pretty excited.

"How long are you going for?"

“We haven’t decided yet. Yuna has told us it’ll be about a week. I’m worried about leaving the businesses closed that long, but since we need to budget in travel time, we’d need about that long to truly enjoy the vacation.”

“When Fina and Shuri went to Mileela, they were back within a few days, weren’t they?”

“That was thanks to Kumayuru and Kumakyu.”

“They’re fast,” Shuri chimed in.

“I think we’ll need a carriage with how many are going this time. That’ll take longer than traveling on Yuna’s bears.”

Right. That meant I would be all alone during the trip. There was only one option.

“I’ll go too.”

“But you have work.”

“I’ll take time off.”

“We’ll be in trouble if you get fired.”

“I can have people cover my shifts.”

The only issue was that they hadn’t decided on a day they were leaving, but if I started to ask around now and swapped our days off, there shouldn’t be any problems.

As soon as I could, I talked to the guild master and requested to swap days with my coworkers so I could go to Mileela.

“As long as your coworkers are fine with it, there’s no issue.”

“Thank you.”

As long as I had the guild master’s permission, all I needed to do was convince my coworkers.

“I’ll ask them too,” the master said.

“You will?”

“Yeah, but I’ve got something I want you to do too. Check out how Mileela’s adventurer guild is doing. It’d be useful to know what monsters are around there, the number of adventurers they’ve got around, and what their guild rank is.”

“Couldn’t that all be done with a letter?”

“I’m trying to make it work for you. This’ll make it easier to convince the others.”

The guild master grinned.

I see. It’d taken me a moment to understand what he actually meant.

“Of course, there are certain things you can only find out in person. Other than that, you can do what you like.”

He was sending me out on the pretense that my vacation was a work trip.

“Thank you, Guild Master.”

Thanks to the guild master, everyone agreed to swap with me.

This meant I’d be working every day until the trip to the beach.

Chapter 18:
Going to the Town of Kars
Blitz Chronicles

WONDERGOOD BONUS STORY

WE HEADED FROM Mileela over to Crimonia through the new tunnel, then made our way from town to town until we reached the capital. Along the way, we saw all sorts of towns. It was a great experience. Rosa and the others complained about me doing whatever I wanted, but they came with me anyway. I was grateful to all three of my party members.

The most recent interesting sight on the trip was the bear shop in Crimonia. The food there was great, but the bears stole the show. A gigantic bear statue stood outside the shop and all the kids working inside were dressed as bears. It was Yuna's business, so I had to ask myself: just how much did this girl love bears?

We'd traveled to a lot of towns before making our way to the capital, so we were planning on staying there to work for a while. While we were working, we overheard an interesting tidbit. Apparently, there was a town in the south in the middle of the desert. The town was surrounded by sands and hot as all hell. I was curious, and wanted to go have a look. Luckily, there was a quest to deliver goods over to Kars, the town in question.

"I want to see the desert, so I was thinking we could take this quest."

I asked Rosa and the others about it. Whenever we were considering taking a quest, we all talked it out together.

"Sounds fun."

"A town surrounded by desert, huh? I wonder what it's like."

"If everyone else is up for it, I am too."

Rosa, Ran, and Glimos all seemed receptive, so we accepted the quest.

We headed out to Kars on horses. As we headed south, the scenery around us started to change.

“Compared to Mileela, there aren’t as many trees around.”

“Well, of course. Kars is in the middle of a desert.”

Mileela was surrounded by ocean, mountains, and forest. But here, the trees were slowly growing thinner.

After riding our horses for a while, we caught sight of a town. It had to be Kars. Once we were at the gate, we asked about where the adventurer guild was and where to find an inn before heading inside.

“Wait, huh? What’s that? A lizard?” Ran pointed out a gigantic lizard, looking surprised.

“Everyone’s riding them.”

People were sitting on the giant lizards and even hauling luggage on them. Maybe they were used in place of horses here?

“I had no idea lizards could get so big.”

Rosa and the rest of the party were curiously looking them over. We’d gone a lot of places together, but this was the first time I had ever seen people use lizards as mounts.

We gawked at the giant lizards walking around town as we looked for an inn.

“I’ve been sweating buckets. I wanna take a bath and refresh.”

She was right. We hadn’t taken a bath since heading out of the capital. I wanted a bath too, but the inn we found didn’t have any.

“How could they not have baths?”

“The other inns do, but they’re all booked right now.”

“I asked the innkeeper about it. There’s a big bathhouse in town, so we can go there.”

“I’ll go too,” Glimos said in response to Ran.

“Then I suppose I’ll join you too,” I said.

We left our belongings at the inn and headed to the bathhouse. Letting our exhaustion wash away with the grime really was refreshing.

After we got back to the inn, we started talking about what to do next.

“It’d be great if we could find another quest that’d take us farther ahead to Dezelt.”

Our quest had only taken us to Kars, but we wanted to get to the town of Dezelt, which was in the middle of the vast desert.

“Sure, let’s check out the adventurer guild tomorrow to see if we can find one.”

“Oh, by the way, I found out those giant lizards are supposed to be used to traverse the desert.”

Apparently they were called laggaroutes.

“What? People ride those things?”

Ran seemed a little reluctant.

“Apparently it’s impossible to travel by horse.”

We could ask for more information at the guild, so we decided to relax for the rest of the day.

The next day, we headed out to the guild.

“Looks like this is it.”

We caused a slight commotion as we headed in.

“He’s got three women adventuring with him.”

“And they’re all different types. One’s a classic beauty, another one’s the cute type, and the last one is more aloof.”

I heard people gossiping about us from all around. The rest of my party members were all pretty, so they tended to gather attention.

“Guess looks are everything to guys.”

“Yeah, if anyone joined a party, they’d prefer a handsome guy to your ugly mug.”

I heard everyone around laugh.

“Damn, then maybe I’ll just bust up his face until it looks the same as mine.”

Now that sounded ridiculous.

Rosa and Ran shifted closer on both sides of me.

“Rosa, Ran, give me a little space.”

“Damn, now they’re all flirting.”

I wish they’d be more aware of the circumstances we were in.

“Y’all, cut it out. An inferiority complex ain’t a good look on a man.”

A well-built man came to my aid.

“Haven’t seen you lot around.”

“Yeah, it’s our first time here.”

“I see. Most of the guys around here aren’t popular with the ladies. Don’t think any of them would resort to violence, but lots of ’em are prone to jealousy, so watch yourself.”

“I’ll protect everybody if it comes down to it.”

“Blitz…”

“Damn, he’s not just beautiful on the outside but on the inside too.”

“Wish I could say that line in front of a gal.”

“It wouldn’t sound right coming out of your mouth.”

“And you don’t know any women anyway.”

I heard laughter around me again.

“So, ladykiller, you here for work?”

“Don’t call me that. My name is Blitz. This is Rosa, Ran, and Glimos. We carried goods here from the capital.”

I told him our business and made introductions.

“I see. I’m Doran, an adventurer from around here.”

He also introduced himself. Thanks to Doran, the guild settled down, and we could bring the goods over to the front desk.

“Thank you. I’ve confirmed receipt. Here is your payment for the quest.”

We’d finished the quest we picked up in the capital, so we headed over to the quest board here.

“What? You’re taking another quest? We haven’t got any jobs that’ll take you to the capital. All we’ve got are ones taking you across the desert to deliver goods to Dezelt.”

“That’s exactly where we’re thinking of heading.”

The Dezelt trip was the reason we’d come all this way.

“Then I’ll give you some advice. Don’t much care what happens to you, but it’d be a loss to humanity if three pretty ladies died out there.”

Doran gave us all sorts of advice on traveling to Dezelt. He told us that crossing the desert required cloaks with water mana gems embedded in them. Apparently, if we tried crossing in ordinary clothing, we’d end up fainting in a few hours. The water mana gems would cool us off. If he hadn’t told us, we would’ve been in trouble.

“Have you lot ridden a laggaroute before?”

“No, this is our first time even seeing them,” I replied honestly. I didn’t see a point to lying just to save face.

“They’re pretty different from horses, so you’d best practice riding one before you head out.”

Doran led us over to a place that would loan out laggaroutes.

“Why are you being so nice to us?” I asked Doran. He’d been telling us all sorts of things as we walked.

“We’d have a problem if people stopped coming to town because of rumors. Wouldn’t want the ladies telling others this is a bad place.”

“We wouldn’t spread rumors like that.”

“Yeah, that’s not something we’d do.”

“You’re so dramatic, Ran.”

Men can always make things out to be more dramatic than they actually are.

“Well, anyway, that’s why I want to lend a hand when new adventurers come to town.”

As long as Doran was around, the adventurer guild would be able to prevent trouble before it could even happen.

We promptly arrived at the shed where the laggaroutes were being kept.

“Their skin feels tougher than a horse’s.”

Rosa patted one of the laggaroutes.

“I can’t believe you’d pet that thing.”

Ran looked at the laggaroutes from behind Glimos.

“Try riding one,” Doran said. We each took turns riding the laggaroutes. Ran mounted one, but she didn’t look happy about it.

“Ugh. Have we really gotta ride these?”

“You could just wait here if you don’t want to ride them.”

“I don’t want to be left on my own. I guess I can tolerate it if you ride with me, Blitz.”

Rosa and Glimos seemed okay with Ran’s demand.

After we practiced riding the laggaroutes, we accepted the caravan quest to Dezelt. I wondered what the town would be like. I was looking forward to finding out for myself.

Chapter 19:
Encountering the Bear
Uragan Chronicles

TORANOANA EXCLUSIVE STORY

AS AN ADVENTURER operating around the capital, I'd accepted a quest to deliver goods to the desert town of Dezelt. It was a wearisome quest, but the job paid well, at least. First, we'd need to travel to Kars, a town near the desert, via horseback. Then once we arrive, we'd change mounts to a monster lizard called a laggaroute to cross the vast sands.

Our party soon arrived at Kars.

"What's that?"

One of the newer members of the party spotted a laggaroute and looked shocked. He wasn't all that strong, but he wasn't a weakling either. He listened to my instructions and got along with the rest of the group well.

"Is this your first time seeing a laggaroute?"

"Yeah."

They looked like gigantic lizards.

"Right, of course you'd be shocked. We'll be riding these across the desert."

"You're in for a shock when you see the desert too. The place is swelteringly hot and desolate."

The rest of the gang laughed as they filled the rookie in on what he needed to know. He looked anxious, but he was in for a real surprise soon. We left our horses for safekeeping and borrowed laggaroutes, then headed off toward Dezelt.

I didn't see a single plant around the desert. Just sand as far as the eye could see. The desert had no paths, so normally, any traveler would get lost. However, someone—we don't know who—made gigantic pillars in the desert.

"So we head toward the pillar?"

“That’s right. The pillars are our guideposts. They lead to Dezelt.”

The pillars made a path right to Dezelt, so as long as you kept heading toward them, you’d never get lost. The pillars were also a monster deterrent, so we rarely encountered any while traveling. Whoever made those pillars in the past, I owed them big time.

The real enemy out in the desert was the heat. We needed to make cloaks with water stones embedded in them. That would provide some relief, but it was scorching nonetheless. The rookie hadn’t gone through any of this before, so he seemed confused.

Finally, we made it to Dezelt. At last, we could relax. Since we weren’t used to the blazing heat, it was easy to get fatigued. The plan was to head to the adventurer guild to drop off the goods and then we’d take a break grabbing drinks or something.

We walked into the guild, ready to hand off the goods, when a little girl came up to us and blocked our path.

“Excuse me, would you please take this quest?”

Great. A quest. We’d just gotten into town. We were exhausted. No way in hell were we going to take it.

“Ask somebody else.”

I tried to brush her off, but she grabbed my clothes. The little kid was persistent…

I lifted my arm gently to push her away, but she ended up falling right onto the ground. This wasn’t my fault, though. It only happened because she wouldn’t stop bothering me. And I’d barely pushed her away in the first place. But even after all that, she wasn’t scared or deterred. Instead, she got up and tried to come up to us again.

We were tired after crossing the whole damn desert. I raised my arm to push her away again, when a dark shadow interposed itself between me and the girl. What the hell? I took another look and realized it wasn’t a shadow, but a girl wearing a hood with a bear face. She was holding my arm with a bear glove. What the hell was it with these bears?

Just as I thought that, the rookie behind me turned white as a sheet and murmured, “The bloody bear…”

The bloody what? What was that?

I tried to flex my arm, but I couldn’t budge.

“Turning her down is one thing, but you’re going too far brushing past her like that.”

The girl in the bear suit glared at me.

I wasn’t pushing her off because I wanted to! I was just trying to gently get her out of my way since my party was tired and the girl was bothering us. I tried to push the bear girl away too, but I couldn’t move my arm. When I flexed harder, the rookie was telling me, “Don’t. You do not want to get involved with her.”

“You heard the man. So what now?”

I looked around and saw the receptionists staring at us. This was an adventurer guild. I didn’t want to cause unnecessary trouble. I pulled my arm away from the bear girl and walked away. She walked off too. Then after a receptionist talked to the little girl, she left the guild. The bear girl left too, almost as if she was following the little girl. The rookie looked relieved.

What the hell had just happened?

We handed off the goods at the front desk, then left the guild ourselves. Afterward, we went to an inn to recover.

Once we were settled in with a few drinks at the inn’s dining hall, I turned toward the rookie.

“You know that girl in the weird getup?”

“…”

He didn’t say a word.

“Out with it.”

The rookie looked at everyone else before finally turning back to me. Everyone was waiting for him to talk. He slowly told us about the girl in the bear clothes, but everything he said sounded asinine.

Apparently he’d had a run-in with the bear girl when she first became an adventurer. Some people do stupid things, I

guess. Anyone's allowed to be an adventurer, but if an adventurer didn't have what it took, they'd end up dead.

Honestly, they should've just left her alone.

"She beat Deboraney, the adventurer who picked a fight with her, without even struggling, and then the rest of us who were mocking her joined the brawl. It was all over so fast. She was nimble, landing a punch on me before I could even realize it. She beat over a dozen of us, myself included. We didn't stand a chance."

"So what? You're scared of her now?"

The rookie shook his head, then told us that the girl had defeated tigerwolves, a goblin king (along with a hundred goblin underlings), plus a black viper. Normally, I would've just laughed it off. But the guy looked stone-cold serious in a way that made it clear this wasn't a joke. She was strong enough to hold back my arm, after all.

The rookie told me that he'd run off to the capital because he was afraid of having another run-in with the bear girl, but apparently she'd shown up in the capital and caused a scene there too.

"I remember that. People at the adventurer guild said to be careful of a bear."

One of the others who'd been listening chimed in. I'd been at the capital's guild too, but no one had said anything about a bear girl to me.

"When I was out drinking with a buddy, I heard a rumor too. I don't remember it too well since it was all second hand, but I heard a girl dressed as a bear went on a rampage."

"You shouldn't pick a fight with the bear girl. And don't you dare make fun of her bear clothes either."

The man shivered as he spoke. Must have been a terrifying experience.

I decided to keep the warning in mind. He was one of us, after all. We probably wouldn't see her around anyway. What were the chances we'd see her during a later quest?

Turns out that our job was an escort mission to guide the bear girl and the feudal lord's daughter to the pyramid. Apparently, the little girl at the guild was the daughter of the feudal lord. I thought she'd turn us away when she saw us, but instead she seemed happy we were there. She thanked us too. Apparently the quest was very difficult, and lots of people had turned it down.

We made for the outskirts of town, and I caught sight of the pyramid. It was our job to take the two of them all the way there. At the halfway mark though, we got ambushed by a swarm of sand wyrms. Not that we minded, but it didn't seem like this would be an easy quest. We either needed more people or a better strategy.

Right as my group tried to talk to Jade about what to do next, he started asking the bear girl for her opinion. Apparently, they were acquainted, but it still got on my nerves that he'd ask her instead of us.

I waited to see what she'd say, and suddenly she blurted out, "How about we slay them all?" What a stupid thing to say. We couldn't possibly slay all these monsters, but Jade went along with it. She told us she'd take care of digging the wyrms up, so all we had to do was slay them.

If we could just get them out of the ground, wyrms wouldn't be so hard to kill, and according to Jade, the bear girl could do it. Honestly, I wanted to see it for myself.

We put our plan to slay the wyrms into motion. All of us held our breath.

"Wait..."

The bear girl was riding a black bear, and used wind magic to dig up the sand wyrms. The worms were blown to the surface and onto the sand, so we got to work running the wyrms through with our swords.

My arm was getting tired. The bear girl paid us no mind as she kept digging the wyrms out of the ground. Aw, come on.

Give us a break. I guess I'd basically challenged her to do this earlier. I couldn't exactly ask her to stop now.

She knew exactly where in the sand each wyrm was, and she didn't let a single one escape. All I could do was acknowledge her skill as my arms reached the limit of their strength.

Please, just finish already. Nobody else could keep up either. Jade was looking tired too, but he had killed the most wyrms so far. I guess I should've expected that. Toya, a guy with their group, looked as tired as me, but he was somehow keeping pace.

As I was internally begging her to stop, the bear girl suddenly actually did. Apparently, we were done. When I looked around, there were sand wyrm bodies all over the place.

This bear made *all that* happen. That said, I didn't find out the extent of her power until later. A giant sand wyrm, the likes of which we'd never seen before, suddenly appeared out of nowhere. No way we could handle that thing. But the bear girl took it down all on her own.

I thought back to what the rookie had told me. She'd slain a goblin king and a black viper. I realized in that moment that it was all true. It wasn't that I hadn't believed it when he told me, I just hadn't understood how it could be possible. But now that I'd seen her slay the giant sand wyrm right in front of us, everything made sense.

I made a mental note not to make light of the bear girl if I met her in the future.

Chapter 20:
The Adventurer Who Ran from the Bloody Bear

TSUTAYA EXCLUSIVE STORY

I'M NOT VERY STRONG, but I'm still an adventurer. I thought that I'd at least be able to defeat a little girl.

That day, I was chatting with my buddies at Crimonia's adventurer guild instead of taking quests. We were just shooting the breeze, talking about our recent exploits, sharing info on easy jobs, stuff like that. But while we were talking, there was a commotion at the front desk. Curious what it was, I looked over at the front desk and saw Deboraney causing a ruckus.

Deboraney had his personal issues, but he was a big guy, a physically strong adventurer. I certainly couldn't beat him.

He was picking a fight with a girl in a weird costume. Was she dressed as a bear? I heard other people say something about a bear, so I guessed that was what she was. Why was she dressed like that?

I had no idea, but I could tell she'd come to the guild to become an adventurer. Deboraney was arguing with her because he was worried she'd hurt the adventurers' image or something.

Honestly, Deboraney had a point. She wanted to be an adventurer dressed as a bear? That was a laugh. I didn't want a girl who didn't look like she could even slay a wolf to represent us adventurers. But then suddenly she started saying wolves were nothing to her. Deboraney and the adventurers listening in all laughed. I laughed too, of course. Wolves were weak monsters, but a normal girl wouldn't be able to beat them.

But then, to prove herself, the girl challenged Deboraney to a duel. On top of that, the loser would have to quit being an adventurer. Helen, the receptionist, tried to stop them, but the girl was dead set on it.

In the end, Helen failed to stop the match. Everyone, including me, went to go watch the fight and jeer at the bear

girl. Any normal girl would be afraid of facing Deboraney, but the girl didn't seem scared. It looked like she already knew she would win.

The match began, with everyone convinced that Deboraney would win. Shockingly, the opposite happened. The girl in the bear clothes was the winner, hands down.

We were all watching the match in shock, myself included. The girl looked our way and challenged the rest of us to take her on as well. We remembered what Deboraney said before the match. He agreed that he'd quit being an adventurer if he lost, then he'd turned to us and asked if we would too. All of us had agreed.

The bear girl checked in with Helen to confirm that we'd all said that. She nodded. We couldn't run from this. We all knew we couldn't beat someone who had taken down Deboraney, so one of us threw out the idea of taking her on all at once.

Hopefully, if all of us fought her together, we'd have a chance. I was in favor of the idea. Despite our scheming, the girl punched the daylights out of all of us and we ended up on the ground like Deboraney anyway. We'd all lost to a girl in a bear suit.

I feared I'd lose my guild card, but thanks to the guild master, we all got to keep our cards. In exchange, we were told not to interact with the girl in the bear suit. He didn't have to tell me twice. I saw Deboraney's horrific face after she was through with him. I wasn't going to cross the bear girl again.

After that, the bear girl defeated tigerwolves, a hundred goblins, their goblin king, and even a black viper. I saw the monsters after she defeated them, and I couldn't have ever done what she had. I thought about how we'd laughed at her. We were so stupid.

After people saw the bloodied monsters, not to mention Deboraney beaten to a pulp, we started calling her the bloody bear. Whenever I saw her, I'd start quaking in my boots. It even started affecting my work, so I decided to leave the familiar town of Crimonia to run off to the capital. The bear girl wasn't around there, and unlike Crimonia, it was bustling with people.

Something was always going on. I decided to start my life as an adventurer anew in this place.

But my intentions were betrayed when I heard a commotion at the adventurer guild. I heard people taunting someone. I looked over at the commotion and saw the girl dressed as a bear. It was the bloody bear again. What was she doing here?

I stopped myself from yelling. I couldn't get involved. But on the other hand, there were fools who were picking a fight with the bloody bear. Why did they have to pick a fight with *her*? She was the *last* person they wanted to fight with.

"You shouldn't involve yourself with that bear girl."

I didn't want her to notice me and punch my lights out again, so after my warning, I hid my face. The fools didn't listen and tried to pick a fight with the bear girl anyway.

Stop it. You'll die.

They didn't listen, and before long one of the guys was blown away by the bear girl. When his buddies saw what had happened, they got even angrier.

Stop. Just apologize right now.

But my feelings didn't matter. The bear girl and the adventurers headed outside, and soon I started hearing the screams. It seemed the bear girl had gotten her revenge. Ignorance was a frightening thing. That was why I'd tried to stop them.

After that, the guild master got involved, just like in Crimonia, and warned everyone not to antagonize or pick a fight with the bear girl from then on. The guild master told us that anyone who didn't promise to keep away from her would be punished.

The bear girl didn't show up at the adventurer guild after that. I joined Uragan's party and began to live a full life as an adventurer. Uragan was rough around the edges, especially in how he spoke, but he was strong and I knew I could rely on him to help whenever his party members were in trouble.

Uragan took a quest that would take us to the desert in the south. I'd heard of deserts before, but had never been to one before. I was looking forward to it.

Once I got to the desert, it was all sand, just like I'd heard. It was also hotter than I could stand.

The other thing that shocked me was that we would be riding on lizards called laggaroutes to cross the desert. Everything felt new, but it made me feel as though I was leading a fulfilling life as an adventurer. Leaving Crimonia had been the right choice for me.

Very quickly, those dreams were shattered.

When we got to Dezelt, we stopped by the adventurer guild to report in. But then a little girl started hovering around Uragan. It seemed she wanted to ask him to do a job, but we'd only just gotten in from crossing the desert. Uragan treated her like a nuisance. Then when he pushed her aside, I saw a dark shadow come between them. I would have recognized her anywhere. It was the bloody bear. It happened so fast, I couldn't get a word in.

The bear girl glared at Uragan and grabbed his arm. At this rate, Uragan would end up just like Deboraney.

"You should get away from her," I told him.

I hoped he would listen to my warning.

They asked me if I knew her. The bear girl turned my way too. I quickly told them I didn't... If I had said I did, she might remember me and knock my lights out again. I was so frightened, I couldn't say anything else.

Uragan tried to push the girl off of him but, based on his reaction, he was straining pretty hard. He was clearly at his limit.

It seemed he understood the situation and pulled away. The bear girl didn't do anything else to us. What a relief. But I couldn't have predicted that we would see her again after taking our next quest.

Why did she keep showing up?

Chapter 21:
Encounter with the Bear
Lasa Chronicles

BOOKSTORE COLLABORATION EXCLUSIVE STORY

MY NAME IS LASA. I am a maid working in the Ishleet household. My grandmother worked in this house originally, but once she grew older she had to quit, so I took her place. Ever since I was young, my grandmother had brought me with her to the Ishleet household as she worked, so I knew everyone already and got the job immediately.

It had been three years since I started working there. Lady Karina had grown so big. She looked up to me like a big sister and I cared for her like I really was.

But then one day, Lady Karina came home sobbing.

Our town was in the middle of a desert, so the lake in the middle of the town was vital for us, but the water had started to recede. The Ishleet household managed the lake, and everyone in town knew it. Because the water level in the lake had started to lower, more people had been submitting inquiries to the Ishleet household. Lord Barlimer, the head of the household, had been very busy of late.

Then one day, Lord Barlimer and Lady Karina left for the pyramid to figure out what was going on. After they came back, Lady Karina was crying and Lord Barlimer had an injured arm. It seemed they had lost something vital to the management of the lake's water. Apparently Lord Barlimer had injured himself at the same time.

Lady Karina blamed herself both for losing the object and for Lord Barlimer's injuries. She broke down crying in her room. I had no idea what to say. I could only remain by her side.

Some time after that, Lady Karina began to go out quite frequently. It was better than staying in her room all day, but she always seemed forlorn when she came home. Whenever I asked

her what had happened, all she told me was that she was fine. She didn't seem fine to me.

It made me feel like she might go off on her own somewhere at any given moment. I tried to keep an eye on her as much as I could.

The next day, Lady Karina disappeared again. Where did she go? I remembered her face the day before and worried that she might have gone to the pyramid on her own. She so deeply regretted losing something so precious there.

Lord Barlimer had set up a search quest for the object over at the guild. Some adventurers had accepted it at first, but the monsters in the vicinity of the pyramid began to increase to the point where no one would take it anymore.

I considered talking to Lord Barlimer about Lady Karina. As I fretted over what to do, Lady Karina finally arrived home.

I was glad. It seemed Lady Karina had not left the town, but she had a strangely dressed girl with her. The girl's name was Yuna, and she was there to see Lord Barlimer. Apparently they had met at the adventurer guild, but I couldn't believe such an oddly dressed girl could be an adventurer, let alone one with an appointment with Lord Barlimer. It seemed Lady Karina believed her though, so I received her like a guest.

She inquired about Lord Barlimer and I replied that he was working in his office. Lady Karina dashed right off as soon as she heard where he was. Yuna glanced at me, then followed Lady Karina. I couldn't do anything to help, but I followed them anyway.

That said, I couldn't very well enter Lord Barlimer's office without a reason. Oh, right. I could prepare tea, as he had a visitor. I went to the kitchen to fetch the tea and ran into Lady Listiel, Lord Barlimer's wife.

"Is there a guest?"

I informed her that Lady Karina had brought home a girl dressed as a bear, and that she was in Lord Barlimer's office to speak to him. Lady Listiel was shocked and headed to the office herself.

It seemed I needed to prepare one more cup of tea.

Once all the preparations were complete, Lady Karina appeared and asked me to prepare tea. Excellent timing. I tried to take the tea over, but Lady Karina asked to do it herself.

“This is my job,” I said.

“I’d like to hear what Father and Yuna are talking about. I don’t think they’ll let me into the office otherwise, so please let me take it.”

In other words, she needed an excuse to enter the room. She seemed slightly more at ease compared to previous days. I wondered if it was thanks to the bear girl. I decided to help Lady Karina.

“All right. I will have you take the tea in.”

“Thank you, Lasa.”

Lady Karina smiled happily. She set the tea on the pushcart and took it to the office.

As I waited for them, I did my own work for a while, worried about whether Lady Karina had been allowed in to listen. After a while, she returned to me looking happy.

“Lasa, please prepare a room for Yuna to spend the night.”

It seemed the bear girl would be staying with us.

“All right. I will have it prepared right away.”

The room was already clean, so all I had to do was change the sheets.

“Which room will it be?”

“One of the larger guestrooms on the second floor.”

Yuna was Lord Barlimer’s guest, and since we had nobody else staying with us, we could set her up in one of the larger rooms.

“You mean that room then? Understood. Please bring Yuna in once they are done talking.”

Lady Karina seemed pleased.

“And please prepare a table setting for Yuna.”

Yes, of course. I would need to make sure we had enough ingredients.

Lady Karina ran off to Yuna as soon as she was done talking to me. She had regained some of her pep thanks to the bear girl. I felt slightly frustrated about how this had all played out, but I was also thankful.

I hurried off to the guest room and changed the bedding, and then I opened the windows to air the room out. As if on cue, Lady Karina walked in with Yuna in tow.

Yuna really was dressed as a bear. She reminded me quite a bit of a bear from a book I’d read. The bear in the book had been more frightening while Yuna was dressed more cutely. I could understand why Lady Karina had taken such a liking to her.

I gave Yuna a tour of the room, then headed to the kitchen to prepare dinner. Now, what to make…

I had to cook mindfully for guests from foreign lands, especially ones invited in by the head of the household. Many people from other regions don’t enjoy our cuisine. Yuna might have dressed like a bear, but that was certainly no excuse to offend her palate.

I thought for a bit, then realized that a dish that mixed many different spices together would be best. I decided to make curry for everyone. I’d served it to guests from Elfanica Kingdom in the past, and it had been a huge hit. I hoped that Yuna would enjoy it.

I finished preparing dinner and called everyone in. They all gathered in the dining room and I set their places. As I served the curry, Yuna looked surprised. The curry was pungent, so perhaps she had been taken aback by the smell. If she tried it, though, I was certain she would enjoy it. I sat down and began to eat with everybody.

I was curious to see what Yuna would think of the meal, so I watched her out of the corner of my eye. She dipped a piece of

bread into the curry and brought it to her mouth, then her expression transformed. What did she think?

She started speaking to Lady Karina, who sat next to her. Lady Karina then called me over. Had Yuna not liked it? Apparently not. It seemed she enjoyed the curry so much that she wanted to know how to make it herself.

I was hesitant to simply tell her the recipe. I had learned the recipe from my mother, who had learned it from my grandmother. I agreed to tell her the recipe, but on one condition: she had to trade me a recipe I didn't already know. That would allow me to always cook delicious meals for Lady Karina and her family.

Yuna had said she was from Elfanica Kingdom, so it was likely she knew some recipes I didn't. Yuna lost herself in thought for a moment, then said she would serve a treat after dinner. I was looking forward to finding out what it was.

Chapter 22:
Drinks with Uragan
Jade Chronicles

EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL BONUS

WE REUNITED WITH YUNA in the town of Dezelt, where we took a quest from the feudal lord, Barlimer. We needed to retrieve a lost item from the pyramid near town. The item in question had been eaten by a scorpion larger than any I'd seen before. We proposed retreating to town, but Yuna, who was with us at the time, blurted out that she would defeat it alone. She may have been a girl in a cute bear costume, but she was, in truth, a formidable adventurer. I respected Yuna, so I left the scorpion to her.

Unbelievably, Yuna was able to defeat the gigantic scorpion all on her own. Based on her bear outfit and her age, no one would have believed she could fell the beast. I sure wouldn't have if I didn't already know all she did in Crimonia. Even if something unexpected happened, I was always sure she would be able to prevail…

Thanks to Yuna, we found the missing object and got treated to a feast by Barlimer as thanks. Everything tasted great, but something was missing. It seemed Uragan and his crew, who had joined us on the quest, were of the same mind, so we all went out drinking together.

"Jade is buying tonight! What a great guy."

"No, I'm not."

Why was he assuming I'd pay?

"Don't be so stingy, Mr. C Rank. You're going around with those two beautiful ladies, too. Least you could do is buy me a drink!"

"Yeah! He's right!"

"Mel and Senia are so pretty."

The conversation had spread to include the other people around us.

“The girls have nothing to do with me buying your drinks.”

To be honest, compared to the rest of the female adventurers, they were pretty, but if I said that while they were in earshot, it’d feed their egos. I held my tongue.

“Okay. One round, but that’s it, all right?”

“All right, I guess one round is enough for today.”

How many more times was he planning to drink with us? I ordered the drinks and some food.

“Jade, you know much about that bear girl?” Uragan asked as the drinks were brought to us.

“We were coworkers, and I’ve been to the town she lives in. I know a thing or two about her.”

“Crimonia, right?”

“Yeah. I didn’t know you paid attention.”

“One of my guys came from Crimonia, so I heard some rumors about her already. I thought that it was all absurd at first, but after everything, I believe it all.”

I wouldn’t have believed it just hearing about it either. And then we all saw it. “She has some sort of magic that allows her to pinpoint and dig up sand wyrms from the ground. Not to mention, she slayed both a giant sand wyrm and a scorpion larger than anything I’ve seen before. I can hardly believe it even though I was an eyewitness.”

It was all true. The only option was to accept it. She was truly so amazing that you couldn’t believe it without seeing it yourself. “Let me give you some advice. Don’t mock that girl or ask about her clothes. Some adventurers who didn’t know anything about her got beaten up and they weren’t doing too hot after she was done with them.”

Toya held his cup of alcohol and smiled as he gave his warning about Yuna.

“One of them’s in my party,” Uragan said and broke out into a smile as he looked at one of his men. The poor guy gave us a strained smile.

“My condolences. We weren’t at the guild that day, so we never saw it. Too bad.”

“Come on, Toya. I’m sure if you’d been there, you would’ve tried picking a fight with Yuna too. You might have ended up like one of them.”

“I can’t deny that.”

Toya wasn’t strong enough to beat Yuna. We hadn’t seen the fights for ourselves, but her trophies included a black viper, a black tiger, golems, and now even a giant scorpion. None of those were easy prey. She had done that all on her own (technically, I guess she had two helpers if you include her bears). I couldn’t even fathom how powerful Yuna really was.

She was so strong that the only way we could defeat her is if all of us fought her together. And even then, it would only be a small chance.

“So how did she defeat a scorpion that big?”

“I’m not sure. For the sand wyrms, she used fire magic to blast them in their mouths. I didn’t see her do that with the scorpion.”

It wouldn’t have been easy to kill the scorpion from the inside out either. Normally any magic would be dispelled once inside the beast’s mouth. If she destroyed it from the inside, that just goes to show how powerful her magic was.

“She cut its stinger.”

“That wouldn’t be a fatal wound, though.”

“How did she even cut the stinger in the first place? That couldn’t have been easy.”

I’d also felt how hard the scorpion’s shell had been.

“Yuna has mithril knives. I think she used those.”

“Knives wouldn’t be long enough.”

“She might have a sword in her item bag. Her stuff had Ghazal’s inscription on it.”

“The blacksmith in the capital?”

Uragan looked surprised.

“Yup, she let me see her knives, so I’m sure.”

Uragan looked suspicious.

“Who is that girl… She just let us have the scorpion’s shell and told us to keep quiet about what happened. Any normal adventurer would be proud of that.”

“Yuna isn’t after money or fame. She said she hates standing out.”

“Ha ha, with that getup? Don’t make me laugh.”

He had a point, but I was telling him the truth. Even when Yuna defeated the golems, she told us not to tell anyone what she had done. She also hadn’t seemed upset when we told her Barbould had taken all the credit. Normally, people would be mad about someone else stealing their glory. Adventurers all wanted to spread word of their successes. That was how they advertised and won trust. It could even help them earn more.

She really didn’t want any attention. Yes, even though she dressed like that.

“Well, she gave us the scorpion parts in exchange for us keeping our mouths shut, so we won’t tell anyone. You better not either.”

I made sure Uragan and his party understood.

“You either, Toya.”

“I know. I’m not prepared for death yet.”

He was so drunk, I wasn’t sure he understood me. Toya could be a real liability. He had loose lips sometimes.

“Still, I’m excited to make armor from the shell. I want to get back to the capital and have it made up.”

Uragan gleefully ordered another drink.

The scorpion’s shell was tough but lightweight. It was first-class material for armor. I planned to make arm guards. Heavyguards would weigh me down while I was using my sword. But since the scorpion shell was strong *and* lightweight, it would make for excellent material to make a new pair.

It wouldn’t just be useful for arm guards either. We could protect our legs and torsos without compromising movement. Of course, if it was easier to move, it’d be easier to fight monsters too. Any adventurer would want that advantage more than anything. And Yuna had just given it to us, meaning that it

probably wasn’t worth all that much to her. She was a truly enigmatic girl.



Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear

VOL.12

ILLUSTRATION GALLERY_


Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear
VOL.13

STORY

KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR 14



YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THE EMPLOYEE TRIP, RIGHT?

Yuna returns from Dezelt. She reports back to the king, then relaxes at home. Suddenly, Fina comes calling! Apparently, she needs to choose a date for the employee trip soon or Gentz won't be able to take the time off. With how many people are going, how will she get them all to the beach? This bear CEO has a lot of decisions to make!

THE SWIMSUITS ARE FINALLY DONE!

Yuna and the others try on the swimsuits Sherry made for them. Shuri seems to be having fun modeling the swimsuits for the orphans. They're based on school swimsuits too! They're so cute and great… but wait a second?! Are those bear tails…? Yuna worries that her swimsuit might be bear-themed too.

OFF TO MILEELA!

Finally, they're all off on their employee trip! Yuna changes into her white bear clothes to operate her DIY bear bus, and they're ready to go. All the orphans, employees from Anz's restaurant, Fina's family, Noa and Shia, Misa, and the others are ready for their trip to Mileela!



THEY ALL ENJOY THE OCEAN!

After enjoying their trip on the bus, they arrive at Mileela. They leave their things at their giant bear house and waste no time in heading directly to the beach to play! After stretching, the kids put on their swimsuits with bear tails and don their swim caps, which also sport bear ears. Everyone's playing in the water and learning to swim but Yuna's nowhere to be seen. She changed into her swimsuit since Sherry worked so hard to make it, but it seems like no one recognizes Yuna out of her bear clothes?!



Chapter 23:
Preparing for Departure
Tiermina Chronicles

TORANOANA EXCLUSIVE STORY

YUNA CAME UP with an idea to take the orphans, Morin's employees, and others to the beach. Suddenly, I had a lot more work.

After Yuna told me the plan, I did my job like usual, then headed over to visit the orphanage director. I didn't want the children to know just yet, so we spoke in a private room.

"So, what's this news you have that you don't want the children to know?"

The director seemed a bit anxious. Telling her I didn't want the children to hear what I had to say made her nervous.

"I'm sorry. It's nothing bad. I just thought that it might cause a commotion if the children heard."

I told her that Yuna was thinking of taking the orphans to the beach.

"Do you mean everyone?"

"You, Liz, and Neaf too. Also, Yuna wants to bring all her employees."

When I explained this, the director seemed shocked.

"Me?"

"It would be a great help if you could watch over the kids on the trip."

They were full of energy and wandered wherever their feet would take them. Only the director could manage them. They would listen to Liz and Neaf too, of course, but the director had the most authority. She was very important to them.

"Yuna's always coming up with new ways to surprise me," the director said.

It was true. Yuna would act on any thought that ran through her head. I wished she'd see things from the perspective of the people she was forcing to do her bidding. That said, even though it was often a lot of work, I never once was reluctant to follow Yuna. I was happy I had a job and all the things Yuna thought up seemed novel and fun.

But this time, things would be a bit more complicated.

"So, about Neaf..."

"Of course. I'll let her know. We can't force her to come, after all."

It seemed the director realized what I was getting at.

"Yes, I believe Yuna understands that too."

Neaf and the other women working at the Bear Dining Room had left Mileela for a reason. They might not want to go back. If not, they could always just stay in Crimonia.

I left the orphanage and went to the Bear's Lounge to give everyone there the news. Everyone was surprised.

If everyone was going, we'd have to close the shops which would mean no income while we were away. But Yuna had promised not to decrease anyone's wages during the trip. As I was explaining everything, they seemed even more surprised. Morin didn't seem to believe me, and Karin was ecstatic. Nerin muttered whether she would be included.

I headed to the Bear Dining Room next. I'd asked the director to handle Neaf, but I couldn't ask Anzy to tell Seno and the others.

With some hesitation, I filled all three of them in. They were more receptive than I expected. In fact, they told me there was nothing to worry about. They shared a glance and said that they would talk it out with Neaf. I told them to take their time thinking it over. I didn't know what was going through their heads, so that was all I could say.

I was older than them. I needed to keep it together.

After leaving the Bear Dining Room, I headed to the merchant guild to start marking things off of Yuna's to-do list.

"Did something happen, Tiermina?"

The girl smiled. This was Milaine, the young guild master.

"I have something I need to ask about."

"What's on your mind? Something about your earnings?"

"I'm afraid not, though depending on how you view it, an earnings discussion might be relevant."

I told her that the orphans and the employees at the shops were all going to Mileela.

"Everyone?"

"Yes, everyone."

Milaine, who had been smiling until that moment, looked shocked.

"The children won't be there either, so I wanted to see if the guild could arrange for some people to watch over the kokekko while they're out."

I knew it was a big ask.

"It would be a huge help if Guts and Billy could do it. They know how to take care of them, after all."

Guts and Billy were the merchant guild employees who came to retrieve the eggs. Sometimes they'd help us out when we weren't done preparing the eggs. They knew how to take care of the birds, so I wouldn't have to worry if I left their care to them. They were also Milaine's people, which meant they were trustworthy.

"That should be doable."

"Really?"

"Yes. If we can know the day in advance, I can arrange for that."

We hadn't decided when we would be heading out on our trip yet, but if we could figure it out in advance, Milaine would make it work. She was so helpful.

We moved on to talking about things we could take care of right away.

“So if you’re closing the shops for that period, the guild can take all the eggs?”

“Yes, it would be helpful if the guild could take all of them. I wouldn’t want them to go to waste!”

The prices would have to be lowered, but I’d already gotten approval from Yuna.

“That would mean we could run a promotional campaign during that time…”

Milaine smiled to herself, obviously plotting something. That’s why she was the guild master.

“Going to the beach seems like a lovely idea. I’ve only ever been to Mileela for work.”

“Would you like to go too? I’m sure Yuna would love to have you.”

“Ha ha, no, thank you. I appreciate the sentiment. I’d like to go, but I’m afraid I have to work, especially now that I have all these eggs to deal with. I don’t think it’d be possible.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Ha ha, it’s fine. Please enjoy yourself.”

Milaine had done so much for us.

After I left, other small issues kept cropping up as I tried to sort out the preparations.

The biggest snafu was deciding how we would handle the ingredients in the shops. If we weren’t careful, there could be issues with the grocer and butcher deliveries. If we said we needed to skip deliveries without proper notice, that would be an issue for them too. I would need to tell them when the shops would be closed in advance if I could. But since we didn’t have firm dates yet, I couldn’t.

Also, in addition to any upcoming deliveries, we had food in the shops already. It’d be ideal to just use all of it, but it likely

wouldn’t be that easy. The stock we normally just rotated to the next day couldn’t be redistributed once we ran out.

We also needed to make some sort of public announcement that the shops would be closed. If we left without notice, the regulars wouldn’t know what to do.

There were so many things to do, but I couldn’t even start on any of them without knowing the dates of the trip.

To make matters worse, Gentz had suddenly decided he would go to the beach with us. It would be an issue if he took too much time off of work and lost his job at the guild, but he said that he would work consecutive shifts in exchange for time off. I wished he wouldn’t push himself so hard…

I had a lot of things to talk to Yuna about, the situation with Gentz included. Unfortunately, she had gone off to the capital while on a quest for the feudal lord. I figured I would just do everything I could until Yuna returned.

A few days had passed since I’d started prepping for the trip to Mileela. Neaf and the others had decided to come as well. I was a little worried, but it seemed that they’d made the decision together. If the four of them had decided on it as a group, it wasn’t my place to say anything.

I was hoping to talk to Yuna soon, so I had Fina use her Bear Phone to call her up. According to Fina, Yuna was in a land far, far away. She’d been asked by the feudal lord to go to the capital, and next, His Majesty had asked her to take on another job. It was all beyond my imagination.

And yet, according to my daughters, Yuna was on very good terms with the king. They’d visited the palace and had a meal with His Majesty, Her Majesty, and the princesses. I was sure my daughters were safe with Yuna, but thinking about how they had met His Majesty made me a little nervous.

Gentz had gotten permission to go with us as well. Since Gentz was going to be working nonstop without a break so he could join us, I decided to make him something special for dinner that night.

Chapter 24:
Inside the Bear Bus
Noa Chronicles

TSUTAYA EXCLUSIVE STORY

WE WERE GOING to Mileela today. I was so excited that I woke up early. Next, I woke Misa, who slept next to me, and also Shia, my older sister, who had come home from the capital. We all went to the meeting location together, but no one was there. It seemed we were the earliest ones to arrive. But before long, Yuna and Fina arrived as well.

In order to get us all to Mileela, Yuna produced a bear-shaped carriage from her bear item bag. There was one large bear carriage and one small one. The smaller carriage of the two was white and black, so they looked just like Kumayuru and Kumakyu. Yuna said that I could ride on whichever one I liked best, but it was so hard for me to choose. Misa, Fina, and I decided to inspect the carriages before deciding.

“Did you know what Yuna had planned, Fina?”

Fina and Shuri didn’t seem surprised by the carriages.

“I knew about the larger one, but not the smaller one.”

It seemed that Fina and Shuri had been with Yuna when she had made the larger carriage.

“Unfair! Why do you get to know that, Fina?”

Fina was with Yuna all the time, so it was inevitable that she would know these things. I was still jealous, though.

“She asked us to try riding in the carriage and it was a whole thing.”

“Yeah, my butt hurt.”

Apparently, Yuna had asked them to ride in all sorts of bear-shaped contraptions, and it wasn’t a particularly fun experience. Still, I was jealous that they had been able to ride other vehicles in addition to this bear carriage.

“So, what would you all like to do?”

The orphans came and began to board the larger bear carriage. If we didn't choose quickly, there wouldn't be space for us.

Honestly, I wanted to ride on both the bear carriages. After talking it through with the others, there was only one solution. Fina's family would ride separately in one bear carriage, then we would trade places so we would be able to experience both carriages. If I wanted to ride with Fina and Shuri, I would need to trade places with others, but if we rode separately, it would be easier to swap. Of course, I asked Fina's mother for permission.

At first, Fina and her family rode in the larger bear carriage, and I rode with my group in the smaller one. Misa, Shia, Marina, El, and I all boarded the white Kumakyu carriage. Misa and I rode in the front row, then Shia sat in the middle, and Marina and El sat behind us.

Once we were all situated, we headed off to Mileela. The larger bear carriage was at the front, and our bear carriage followed after.

"It's moving even without a horse."

I wondered at first how it would move, but Yuna seemed to be using the power of her magic. When I had traveled with Yuna to His Majesty's birthday festival in the capital, she had captured bandits. Back then, she captured them in a cage and transported them using a bear golem. This was actually quite similar.

She spoke about it as if it were easy, but magic at this scale was not something just anyone could do.

"I'm so jealous of Yuna's magical prowess."

El, who was a decent mage in her own right, said with a sigh from behind me. Misa turned to her.

"You can't do this, El?"

"Well, I think I could bring the wheels into motion. But controlling the heft, speed, distance, and various other factors across a great length of time and distance is beyond me."

El began to explain to Misa in more detail.

"Plus, I couldn't possibly move three carriages at once."

“That sounds very hard.”

“It must be. Yuna isn’t even breaking out into a sweat. I’m so jealous of her.”

Even El, a mage, thought Yuna had impressive magic.

I wished I could use magic like that someday.

The bear carriage continued along as though it were the most natural thing in the world. It wasn’t going much faster than an adult could run, but it was still undoubtedly quicker than a carriage moving at a leisurely pace.

“Noa, Yuna said there are drinks in the refrigerator. Would you hand me one?” Shia asked me from behind.

“Yes, one moment.”

I saw a small door situated in the middle of the vehicle at the very front. Yuna had said drinks were inside of it. I opened the door and felt a rush of cool air. Then, just as Yuna had told us, I saw several drinks had been prepared.

“Here, Shia.”

“Thank you.”

Shia took it and began to drink.

“It’s so good. Refreshing, too.”

Misa and I also took drinks. She was right. They were wonderfully cold and tasty.

The bear carriage continued on, until it came to a halt as I was speaking to Misa and Shia. Apparently, we were taking a break for lunch. Our meal was prepared by Morin, who ran the Bear’s Lounge. It was delicious, but I was disappointed there weren’t any bear breads.

After we finished eating our lunch, I traded carriages with Fina.

“I’m sorry, Tiermina.”

“It’s all right. I already heard all about it.”

Fina’s family switched places with us and boarded the large Kumakyu vehicle. I enjoyed riding in the smaller one, but the

large one was nice too.

I held Kumayuru and sat next to Yuna.

“Huh? Are you riding with us, Noa?”

“Yes, I traded places with Fina.”

On the way home, I would ride in the vehicle that looked like Kumayuru, and my experience would be complete.

After the large bear carriage set off, I saw the small black-and-white bear carriages following after us.

“We’re going to go a little faster, okay.”

As soon as Yuna said this, the carriage began to speed up. The other children cheered and the adults became flustered. I was in the former group, of course. At this rate, we would reach the beach faster.

As I thought this, one of the children looked out the back and started to make a fuss.

“The bear’s eyes are glowing!”

The small bears’ eyes were indeed flickering on and off.

“Yuna, the eyes of the bears behind us are glowing.”

She had told me to turn the eyes on if we needed anything, but I never ended up having to use them.

“Wonder what’s going on?”

Yuna steered the vehicle to a halt, and the smaller bear vehicles stopped as well.

“What is it, Tiermina, Anz?” Yuna asked. Everyone from the smaller bear carriages told her that she had been going much too fast. After that, we slackened our pace yet again.

Yuna looked disappointed, but even the director of the orphanage politely asked her to go slower. We had no choice.

I was disappointed, but I didn’t complain. We still were traveling much faster than a normal carriage, and we soon arrived at the tunnel.

Inns and shops were set up at the entrance to the tunnel, but the greatest attraction was the bear statue. Apparently, Father had asked Yuna to make one. I had already begged her to

make one for our home, but my idea had been shot down quickly. It was no fair. Why did she listen to Father but not me?

We finally started heading through the tunnel. Once we were out the other end, we'd arrive at the ocean. Light mana gems were set up along the tunnel's walls, brightening the interior. At first, moving through the tunnel was novel and interesting, but after seeing the same scenery for so long, it grew unappealing.

Before long, Yuna announced that the exit was coming up. Everyone began to liven up inside the bear carriage. I did, too, of course. I saw the exit up ahead as we exited the tunnel.

A vast expanse of blue spread out before us.

"That's the ocean."

Everyone began to shout as they gazed upon it. Misa and Shia, Fina and Shuri, and I all did too. I looked forward to the next few days.

Chapter 25:
Inside the Bear Bus
Karin Chronicles

BOOKSTORE COLLABORATION EXCLUSIVE STORY

WE WERE GOING to Mileela today.

Everyone had been busy at work early in the morning baking bread, so we ended up late to the meeting point. Once we arrived, we saw a large bear and two smaller bears. Were these our carriages?

I saw the orphans, Fina and her family, and Lady Noir and her group already settled inside. Apparently, we would be traveling in these bear-shaped contraptions. I saw no horses ready to pull the carriages, however. They seemed to move via Yuna's magic alone. When I first heard, I couldn't believe it. But this was Yuna we were talking about. It might be possible for her.

I boarded the small, black carriage with my mother, Nerin, and Anzy's group. Seno asked to sit at the very front, so she and Anzy took seats in the first row. Forne sat in the middle with Bettle, and the rest of us sat in the very back. Then Yuna gave us a brief tour of the carriage, and we were off.

Seno started making a commotion at the front. It felt odd. This carriage was moving without a horse.

"Karin, there's no horse, but the carriage is moving!"

Nerin was animated as well. If they hadn't been here, I would probably be making a scene like they were.

"Well, she is Yuna after all."

"She really is amazing."

Whenever I worked, I would overhear snippets of the customers' conversations. They often talked about Yuna. She would get revenge on any adventurers who picked fights with her and had slain powerful monsters. After hearing everything

she had done, I suppose it wasn't so surprising she could do this too.

She was younger than me, but her powers were amazing.

"Anzy, you came here because Yuna asked you to come from Mileela, is that right?"

"Yeah, she wanted a chef for her restaurant. At first, I thought she was joking, but after going through all sorts of things together, I realized that she was serious, and we moved to Crimonia."

"And we tagged along with her."

"We wanted to get out of town, even if we wouldn't be paid well, so we had Anzy to talk to Yuna."

It seemed everyone had their own circumstances. Terrible things had happened to my mother and I at the capital, but Yuna had saved us as well. Now we were surrounded by children baking delicious bread every day.

"When we got here, the work was a lot more fun than I expected and no one was forcing us to do anything we didn't want to. The pay is good and we have time off, so we can go out. And now we're all here out on this trip."

"Well, for us, it's just a trip back home."

They laughed.

"Hey, are you sure about returning to Mileela? I heard terrible things happened to you in that town."

I had no idea whether it was a topic I was allowed to broach, but I asked about it anyway.

"We won't know until we get there, but it's probably all right now. I'd like to see my friends in Mileela after it's been so long."

"I don't think I could have made the trip alone, but I'll be okay as long as I've got everyone else with me."

Seno and the others looked at each other.

"We're really grateful to Yuna for making this possible for us all."

"I never would have guessed she would take so many people over to Mileela."

She had taken the orphans, us, and Fina's family. In addition, even the feudal lord's daughter, Lady Noir, was with us.

"What is Mileela like? Is the ocean really that big? I heard that the water is all salty. Is that true?"

I knew about the ocean, but I hadn't ever seen it before.

"All the tourists ask that about the ocean."

Well, I hadn't seen it in person before, so what else would I ask about? I'd only ever heard people describe it. Salt didn't come free, either. How could a body of water larger than a lake, stretching as far as the eye could see, be full of salt water?

"The ocean is massive, Karin. The water stretches out beyond the horizon, and all of it is briny."

"Someone didn't just spill some salt into the water, right?"

Nerin interjected into the conversation.

"Ha ha. Now that would be something."

"Then why is it salty?"

"Um, I'm actually not sure."

"Come to think of it, I never really thought about it either. I was born by the ocean, so I never really questioned it."

"Karin, Nerin, you two don't know why rock salt is made of salt either. We have no idea why gold, silver, and iron ores are found in mines either. It probably hasn't even occurred to you to think about it. The ocean is the same to us."

After she explained it like that, I realized there were things I'd never questioned. Now that I was aware of them, I realized I had no answers. My mom and Nerin felt the same way, so I understood how Anzy and the others had never wondered or even thought about why the ocean was salty.

"So, you came from the capital, right, Karin? Why don't you tell us about it? I'd like to visit someday," Seno said, turning around to talk to me.

"The capital?"

Nerin and I started telling them about the place. Mom would chime in occasionally too.

"I'd really like to visit someday."

“Maybe we should have gone on a trip to the capital instead of Mileela. We could get there so fast in these carriages.”

Our small carriage was following after the big one in front of us. At first, I’d felt nervous at the lack of a horse, but the ride was comfortable, and faster than a normal carriage too.

Typically, we could only travel as fast as the horses could trot, but Yuna’s bear carriages could travel as fast as a person could sprint. We had been traveling at that speed since morning without slowing down.

“Yuna is using her magic to make it go, so it’s probably wearing her out.”

I guess she had a point. I didn’t know much about magic, but if something like this was easy, others would probably have been doing it too. Yuna was probably only capable of doing this because she was, well, Yuna.

When we took a break later, I overheard Yuna and Rulina talking. Apparently, moving the bear carriages through magic would normally take a great deal of mana. But Yuna didn’t seem tired at all.

I couldn’t tell if it was easy or hard on her.

Soon, we arrived in front of the tunnel that led to Mileela. After we took a break at the entrance, we boarded the bear carriages again and headed through the tunnel. There were light mana gems affixed to the walls, lighting the tunnel all the way through.

“Once we get through the tunnel, we’ll see the ocean.”

“The tunnel is pretty long, though.”

“Is it?”

“Yes, at first, it’s interesting to pass through, but it gets boring after a while seeing the same scenery forever.”

“Seno fell asleep, after all.”

“So did everyone else.”

When Seno got upset, everyone laughed.

Just like Anzy said, the tunnel was long. My mom dozed off next to me, and Nerin was sleeping too. Anzy and the others had drifted off as well, so the carriage was quiet. Since I'd been up early, I was feeling tired too. I was nodding off when I heard the kids in front of us start to make a commotion.

"I see a light!" "Is the tunnel exit ahead?!" "The ocean?"

We all roused ourselves and poked our heads out the window to look out ahead... There really was a light at the end of the tunnel.

As the carriage continued through the tunnel, the light became bigger and bigger. Then, the moment we were through, the gigantic ocean spread out before us. The ocean was huge. It was somehow bigger than I'd expected. It continued on farther than I could see. It wasn't just me, though. Mom and Nerin were shocked too. The kids in the big carriage quieted down. I could understand why they'd made such a big commotion earlier. It really was amazing to see such a vast body of water stretch out in front of us.

"This is the ocean."

The water continued on farther than the eye could see. The ocean was vaster than I could imagine.

Chapter 26:
At the Ocean for the First Time
Sherry Chronicles

ANIMATE EXCLUSIVE STORY

ONCE WE GOT TO MILEELA, we were all going to stay at the large bear house there. We decided on our rooms, and then the kids from the orphanage all asked Yuna if we could go to the ocean. It was an odd hour, so she didn't look very keen to let us explore. Suddenly, the adventurer Rulina said she would come with us so we were allowed to go.

We tried to dash away, but Rulina stopped us.

"If you rush off on your own, we're not going."

After she said that we all stopped in our tracks. Nobody wanted to be forbidden from going to the beach.

"If anyone wanders too far from the group, we're going right back to the bear house. Make sure to keep an eye on each other."

That stopped us from racing to try to get to the ocean before everyone else. The boys looked the most disappointed, but after Gil told them that a man who couldn't keep a promise was no man at all, none of them tried to sneak ahead.

We leisurely walked down the gentle slope. The ocean was getting closer. We saw it on the way to Yuna's bear house, but seeing the ocean again, it really was huge. It was far larger than a lake, or even the whole town of Crimonia. I couldn't even imagine how vast it was. I couldn't even see where the ocean ended.

"Rulina, how far does the ocean go?" a girl asked. Rulina looked pensive.

"Hmm, that's a tough question. I think that if you kept going all the way to the other side, there might be another country there, full of people different from us."

"How far across is it? Is it as far as Crimonia is from here?"

“I’ve never tried to cross it so I’m not sure. But on occasion, we trade with the country across the ocean, so there must be people living there.”

I wondered how far away the other side could be. No matter how far I looked, I only saw more water.

We finally reached the ocean. There was sand all the way across the shore.

“This is a sand beach.”

A beach. It was my first time seeing one.

“The water is coming closer!”

“It’s going back!”

“Those are waves.”

The water came up to us, then lapped right back into the ocean. It kept coming in and out over and over. The kids couldn’t help themselves, and started running.

“As you can see, the water will come right up to you pretty fast, so don’t get too close to it or you’ll get your shoes wet.”

But Rulina was too late. Some of the kids had gotten soaked already. Nonetheless, everyone was having fun.

“It’s salty.”

One of the kids had tried to drink the water. He stuck out his tongue as he spat it out.

“Yup, you’re not supposed to drink ocean water. It’s brine, so it’s not for drinking.”

I heard her, but really? I couldn’t believe the water in front of me was all brine. I scooped some water up with my hands and licked a little bit of it. It was salty. The ocean really was full of salt water.

We didn’t have much time before we had to head back, but we had fun on the beach anyway. No one seemed to want to leave, but Rulina reminded us of our promise to Yuna, so we all listened and headed back.

Everyone always listened to what Yuna had to say. We all loved her, after all.

Once we got back, we ate dinner, then I went to give Lady Misana and Lady Shia their swimsuits. Lady Noir already had hers, just like Fina and the others, but I hadn't been able to give Lady Misana or Lady Shia theirs yet.

"Lady Misana, Lady Shia, um, here are your swimsuits."

"Thank you so very much."

"Thank you. It must have been a lot of work to make these."

They both happily took them.

"No, it was quite all right. I had fun making them."

I was telling the truth. I'd had fun making them, but I wished I had a bit more time.

"If they rip or anything, I think I should be able to mend it as long as it's a simple fix, so please ask me if you need it."

I'd brought thread and a needle as well as some fabric just in case. It was possible to sew the swimsuits up at least.

"I'm sure they'll be fine because you made them, Sherry. Fina's and my swimsuits were perfect, after all," Lady Noir said. It eased my anxiety, since she had already done her fitting.

"Right, we'll let you know if there are any issues."

"Of course."

After that, I gave Lady Misana's guards, Marina and El, their swimsuits and finally gave Rulina hers. Now everyone in the group had theirs.

The next day, after we finished breakfast, we got ready to go to the beach. The other kids from the orphanage started to put on the swimsuits I'd made for them. Since they'd already tried theirs on, I figured it would be okay, but I was still a little worried.

Once we were all done changing, Rulina and Liz gathered all the girls to go outside. Gil had already taken all the boys out.

We took the same path to the beach, and we saw the ocean spread out ahead of us. Everyone seemed like they wanted to run off, but they followed Liz and Rulina's directions and didn't go ahead on their own.

We got to the beach. We needed to be careful of the waves when they washed up, and we weren't allowed to wander far. Rulina warned us about a lot of things, but the kids who had already heard her speech yesterday weren't listening very closely because we all wanted to go right to the water. I did, too, of course.

Rulina and Liz sighed, then told us we could go off and play. We dashed off and jumped into the water.

"It's cold."

My friend and I started splashing each other. My clothes were getting wet, but it wasn't hard to move in them. They didn't cling to me like normal wet clothes either.

All the kids from the orphanage were wearing swimsuits, but the nobles and adventurers had them on too. They were all wearing clothes I'd made. For some reason, that made me happy.

Fina and Shuri came last, wearing my swimsuits too. There was a pretty girl with long black hair next to them. For a second, I wondered who it was, but then I realized that the girl was wearing the swimsuit I'd made for Yuna. Fina and Shuri were happily holding her hands. The girl was wearing black and white bear gloves. This pretty girl must have been Yuna.

My friend asked me who the girl next to Fina and Shuri was. She hadn't put it together yet. I wouldn't have realized it was her either if she hadn't been wearing the swimsuit I'd made her.

Yuna had picked out that swimsuit. She looked tall and slender in it. It looked good on her. I wanted to see her try on the other swimsuits too, but that seemed unlikely.

Chapter 27:
Returning Home
Anz Chronicles

EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL BONUS

IT HAD BEEN A WHILE since I'd last been to Mileela. I hadn't thought I'd be back so soon. According to the lodgers at our inn, a chef wouldn't normally return home for years after going out to study their discipline. That was my assumption when I left Mileela, but when I thought about it more carefully, Yuna had dug a tunnel for me so I could go back and forth between the towns anytime. Plus, she hadn't just invited the orphans on this trip, she took the rest of us along too.

The day I got to Mileela, instead of going home, I slept in the bear house.

I'd heard about Yuna's bear house even before going to Crimonia. I couldn't let a chance to see it for myself pass me by. I didn't want to leave Morin on her own to make everyone's food either. I was excited to tour the bear house, but after finding our rooms, Morin said she was going to prepare dinner, so I helped her out. Yuna gathered the ingredients and we put them together in a dish. Karin, Nerin, Seno, and the others helped, so it took less time than I'd expected.

While we were prepping the food, the kids came back from the beach and started yapping away about everything they'd done. Once I finished, I joined Seno and the others exploring the house and we found a bath. The night view we could see from the bath's window was stunning. It was so beautiful that even after years of living in Mileela, we all agreed it was wonderful.

The next day, I took Yuna up on her kind offer and left to see my family. I was worried about the kids having enough to eat, but she told me it was fine.

"I didn't think I'd be back here so soon," Seno said softly.

It wasn't just me coming back home. Everyone from Mileela was there. The director had even convinced Neaf to come. Tiermina and Gentz were also there to meet my parents.

"You're right. And I never could have imagined that I would be so cheerful when I returned."

"Living in Crimonia must have been just that good for us."

"When we had no idea where our hearts belonged, Yuna saved us."

"What an odd girl."

She dressed as a bear all the time. She really was odd.

We walked and talked about Yuna until we had to split ways.

"Well, I'm headed this way."

"Tiermina, Gentz, please take care of Anz."

"Yes, of course."

Seno and the others headed one way, while Tiermina, Gentz, and I walked the other way. They were headed to the inn in order to meet my parents. Since they were looking after me, they figured they needed to meet my parents.

Personally, I didn't think it was necessary.

"I'm glad they're all in good spirits."

Tiermina seemed to have an idea of what had happened to them. She looked relieved.

"Yes, it's all thanks to Yuna."

Who knows what would have happened to them all if Yuna hadn't given them all jobs. Maybe they would have stayed in Mileela, still wallowing in their grief without anywhere to go. Yuna had given them a warm welcome and a nice home and environment with a job.

When they'd first gotten to Crimonia, they'd all been confused by how nice it was.

As I was talking to Tiermina and Gentz, I caught sight of my house. It had been a while since I'd been back home. It looked

exactly as I remembered it. It was an inn and also a restaurant, so it was a lot larger than the normal houses around it.

I headed in through the inn entrance.

“I’m home,” I said.

“Welcome back…wait, Anz?”

My mom was inside.

“Hi Mom. I just arrived.”

“What are you doing here? Did something happen? Were you chased out by Yuna?”

Why would she say something like that out of nowhere?

“No, Yuna gave us a break from the restaurant and brought Seno and everyone else here to Mileela.”

“I’m only kidding. Some guests who visited last night told me that Yuna was here. I was thinking of going to visit, but it was late and I didn’t want to bother her. We’re not allowed to make a big commotion, and besides, the inn was bustling.”

She could have spared me the poorly chosen joke if she already knew why I was in town. Was it really that fun to tease her own daughter?

“Who are these two?”

Mom looked over at Tiermina and Gentz.

“Tiermina looks out for me, and Gentz is her husband.”

“My name is Tiermina, and I’m helping manage Anz’s restaurant. I’m so sorry that I never greeted you earlier, especially since I’m the one in charge of your daughter.”

“You’re not Yuna’s mother, are you?!”

“No, Mom. Um, Tiermina is Fina and Shuri’s mom. They’ve been here before, haven’t they?”

My mom said something so silly that I rushed to correct her. Tiermina and Gentz were shocked.

“You’re Fina and Shuri’s mom?”

“Yes, thank you for taking care of them while they were here.”

“It was no issue, they were adorable little girls. Unlike my daughter.”

“Anzy is such a wonderful cook.”

“Oh, she doesn’t even compare. There are so few kids who are that polite at such a young age.”

“There aren’t many girls Anzy’s age who have left home to start their own business venture.”

“Come on, please stop it!”

I was just glad Fina wasn’t here. It was embarrassing hearing someone brag to my mom about me, so I really didn’t want it to continue.

My dad came in to see what all the commotion was, so we went through introductions all over again.

“How’s our little girl’s cooking?”

“She’s very popular in Crimonia. Anzy really helped us out there.”

I wished she wouldn’t praise me when I was right in front of her. I was so embarrassed.

“Really? You shouldn’t need to go out of your way to ask when you’ve already talked to all the guests coming in from Crimonia. You should know this already.”

Mom sighed and said, “They might just be saying that as flattery because they’re at our establishment. It’s better to ask the person managing the restaurant.”

“Don’t worry. Anzy is doing a wonderful job running the restaurant.”

“I see. That’s a relief. I hope you’ll continue to look after her.”

Dad bowed his head.

“Of course, we’ll take good care of her.”

“If she chases away all her customers, please send her back here. I’ll make sure to straighten her out.”

“If that happens, please do.”

Tiermina and Gentz laughed as they spoke and took a look around the house before heading off. I offered to show them around, but they told me not to worry about them since it'd been a while since I'd seen my family.

Ugh, that embarrassed me too.

"So, are you really doing all right? Hasn't been too hard?"

"It's been good. Seno and the others are there, and everyone is nice."

"Since you're a young girl, you haven't gotten people underestimating you or trying to antagonize you, eh?"

"From the others? No, I'm fine. All the customers know that it's Yuna's shop, so no one messes with me. If some people who don't know Yuna tried to make trouble, the adventurers and employees from the merchant guild would protect us."

"Really?"

"It isn't just that. She also knows the local lord and the guild masters of the adventurer and merchant guilds, so working is always fun."

Yuna really was an amazing girl. Anyone who knew her wouldn't do anything bad to the shop, and even if they tried, there were lots of people who would protect us.

"She really is something else. Nobody'd guess based on how she dresses."

She slayed a kraken and dug a whole tunnel just to bring me to Crimonia.

"I can't believe she closed the restaurant to let you all have time to visit Mileela. She always does the unfathomable."

My mom was shocked when she found out the reason I'd come back. It wasn't just my restaurant employees here, but also the kids from the orphanage and Morin's shop. Under normal circumstances, that wasn't believable. If you took time off, you couldn't make a living. On top of that, if you went on a trip, it'd cost money.

I couldn't see how it helped Yuna in any way.

We were staying at Yuna's house, so there wouldn't be lodging expenses. If everyone had stayed at the inn for seven

days, that would have been very expensive.

“I’d like to see her, but I can’t leave the inn,” my dad said.

Apparently a lot of people had come in from Crimonia, so he was very busy. Back in the capital, Elena had told me the same thing was happening.

“Should I come back?”

“Anz, do you really mean that?”

Even though I’d thrown the idea out casually, my dad suddenly got angry.

“But you’re so busy, aren’t you?”

“Not busy enough to quash my own little girl’s dream! You really think your dad would do that to you?!”

“Dad…”

“The girl said your cooking’s so good, she made a restaurant just for you.”

“Yeah.”

“Then you better see it through to the end. If the bear girl doesn’t want you there anymore, then you come home. But until then, you stay put.”

“Okay, I understand. I’ll do the best I can.”

“Will you, now? That’s my little girl.”

“C’mon, you know you want her back home.”

“Ey!”

“You’re always so worried about her. I’m not joking this time. You can come back whenever you’d like.”

“Mom… I’m going to work hard so Yuna doesn’t chase me out.”

I loved my job in Crimonia, after all.

STORY

KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR 15



IS THE GUILD MASTER OKAY?

While Yuna is enjoying her employee trip, she goes around to visit everyone in Mileela who has helped her in the past. She sees Anz's father, Deigha, who fed her a delicious, replenishing meal; the guild master Atola and the others; and Jeremo, who is now the merchant guild master! Jeremo is keen to skip out on his duties, but even when Anabell, his mentor from Crimonia, gives him a scolding, he's still beloved by everyone, always doing the best he can…

A SMALL ISLAND APPEARS OUT OF NOWHERE.

After Yuna is done making her rounds, she goes fishing with Fina's family and hears about a mysterious island that appeared out of the blue. She talks to old man Kuro, who had helped her when she fought the kraken, to get more details. Kuro tells her nothing bad will happen as long as she doesn't go near the island, which is only visible in the open ocean… Yuna's curiosity is piqued. She makes a waterslide to occupy the kids!




Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear
VOL.15

Chapter 28:
Going to the Ocean
Director Chronicles

ANIMATE EXCLUSIVE STORY

WHEN TIERMINA first approached me with the proposal, I couldn't believe it. She said Yuna wanted to take all the orphans to see the ocean. According to Tiermina, Yuna wanted to reward all the children who were working so hard with an employee trip.

Though Mileela was indeed not too far from Crimonia, traveling with nearly thirty young children was no small matter. Some of them worked in the bakery and others were watching over the kokekkos. My worries had already been considered, however, and they had asked employees at the merchant guild to watch over the kokekkos while they were away. The same people who came to retrieve the eggs would look after them. I had seen them many times before, and they were good people.

I also heard that Morin, Anz, and the others would take time off from their businesses to go as well. I couldn't believe how many people would be going. I thought the cost must have been staggering, but it seemed my worries were unnecessary. Yuna was going to cover all expenses. In addition, she planned to pay everyone's salaries even when they were not going to be working.

I didn't understand what Yuna was thinking. None of this would benefit her at all.

While I was mulling everything over, Sherry began to make swimsuits at Yuna's request. She would make one for each of the children. Sherry planned to make many types of swimsuits, which seemed like a large responsibility. The children also made much too many personalized requests. In order to make sure that Sherry didn't shoulder an undue amount of work, I stipulated that everyone would wear the same swimsuit.

If the clothes were all the same, that would make things easier on Sherry.

The children happily did their work while looking forward to the upcoming trip. They asked me what the ocean was like, but as I had never been there, I had no idea how to answer. Neaf came to my aid.

“Ask me about the ocean instead,” she said.

She hailed from Mileela, a town on the shore. Something terrible had happened to her in her hometown and so she had come to Crimonia through Yuna. Then she had started to help with the orphanage. At first, the children and Neaf had tried to be considerate of each other and kept some distance, but before long, they had taken to each other, and Neaf began to enjoy herself.

I worried about whether she would be able to go back there without unearthing terrible memories. Tiermina had asked me to talk to her about it, but I hadn’t the faintest idea how to broach the subject.

“Director, I’ve gotten the children to bed.”

“Thank you. Things have been so much easier with you here, Neaf.”

“I’m just glad that I’m not in the way. This has been fun for me too.”

“I’m grateful you’re here.”

“I’ve brought the tea for you,” Liz said as she came in.

“Thank you very much.”

“Hee hee. Things have been so fun lately.”

“It’s all thanks to Yuna.”

“When I think about what things were like before Yuna came, It’s hard to believe how we’re living now.”

“I asked so much of you, Liz.”

“We have everything we do now thanks to Yuna.”

Yuna, the girl who wore the adorable bear clothes, was the one who made it possible for us to enjoy ourselves now.

“I had a question for you, Neaf,” I said as we had our tea.

“What is it?”

“Will there be any trouble if you visit Mileela? If you don’t want to go, we can inform Yuna.”

Neaf shook her head.

“I’m okay. I can go with you. I should be fine as long as I’m with the children. I’ve already promised them I would go.”

She smiled.

“Just as Liz said, it’s been a lot of fun. Some of the children are stubborn, but everyone is working hard and helping each other. Even the small children are doing all they can. I enjoy being here with them. If I had to return to Mileela on my own, I might be anxious, but as long as I’m with you, Liz, and the children, I should be fine. It seems Seno and the others plan to go too, so I won’t be on my own.”

“Well, as long as that’s true. Please tell me if anything happens.”

“Thank you for your thoughtfulness.”

She smiled. Seeing her smile quelled one of my worries.

Before I even knew it, it was the day of our departure. Since we were leaving early, the children all seemed very tired. Some swayed as they walked and had to be carried by Neaf and Liz.

“We told you to go to bed early!”

We couldn’t carry all the children.

It seemed that they couldn’t help themselves, such was their excitement of going to the ocean. They had stayed up late into the night talking with each other.

“You can sleep inside the carriage.”

According to Tiermina, Yuna had prepared the carriages at the town’s gate. We would only leave once everyone had gathered, but we needed to make it to the gate by foot.

I was so very thankful Neaf was there with us.

Once we arrived at the gate, I found a large bear and two smaller bears there.

“Director, are we riding on those?” Liz asked as she peered at the bear-shaped objects. I hadn’t the slightest idea.

While we hemmed and hawed over what to do, Yuna arrived and asked us to board the larger bear. They were indeed vehicles. I supposed these must have been our carriages then.

When the drowsy children caught sight of the bears, they were jolted wide awake and began to run over with energetic vigor.

“If you’re too rowdy, we’ll leave you behind.”

I told them to quietly board the bear carriage. They obediently went in and sat together in groups with their closest friends.

“She said to go to the very back, right?”

Yuna had told us to take the last seats. I did as she had asked. I was able to keep an eye on the children from my seat, which must have been why she had asked us to sit here.

“How will it move, do you suppose? I see no horses,” Liz asked from her seat next to me.

She was right. There was not a single horse to be found.

“Perhaps Kumayuru and Kumakyu will pull the carriages?”

Kumayuru and Kumakyu were Yuna’s charming bears.

“There are also two smaller carriages, so that wouldn’t be possible.”

Neaf peered at the bear carriages outside the window.

As we wondered how this could possibly work, Yuna told us she would use her mana. I didn’t know much about magic, but those who did seemed aghast at the idea. It appeared to be quite an unreasonable proposition.

Nonetheless, we headed off to Mileela in the bear carriages.

We traversed the long road and pressed on through the tunnel until we spied the glistening ocean on the other side. I had never dreamed of seeing the ocean at my old age. I couldn’t thank Yuna enough for the experience.

Chapter 29:
Going to the Ocean
Orphan Chronicles

WONDERGOOD BONUS STORY

WE WERE GOING to the ocean with Yuna.

Yuna said she was taking us there to thank us for all our work, but we were the ones who were thankful. If we didn't have Yuna, we'd be hungry every day. Because of her, we could eat our fill.

I was really looking forward to the trip, but I was also worried about the kokekkos, since we wouldn't be there taking care of them. Who would feed them while we were gone? Without us around to feed them, they might even starve, and I wouldn't be able to forgive myself. Maybe it would be better if I stayed behind?

Turns out I didn't need to worry. Tiermina said that while we were at the beach Guts and Billy would take care of them. They were the employees from the merchant guild who always came to pick up the eggs. They were nice to us, and they'd even give us a hand when we were really busy.

If they were taking care of the kokekkos while we were gone, there was nothing to worry about.

Then we got to the ocean. It was the first time I had ever seen it. It seemed like it was a big deal to everyone, as we were smiling and playing.

We swam in the water and Yuna made us this waterslide thing that we played with. It was like a slide in the shape of a bear. Then some fishermen made us seafood before they let us go fishing on their boats. We also got to explore the new town, which was great too.

The days were a lot of fun, but at night, I would worry about the kokekkos. Since I normally spent every day with them, I was nervous.

“Are the kokekkos okay?” I murmured to myself from under my covers.

It wasn’t just me. It seemed like everyone else was worried too.

“It’s gonna be okay. Guts and Billy are looking after them.”

“This has been fun, but I miss the kokekkos.”

I felt the same way. I forgot about them when we were playing on the beach, but at night, I’d start to get homesick for them.

“We’re leaving the day after tomorrow.”

“Yeah, tomorrow is our last day of vacation.”

I’d see the kokekkos the day after tomorrow.

“The last few days have been fun, though.”

“Uh-huh, sure were.”

“How can we show Yuna how much we appreciated this?”

I was thinking so much about the kokekkos that I forgot to tell Yuna how grateful I was.

“It doesn’t seem like there’s anything we can really do for her.”

“Yeah. The only things we can do are to take care of the kokekkos and clean.”

Clean?

“We normally clean at the shops and when we’re at home. We even clean when we take care of the kokekkos. We could probably clean this house too.”

Someone made a suggestion.

“What do you think, Gil?”

“Sounds good. Yuna will love it,” Gil said after listening to us talk.

“I’ll help too.”

Gil decided to join us.

The next day, we told the girls our plan.

“We actually had the same idea. That’s probably the best we can do. We can at least clean up the rooms we used.”

Apparently, great minds think alike. We could have started in the morning, but we already promised the kids we met in town we’d play with them. We needed to say goodbye to them too.

We made up our minds to play a bunch in the morning, then clean the bear house after.

“We’re going home tomorrow, you don’t need to clean.”

Instead of being happy, Yuna seemed confused when we told her. But why?

“Are you sure you guys want to go home? You don’t want to play more?” Yuna asked us.

“We’re worried about the kokekkos. We want to get home soon.”

“Yeah, I want to see the birds.”

“I want to work at the bakery.”

No one told her they really did want to play more. We knew that if we did, we would be making trouble for her. We didn’t want to inconvenience the director or Liz. Or Yuna either. We were already grateful she brought us to the ocean. We would treasure these last few days forever. If we didn’t work, we wouldn’t get to eat.

Yuna seemed troubled by what we were saying. She finally smiled and said, “Okay.”

It wasn’t just us. Anz, Morin, Gil, Rulina, and Lady Noir came along too. Since everyone helped to clean the hallways, kitchen, bath, and outside walls, we finished the job fast. Yuna thanked us. She looked really happy, and that made us really happy too.

The next day, we left the bear house and got back on the bear carriages to return to Crimonia. I felt sad, but I wanted to see the kokekkos sooner rather than later.

Once we arrived at Crimonia, I thanked Yuna and dashed off to our house. I wasn't alone, though. All the kids who were worried about the kokekkos were running too. From behind, the director shouted, "Don't run! It's dangerous!" We called back to her that we wouldn't, and we all stopped running.

Soon, we saw our house, and the kokekko shed next to it. It really felt like we were home. I headed straight to the shed, but I realized I didn't have the key to get in.

While I was trying to figure out what to do, I saw someone sitting next to the shed.

"You're back?" he said.

"Guts?"

It was Guts, one of the people taking care of the kokekkos while we were gone.

"Why are you here?"

"I heard you were coming home today. Here's the key."

I caught the key as he tossed it over to me. He waited for us so he could hand off the keys. I was glad we hadn't told Yuna we wanted to stay longer. That would have caused a lot of trouble for Guts.

"I took good care of the kokekkos for you guys."

"Thank you."

"You too."

The kids running up after me also thanked him.

"Did you have fun in Mileela?"

"Yes. The ocean was huge! I was so shocked."

I didn't think it'd be that big or pretty.

"I see. Sounds like a good experience. I'll be counting on you again starting tomorrow."

"Yes. Thanks again."

After we thanked him, Guts gave us a wave as he started walking away.

I opened the shed and headed inside. The kokekkos welcomed us. I was happy to see them.

“I’m home!”

Looking around, I saw all the other kids were thrilled to see the kokekkos too.

I’d be putting in another day of hard work starting tomorrow.

Chapter 30:
Going to the Ocean
El Chronicles

TSUTAYA EXCLUSIVE STORY

WE ARRIVED IN CRIMONIA to work as Lady Misana's guards while she was on vacation in Mileela. After we got to the capital, we boarded Yuna's fantastical bear-shaped carriages and headed off. At first I wondered how Yuna would make the carriages move, and was shocked to learn that she was using her own mana. Thinking back though, she'd done something similar the first time we'd met. Even if I could have gotten the carriages going, I wouldn't have been able to keep it up for the duration of the trip. As a fellow mage, I was jealous of Yuna's mana stores.

We took a break, but Yuna didn't even seem tired. She kept up the pace and brought us all the way to Mileela on the carriages. A view of the ocean opened up ahead of us. It was my first time seeing it. The swath of blue looked like it stretched into infinity.

When I heard we were all getting swimsuits, I wanted to stay in Crimonia, but after seeing this view, I was glad I came.

It was late by the time we got in, so the real fun would start tomorrow.

Lady Misana looked disappointed to have to wait, but it seemed she had taken a liking to Yuna's bear house. She and Lady Noir started exploring it together.

It didn't seem like they'd be in any danger, but Marina and I decided to take a look around the house just to be sure.

"I didn't expect there to be a bear house here."

"I was already stunned by Yuna's bear house in Crimonia, but the bigger one here was even more of a surprise."

"Plus, she has two houses here."

There were indeed two bear houses, likely to separate the boys and the girls. They were connected on the inside, so we could move between them. The rooms and the baths were separated as well. I didn't want to take a bath with Gil or Gentz, of course, so I had no objections to this arrangement.

After making our rounds, we arrived in the dining hall, where I sensed a delicious aroma. Morin and Anzy, who worked at Yuna's shops, were making dinner. I was shocked. I mean, Yuna was an adventurer, right? She was a truly enigmatic girl.

The next day, Lady Misana asked me to teach her how to swim. I already knew how from lakes and places like that, so I was more or less comfortable in the water, but I wasn't a very good swimmer. As long as she was okay with that, I'd teach her.

"It'd be embarrassing to learn in front of the other kids here, so can you please teach me over there?"

Lady Misana pointed at a boulder on the beach. She must have wanted to hide behind it as she practiced. I didn't think it was embarrassing for someone of her age not to be able to swim. Some people were never given the chance, and wouldn't ever learn. Even still, she was at an age where she'd feel embarrassed if others saw her struggling.

Lady Shia was going to help teach Lady Noir how to swim too, so we all headed behind the rock Lady Shia splashed Lady Noir, and then Lady Misa joined them and started playing too.

"It's cold."

"I got water in my mouth. Eww, it's salty."

"It got in your mouth? Are you okay?"

"I'm okay. It was just a little, but it was really salty."

I thought that was odd too. I couldn't believe all this water was salty. I thought to myself how all the salt anyone could possibly want was here for the taking.

"Lady Misana, Lady Noir, weren't we here to practice swimming?"

"I'm sorry."

It seemed as if they really had forgotten. They apologized, then we started practicing. We waded into the water until it came up to our hips. It was chilly, but it also felt nice.

“I’ll hold your hand, so try to use your legs to swim.”

Adorably, Lady Misana cocked her head to the side.

“My legs? How?”

She didn’t seem to understand.

“El, give her an example,” Marina said, and I finally understood. Of course Lady Misana wouldn’t know how to kick her legs. She hadn’t ever seen anybody swim before.

“Here, let me show you,” Lady Shia said, then took my hands.

She started to kick as she held on.

“I see. So that’s how you do it.”

Thanks to Lady Shia’s example, Lady Misana knew what to do. She kicked her legs in the same way Lady Shia had, then we started practicing. Next to us, Lady Noir was doing the same thing, grabbing Lady Shia’s hands.

“Shia, don’t let go, okay?”

“Hee hee. I know.”

“Why did you laugh?”

“I wasn’t laughing.”

“You so were.”

The two sisters seemed to get along well. It was charming.

“You better not let go either, El,” Lady Misana told me after hearing the other two.

“I won’t.”

If I let go and something were to happen to Lady Misana, our lives would be forfeit. I wouldn’t do anything like that even as a joke. I’d hold on to her hand no matter what happened.

Lady Misana kept her head just above water as she kept kicking and kicking her legs.

As we were practicing, Lady Misana said something to me out of nowhere.

“You have such a large chest, El.”

I didn’t like my chest. It got in the way when I ran, and the male adventurers always stared at me. It was in the way when I swung a sword and I couldn’t wear most clothing. In many ways, smaller breasts were simply more practical. Plus for some reason, my larger breasts seemed to make Yuna hostile toward me? She was always glaring at them like they killed her parents or something. Honestly, if she wanted them that much, she could have them.

I had high mana reserves, so I was lucky that I could use magic. If I couldn’t, I probably wouldn’t have been able to become an adventurer.

“Large breasts aren’t necessarily better,” I told her.

I thought that Yuna’s breasts were actually a great size. She was slim, pretty, and feminine, but she was a magic genius with impressive mana stores. She was exactly the kind of girl I wanted to be.

Plus, that bear look could only work on her. If I wore that, I’d look ridiculous.

Lady Misana looked at my breasts and seemed lost in thought. Soon, though, she went back to practicing without saying another word. I was curious about what she had thought, but I was too nervous to ask.

After a while, Lady Noir got the hang of swimming so she decided to take a break. On the other hand, Lady Misana needed a little more practice. Her swimming was still pretty awkward. Lady Noir and Lady Shia gave us an apologetic look before heading off on their break. Marina and I took turns teaching Lady Misana until she figured it out.

“Marina, El, thank you so much.”

She beamed at us.

“No trouble at all. I’m just glad you’re able to swim now.”

Some people could practice all they want but still never be able to swim. Lady Misana was a quick learner, most likely

because she wasn't afraid of the water. If she had been, teaching her would have taken forever. Lady Misana had done a great job.

"Let's go take a break too. I'm parched."

Lady Misana wanted to go back to meet up with Lady Noir and Lady Shia. When we left the boulder, we came upon a house with a bear head in the middle of the beach.

"It's a bear. What is that?"

"Yuna must have made it."

"I can't think of any other way it got here."

I agreed with Marina.

"Marina, El, let's go check it out."

Lady Misana started running, so we followed her. I saw a beautiful girl with Lady Noir. For a second, I wondered who it was until I saw her glaring right at my breasts. I realized it was Yuna. She really was so cute.

Just...please don't stare at them like that. If I could share, I would.

Chapter 31:
Going to the Ocean
Gil Chronicles

BOOKSTORE COLLABORATION EXCLUSIVE STORY

I AM THE ADVENTURER GIL. I've got a scary mug, so people usually steer clear of me.

Yuna, the adventurer who dresses like a bear, had a request for me. I'd helped protect her shop before, but the kids would get scared when they saw my face. It was just more of the usual. I didn't let it bother me.

One day, I didn't have any work, so I headed to Yuna's shop for a meal. It seemed pretty busy. I looked over toward the commotion and saw one of the customers complaining at the children. The pudding had sold out, so the customer was making a fuss. The pudding was one of the more popular sellers here, since it was sweet and tasty. I liked it too.

The kids apologized again and again. Normally, Karin would be the person to deal with this since she was a bit older, but it seemed this customer caught the kids at a bad time and she wasn't around. I couldn't just sit by. I stood up and stepped between the customer and the kids.

"Who the hell are you?"

"These kids didn't do anything wrong. They only make a certain number of puddings. If you want one, get here when the place opens."

"Unlike adventurers like you, I have real work. I haven't got the time."

Seemed like I wasn't the only one offended to hear that.

"Are you referring to me?"

"Are they talking about me?"

A lot of adventurers were regulars here. They all glared at the man.

"No, I was just..."

The man was getting fidgety.

“You’re that one merchant, Latz, aren’t you? You know that Lord Cliff Fochrosé is a patron here, right? The merchant guild’s master is too. If you make a fuss here, do you know what’ll happen to you?”

One of the other customers, presumably an employee of the merchant guild, smiled at the man.

“Wait, what? The guild master and the lord both?”

“Yes. You should watch yourself. If you do anything here, the guild masters won’t just let it go. The feudal lord won’t either.”

The merchant guild’s employee grinned. The man practically fled the shop when he saw that. Maybe I didn’t even need to help. When I tried to go back to my seat, the kids blocked my path and looked up at me.

“Th-thank you.”

They smiled at me. It’d been a while since any kids had smiled at me, let alone talk to me.

After that, I started frequenting the shops and orphanage whenever I had time. I helped out with the kokekkos and taught the kids how to use a knife. They started hanging around me after that.

I was away from Crimonia for a while on account of work, but when I returned, Rulina asked me if I wanted to take some time off to go visit Mileela. Apparently, Yuna was taking the orphans to the town in order to enjoy the beach there. She wanted us to watch the kids.

It was a job, but we wouldn’t get paid since we weren’t going anywhere dangerous and no monsters were going to show up. Instead, we’d get lodging, travel expenses, and food paid for by Yuna. It wasn’t a dangerous gig, so I accepted. Plus, I don’t know what I’d do if anything happened to the kids.

Rulina had an odd look on her face, but I couldn’t fathom why. Later she told me it was because I was wearing a huge smile.

Soon, it was time to go to Mileela. I headed to the meeting spot with Rulina and found some bear carriages there. Were we going to be riding on those? Rulina laughed, but I decided not to question it.

The kids waved at us and welcomed us over. The kids were glad to see me, and that made me really happy. We boarded, and Yuna used her magic to make the carriages move.

“Yuna, you always do things that nobody could even imagine,” Rulina muttered as she watched the carriages move. “The kids probably have no idea how hard it is to keep this up for hours.”

She looked around at all the yammering kids. I had no idea how hard it was either, but Rulina was the magic expert. She would know if it was a tall order.

Yuna could take on a goblin king or a black viper on her own. Something like this seemed plausible enough for her, but I didn’t know how much work it’d take since I couldn’t use magic.

After we got settled on the carriage, we headed off to Mileela. Just like I’d imagined, the house we were staying in was modeled on a bear motif too. It was famous here in Mileela. I’d seen it plenty of times while in the city. I remembered that Rulina would laugh whenever she saw it.

Per Yuna’s instruction, I was left in charge of the boys, so I would be staying in the same room as them. I preferred it to watching over the girls. Some of them would run off the moment they saw my face. I’d spent more time with the boys, teaching them how to use a knife and wield a sword. They wouldn’t run away when they saw me.

The next day, I took the kids to the beach. It seemed like they were all looking forward to it. They started running as soon as we got out of the house. Rulina and I chased after them.

“Ha ha. You look like a criminal when you run after kids,” Rulina laughed.

I knew how I looked, she didn't have to rub it in. But Yuna had left me in charge of these kids, so I needed to make sure I kept a good eye on them. That meant when they ran, I ran after them.

Once they got to the ocean, they all started playing. Some of the kids tumbled around in the waves that pushed them back and forth. Others splashed each other, but others stayed on the beach. All of them were smiling.

"Gil, I know the waves look gentle, but keep a close eye on them."

"I know."

I headed over to where the kids were playing.

"Gil!"

When I got there, they splashed me. Since they were just playing, I gave them a good spritz myself. The force of the water made them fall back. I thought I might've gone too far, but the kids broke into laughter and surrounded me to splash me with water. Well, if that's how they wanted to play it...

I swiveled around and splashed all the kids around me. One of the kids tried to grab my arms so I couldn't keep attacking them with the water. Apparently, he thought that would actually be enough to stop me. I easily pulled the kid up and threw him back into the water. He plunged right in. After the fact, I realized I might have gone too far this time, but then the kid stood right back up and headed over to me.

"Throw me again."

Apparently he was having fun. I picked him up and threw him back in the water. The other kids who were watching asked me to do the same thing. I threw the kids into the ocean over and over again. My arms were aching after doing that for so long, but this was better than the kids being scared of me. Most of all, I was happy they were having fun.

While I was playing with the kids, I saw a pretty girl with a young-looking face talking with Rulina on the beach. Who was that? I'd never seen her before. She seemed too old for the orphanage. I didn't remember seeing a girl like her at the

orphanage either. If I tried to get close, I might scare her away, so I kept my distance.

I learned later that it was Yuna. I never would've thought she looked like that under the bear suit.

Chapter 32:
The Busy Guild Master
Jeremo Chronicles

EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL BONUS

I'M JEREMO, the guild master at Mileela's merchant guild.

Lately, I've been so busy with work that I've been feeling burnt out. Anabell, who was from Crimonia, came to supervise me, so I couldn't skip out on work. But soon, I started wising up to how Anabell operated. Well, to be more precise, I figured out how she operated when she came to check in on me in my office.

Whenever she came by, I knew she wouldn't be back for a while. I opened the window in the first-floor guild master's office and quietly snuck outside. Then I would sit on a bench nearby and while away the time.

Kids were playing around me. It was peaceful. The girl in the bear outfit earned us this peace. I, on the other hand, hadn't been able to do anything. All I could do was ask for those with more food to give some to those without it. I hadn't done anything great. Somehow, I was the guild master now. It was like a joke, only it wasn't funny.

"Haah... How did this happen?"

I just wanted to live a quiet life.

"Jeremo, are you playing hooky again?"

Someone I knew had caught me.

"I'm taking a break."

"Right, of course you are," the person said knowingly.

"I really am just taking a break."

"So there won't be a problem if I tell Anabell I caught you here?"

"Don't."

"I'm kidding. I know you've done a lot for this town."

I really hadn't done much. At my core, I was lazy.

“I heard that the bear girl is in town.”

“Yeah, that’s what I’ve heard too.”

I’d already received a report that she was in town. Actually, I’d heard a lot of things, like that she was playing on the beaches with some kids and that they’d all come in on a bear carriage.

“You probably shouldn’t skip out on work this often.”

“I told you, it’s just a break.”

My friend laughed and left.

I stood up from the bench. Anabell would be checking in on me again soon. I couldn’t play hooky—I mean take breaks—too often. But when I came back in through the window, the bear girl was already there so Anabell found me out. The next day, my office was transferred to a higher floor, but that’s a story for another time.

The bear girl headed back to Crimonia. Her visit only lasted a few days, but Crimonia’s lord, the merchant guild master of Crimonia, and the lord of Sheerin had also come by, so everything was busy.

We were put in charge of the waterslide that the bear girl had made. The agreement we made with the bear girl was that we had to have a door installed to keep anyone from riding on it without supervision.

I was supposed to send two people from the guild to watch over it, but then the lords of Crimonia and Sheerin came by, increasing my workload even more. We really didn’t have the manpower to send two people to the waterslide, but I couldn’t complain when it was the bear girl asking.

“Shall we ask the adventurer guild then?”

“I would, but they don’t have enough people around either.”

They were also busy with work coming in from the tunnel and from Crimonia’s lord. Once people knew the kraken was gone, some adventurers had come back, but it wasn’t enough. We didn’t have enough employees either.

“You’re right, but let’s at least talk to them.”

Suddenly, Anabell had me on a new job.

After talking with the adventurer guild, I was able to secure some help. They even made the quest fee reasonable and made it into a rookie adventurer quest. Since we didn't have much to pay, that actually helped a lot.

I needed to thank Atola, but as soon as word of the waterslide spread around, more and more people were coming to play. We had residents from Mileela, but even people from Crimonia wanted a ride.

"Apparently Milaine advertised it in Crimonia too."

I heard that they would be inviting people from Crimonia over.

"More people are visiting from Crimonia, so the shared carriages are always filled."

Mileela became a flourishing town, just as Lord Cliff had promised. The seafood was selling well and more merchants were coming in from the capital to buy it. All of that was thanks to Mileela's people working hard in Crimonia.

I heard Deigha's daughter opened a shop in Crimonia that was doing particularly well.

"Should we increase the number of carriages then?"

"I think we can leave that to Crimonia. To be frank, we don't have the staff to manage it."

Anabell was right. Right now, we didn't have enough staff to help us with much.

"We need to establish public order, keep the town clean, make sure we've got enough food, and make lodging information available. With people reporting every little thing that happens in the ocean, we already have so much to do."

The seaport's security was the adventurer guild's responsibility. Not everyone coming in from Crimonia was looking to cause trouble, but there were some who were belligerent or throwing their food out on the streets. Not everyone was well behaved. Lord Cliff had given us permission to close the tunnel to people who didn't listen to our warnings.

The adventurer and merchant guilds were told to use their discretion.

I also needed to go over the distribution of ingredients with a fine-toothed comb. If too much of the seafood went to Crimonia, we might have a shortage of food in Mileela. I left the seafood to old man Kuro, so that was fine, but we still needed someone to manage things.

For inns, we needed someone who could keep an eye on which rooms were vacant. We often had cases of people coming from Crimonia and finding we had no room for them. It was part of the merchant guild's duties to help mediate those situations.

The biggest issue was having people act as lookouts over the ocean. I left that up to the adventurer guild, but the lookout didn't just need to be able to swim, they had to be able to save people who were drowning too. That was the hardest part.

I wished people wouldn't venture to the deep areas when they didn't know how to swim. Even the kids in Mileela knew not to do that. But the adults and children from Crimonia didn't understand. They needed to be taught the simplest basics.

Thinking about it that way, it was possible the bear girl had made a barrier in the ocean to keep the kids safe as they played. It was like she knew this would happen. We were currently thinking over whether to make more barriers too, but we still didn't have enough people.

"Milaine, Lord Cliff, and I believe that it will only be this busy during the warm months. Once it becomes cooler, it's likely that fewer people will visit. It will be busy until then, but all you can do for now is work hard. You can relax in the winter."

That was what Anabell thought was in store for me. It was true. People couldn't play in the ocean during the winter. That meant fewer people around. But I was worried it was a trap.

Anabell came from Crimonia. If the people from Crimonia thought our regular way of life in the winter was interesting, they might still want to visit. Then we would end up with the same busy period as now in winter. Anabell might be saying things would slow down in the winter to squeeze more work out of me.

“Why are you looking at me with such suspicion?”

“Well, it’s just I wonder if the work really will decrease in winter.”

“In the end, it’s just an assumption. Nothing like this has ever happened to Crimonia or Mileela before. We can’t be certain of anything.”

All I could manage was a sigh. Where did my freedom go? No good deed goes unpunished, I guess.



ILLUSTRATION GALLERY_


Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear
VOL.15

STORY

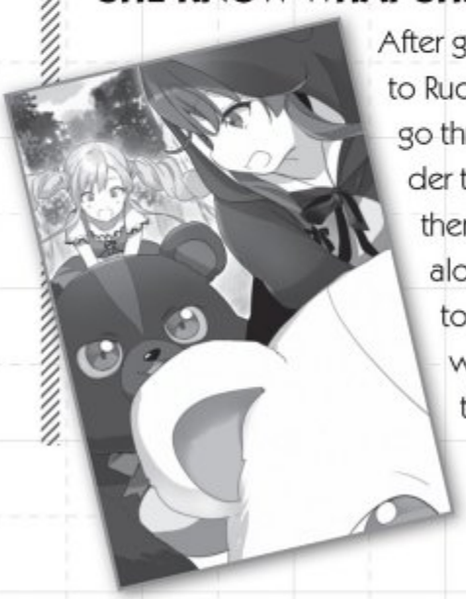
KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR 16



TO THE DWARVEN TOWN!

After coming home from Mileela, Yuna takes a break, making pressed flowers from the plants she gathered on Talgwei. She heads off to Ghazal in order to get some knife maintenance done and remembers the mysterious ore called bearyllium she has. She prepares to go to the dwarven town in order to ask Ghazal and Gold's mentor about the bearyllium!

LUIMIN GUIDES THEM...BUT DOES SHE KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING?



After getting Tiermina's permission, she heads to Rudnik, the dwarven town, with Fina. They go through the gate in the elven village in order to ride there on Kumakyu and Kumayuru, then meet with Luimin. Luimin asks to come along since the village is sending her there to do some errands! Yuna goes around with the two to see the blacksmithing town!



WALKING THROUGH THE BLACKSMITHING TOWN.

Just before they get to Rudnik, they happen to bump into Jade's party. The party is headed to Jade's blacksmith in order to get a mithril weapon made for Toya. Yuna takes a test to see if she's fit to have a mithril weapon, and passes with flying colors. After that, they head to the workshop of Lojina, Ghazal and Gold's teacher, where they meet Lilyka, Lojina's daughter. Together, they hit the town to go shopping.

WHAT IS THE GATE OF TRIALS...?

The four go shopping together. Yuna is curious about the gate of trials, which has brought lots of adventurers into Rudnik. She heads up the stairs to a spot high up on the mountain to see it for herself! Once the gate has accumulated enough mana, it opens automatically, but it allows only a weapons maker and the weapon wielder to enter. The trial apparently changes depending on the challenger. After hearing that, Yuna is excited to see the gates open! Rudnik seems to have a lot of exciting adventures in store!

Chapter 33:
Listening to Shia Talk about Her Vacation
Cattleya Chronicles

TSUTAYA EXCLUSIVE STORY

SHIA HAD REACHED OUT to me, and I was waiting to meet her at our usual cafe. I was a little early, so I nursed my tea as I waited for Shia. She eventually showed up, dressed in light, casual clothes.

“Sorry to keep you waiting, Cattleya.”

Shia sat across from me and ordered a drink.

“So, you’re back from Crimonia?” I asked.

“I returned a few days ago.”

Shia was using our long break from the academy to return home to the capital.

“What was it like to come back home after being away for so long?”

“It was fun. I got to see Father and my sister Noa.”

Shia seemed happy.

“Didn’t you see Noa at the academy festival?”

“Yeah, but still.”

The festival was where I met Shia’s sister and her friends. I also saw Yuna for the first time in a while.

“You said you were going to surprise Yuna with a visit, right? How did that go?”

Shia said Yuna was always surprising people, so she wanted to turn the tables on her.

“She was shocked when she first saw me, but she still had a surprise in store for me.”

“Really?”

“First, it was her businesses. I heard about them from Mother and Noa, but they really are stuffed full of bears.”

“Like the one in the capital?”

The capital also had a bear restaurant, but Shia shook her head.

“There’s a bear statue at the entrance, of course, and the sign is a bear, but all the walls and pillars inside have bears too. There are small bears on the tables, they serve bread with bear faces, and the kids working there all dress as bears. It was cute.”

It sounded like it was bears from top to bottom.

“It really is a bear business, just like the name implies.”

“The name?”

“It’s called the Bear’s Lounge.”

Hee hee, I couldn’t help but laugh. It was a cute name, and it made me want to go visit.

Shia excitedly started talking about all the fun things happening in Crimonia.

“We ended up going to a beach outside of Crimonia, and we rode there on a bear carriage.”

“A bear carriage? Do you mean that the carriage was pulled by Kumayuru and Kumakyu instead of horses?”

I looked out from the cafe at a carriage outside. Several horses were pulling them. A bear carriage had to be the same, right? But then wouldn’t that make it a bear-drawn carriage instead of a bear carriage? Maybe she didn’t like the ring of “bear-drawn carriage” and had dropped a word?

Shia said no.

“It was a bear-shaped carriage. Yuna used her mana to move it.”

A bear-shaped carriage. I tilted my head to the side quizzically. Kumayuru and Kumakyu didn’t pull the carriages after all. I tried to imagine it, but I just couldn’t.

“Um, it’s hard to explain.”

As struck by inspiration, Shia pulled out a piece of paper and started drawing. As a noble, Shia was accomplished in the arts so she was good at drawing. That wasn’t all, either. She knew

how to fight with a sword and how to use magic, plus she was cute. I was jealous.

When I saw the drawing, I couldn't help but laugh. The drawing was simple, but I understood exactly what she meant.

"What is that? Is it a bear? It's so cute!"

The part of the carriage that people would ride on was bear shaped.

"It looks so big."

"Yeah, it was. I think thirty kids could ride on one."

That's a big group.

"Yuna used her mana to move it?"

"Yeah, apparently it was like moving a golem. She kept them running for hours, so Yuna must have amazing mana reserves."

It was possible to run things with mana, but if someone was keeping that up for hours, that was different. That wasn't something just that anyone could do.

"It wasn't just one carriage."

After saying that, Shia started drawing again.

"What are these? They're so small and cute."

She drew two small bear carriages next to the large one. She colored them black and white.

"They're Kumakyu and Kumayuru carriages."

Shia said she rode the Kumayuru carriage to the ocean.

"I'm so jealous, Shia. I wish I could've ridden on a bear carriage."

"Want me to ask Yuna for you?"

Would she let me ride too?

Shia chatted to me about all the ways Yuna had surprised her. Apparently, when they got to their lodgings, it turned out they'd be staying at a giant bear house.

"Was it bigger than the one Yuna has in the capital?"

Even though she wasn't living in Crimonia, she had bought land and built a bear-shaped house here. I'd gone to see it once after Shia told me about it.

"It's bear-themed, but the overall shape is different."

Shia started drawing again.

"It's two standing bears."

They were cute, too.

"The house was four stories tall and had rooms that we all stayed in. There was a bath on the top floor, so we could look out across the ocean from up high."

Shia looked daydreamy, as though she were reminiscing over it. I wished I could have gone too, and started to feel jealous. Then Shia started talking about playing in the ocean with her sister and the others.

"Yuna wasn't done surprising me. She made this on the beach."

She drew another bear, but this time it looked a bit odd. Something strange was protruding from the bear's mouth and stomach.

"Shia, what's that coming out of its mouth and belly?"

"They're slides."

"Really?"

"You can slide out of the mouth and belly and fly right out into the ocean. It was a lot of fun."

I didn't really get it, but based on Shia's expression, it looked like she had a good time.

"We went on an expedition to a deserted island after that."

She was talking as if it was fun, but something about her expression was off.

"Did something happen?"

"Huh? Why do you ask?"

Shia averted her eyes.

"You look troubled. Once you told me about the island, you looked like you were worried you made a mistake."

“I wasn’t concerned or anything. I was just remembering a few strange things that happened on the island. I can’t tell you what happened though, so I wasn’t sure what else to say. That’s all.”

“Well, now I’m curious. What happened there?”

“I’m sorry. I promised Yuna I wouldn’t tell.”

“You can’t even tell me?”

“It’s not just you. I can’t tell Mother or Father either.”

“Oh, are you even allowed to tell me that you have such an important secret?”

“Ugh, don’t be so spiteful, Cattleya.”

She was acting like it was such a big deal, so it was only fair for me to tease her a little.

“After all that, we made pressed flowers from the ones we gathered from the island.”

Shia tried to change the subject by pulling out some pressed flowers in frames from her item bag. I didn’t want to antagonize her too much, so I took a look.

“How pretty.”

The flowers were all sorts of colors.

“They didn’t turn out too well, but would you like one?”

She looked embarrassed, but I didn’t have any reason to turn down a present from Shia.

“Thank you. I’ll treasure it.”

I was so happy to have a homemade present from a friend. Maybe I’d put it up in my room.

“I’ve never seen any of these flowers before.”

“The flora varies there because it’s a different region.”

After Shia finished telling me everything about her trip, I told her about my vacation.

Chapter 34:
Eating Ice Cream
Zelef Chronicles

WONDERGOOD BONUS STORY

AS I WAS THINKING of what ingredients to prepare for dinner, Lady Flora's caretaker, Madam Ange, came into the kitchen.

"Chef Zelef, I'm so sorry, but would you be so kind as to put this away in the freezer?"

Madam Ange set five cups on a table. There was something inside of them.

"What is this?"

"It's a new food Yuna brought along called ice cream. It will melt if it's left out, so she told us to put it into the freezer."

"Is Master Yuna here?"

"Yes, she's playing with Lady Flora right now."

"Also, among these five cups, is there one meant for me...?"

I wanted to make sure Master Yuna had remembered me as well.

"Ha ha. There is. She brought one for you, His Majesty, Her Majesty, and me, as well as my daughter."

Madam Ange looked ecstatic. Every dish Master Yuna brought me was a novel and delectable delight that stimulated my taste buds as well as my mind.

"I wanted to make sure no one ate them, so I was hoping to ask you to put them away in your freezer."

It would indeed be an issue if anyone else were to eat them. Master Yuna's creations were irreplaceable. If I only knew the recipe, I could recreate them myself, but I couldn't do the same for new foods. No one would *dare* steal from my freezer.

"Leave it to me. I will be sure to protect them dearly."

"Thank you so much."

Madam Ange bowed her head and left the kitchen. Master Yuna's new dishes lay before me on the table. I held strong and resisted the urge to sample them immediately. I needed to prepare His Majesty's dinner.

For the time being, I put the cups away in the freezer.

After a while, Madam Ange returned.

"I'm so sorry for coming again. It seems Lady Teilia and Lady Ellelaura have also requested their own portions. May I put these away in your freezer as well?"

Madam Ange left even more cups on the table. I wondered if there were more servings for me too.

"Uncle."

I had finished my prep work, but as I went to sample Master Yuna's new dish, my niece Shyla came up to me.

"Don't you have work?"

Shyla had been apprenticing under me to learn to cook, but was now working in town at a restaurant that the castle managed.

"I have the day off, so I came to visit you."

Her timing was terrible.

"Did Yuna really come to visit today?"

She knew about the visit somehow. Master Yuna's outfit was certainly eye-catching, so I guess it was inevitable.

"Yes. I didn't get a chance to see her, but it seems like she visited Lady Flora."

"She did? I was hoping to see her since it's been a while."

I had been hoping to see her too, but as the royal family's chef, I couldn't abandon my work.

"Did Yuna bring anything interesting along with her again?"

Shyla looked around the kitchen. My eyes gravitated toward the freezer. Yuna's haul was there, but if I told Shyla, I knew she would ask for a taste. She couldn't find out.

“Is it in the freezer?”

It was too late. She started walking to it and tried to open it without permission.

“Wait. There’s nothing in there. Don’t open it.”

“Then why do you keep looking at the freezer?”

It seemed I had looked at it more often than I thought…

“And if there’s nothing in it, why can’t I open it?”

She was convinced that there was something in there. I gave up.

“There are some dishes in there for His Majesty and the princesses. You’ve worked at the castle, so you should understand what will happen to you if you try it.”

I tried to threaten her.

“Uh…well…”

Shyla slowly let go of the freezer’s handle. I took her place and pulled out one of the cups Madam Ange had brought. If she saw all of them, she might beg for one of her own. But the rest were for Lady Teilia and Lady Flora.

“Is that what Yuna brought?”

“It’s called ice cream, apparently. Please prepare two spoons, Shyla.”

“Okay.”

She immediately brought them. I took one.

“Please hurry, Uncle.”

“Don’t rush me.”

I thought it would be firm, but when I pushed the spoon into the substance, the ice cream gave way. When I brought the spoon back up, I took my time taking in the scent of the food before bringing the spoon to my mouth.

It was cold. I thought it had been a solid, but the moment it entered my mouth, it began to melt. It tumbled over my tongue and before I knew it it had fully lost its shape.

“Since it was in the freezer, was it frozen?”

“It was firm, but not quite frozen. It melted the moment I brought the spoon to my mouth.”

“How did it taste?”

“Delicious.”

It had a rich flavor I could hardly describe.

“Let me have some too, Uncle.”

I had no choice. I offered Shyla the cup. Just as I did, she scooped up some of the ice cream. Then she observed the ice cream as I had before bringing the spoon to her mouth. All sorts of emotions played across her face.

“It’s so cold and delicious. It’s not like shaved ice. What is it made from? How did she make it?”

“Milk, eggs, and sugar, but what else? But even if we know the ingredients, we don’t know the method she used. We can’t reproduce it.”

There were many ways to prepare dishes, whether through boiling, sautéing, melting, steaming, warming, or freezing the ingredients. If you didn’t know what to do with each ingredient, it was impossible to make the end product even if you had all the components.

In order to make a delicious meal, you needed to both have top-notch ingredients and also know their measurements. As a chef, a recipe is as important as one’s life.

“What is the recipe, Uncle?”

“She hasn’t told me yet.”

Shyla seemed disappointed.

I regretted not going to see Master Yuna, even if it would have meant leaving my work.

It was so odd that an adventurer knew how to make something like this.

Had Master Yuna not been an adventurer but a chef, I may have asked to become *her* apprentice.

As I went to get my second taste, I noticed that the cup was much lighter.

I immediately knew who the culprit was.

“Shyla! I’ve only had a single bite!”

“But it’s so good. And if you don’t hurry, it’ll melt.”

I looked into the cup and noticed it had indeed begun to melt.

“Then I will eat the rest.”

She hadn’t even left half for me.

“Aw, but…” Shyla started to say.

“No.”

“There’s more in the freezer, isn’t there?”

“Sure, if you have a death wish.”

“I wouldn’t be executed just for eating a cup of ice cream.”

“True. You may not be executed, but you would be fired and banished from the castle for the rest of your life.”

“Uh… That does seem plausible.”

“For now, stay strong. Next time, I’ll ask Master Yuna to…”

I was about to say I would ask her for the recipe, but I stopped myself.

I had just thought to myself how a recipe was as valuable to a chef as their life. I had been taking advantage of Master Yuna’s kindness.

The only thing I had done for Master Yuna so far was to cook for the former lord of Farengram’s birthday party.

That hadn’t even been for Master Yuna, but for the Farengram household.

I had never done anything to benefit her.

“Uncle?”

“I’ll make an amazing dish for Master Yuna next time she is here.”

I didn’t know whether that would be enough to pay Master Yuna back for everything, but all I knew how to do was cook.

I savored the remaining ice cream as I decided on how to repay Yuna.

Shyla seemed to want more, but the rest of the cup was all mine.

Chapter 35:
I Want to Go to Yuna
King Chronicles

EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL STORY

I WAS WORKING IN MY OFFICE alongside Zhang, my chancellor, and Ernat, my son, when I received a report of Yuna's arrival. Yuna seemed to have taken a liking to my daughter Flora, so she would sometimes visit her. Every time she came, she would bring food with her as well. I was quite excited to see what kind of delicacy she brought with her this time.

I attempted to rise from my chair, but Zhang and Ernat interrupted me.

"Your Majesty, you still have work to do."

"Father, we must hurry to finish this."

"But..."

The bear girl brought dishes we never saw on the royal table. Not only that, they were delicious. Even Zelef, our own royal chef, approved of them.

Yuna herself had come to the castle. If I didn't meet up with Flora, I couldn't try whatever she had brought along.

"No buts, Your Majesty. You always put us in a difficult position when you neglect your work to see her."

"Less bears. More work. Can you not see the mountain of paperwork before you?"

They were all glaring at me.

"Ernat, you're next in line for the throne. It'd do you well to take some of my work."

"I think I'm quite all right. I have already taken on more than enough work. Please take care of your own responsibilities, Father."

At first, it was easy to push my undone work on him, but lately he had started to fight back.

“What an uncharming son you are. Who did you get that from?”

“Mother is easygoing, so I am certain, my king and father, that I take after you.”

“When I was in my youth, I took on work willingly.”

“When exactly was that? I seem to remember you pushing nigh-impossible work on me many times,” Zhang said, referring to our shared past.

We had been together since our youth, which meant he knew me well enough that I couldn’t lie to him. I gave up. I returned to my work until Ellelaura arrived in my office.

“Is that you, Ellelaura?”

“I’ve got some documents I need you to approve.”

Ellelaura added some papers to the pile on my desk. Now I had more work.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me.”

She looked over at me, then began to walk out of the office as though she had no cares in the world.

“Wait. Where do you plan on going?”

“To see Yuna, of course,” she grinned.

She seemed to know I couldn’t leave my work.

“Don’t you have work?”

She was running off while I was stuck working.

“I finished it all. It’s right there on your desk,” she said.

She looked at the pile of paperwork.

“And the rest of your work?”

“It’s done.”

Ellelaura was an excellent worker, but she could be rather unpleasant sometimes. Regardless, if I couldn’t visit Yuna, then I needed to ask Ellelaura for a favor.

“If Yuna has brought any interesting dishes with her, you must ask her to leave something for me.”

Ellelaura grinned like a child. I was getting a bad feeling about this.

She held up a finger.

“Ha ha. All right. But you owe me one.”

“You do realize I am the king, yes?”

“I fail to see how that’s relevant here. If that’s a problem for you, I certainly don’t have to pass on the message to Yuna.”

Ellelaura grinned. That unpleasant smirk certainly fit her personality. I had a bone to pick with her, but if I put her in a bad mood, I wouldn’t be able to try whatever Yuna had brought with her.

“All right. I owe you one. Nothing too grandiose, though.”

I was at least able to give myself a way to deny her wish if I needed to.

“That’s a shame. I was going to ask you to let me quit so I could go back to Crimonia.”

“…”

“Please, do not even joke about that, Lady Ellelaura. If anyone overhears, the rumor will spread, and that would be disastrous.”

Before I could speak another word, Zhang beat me to the punch.

“If you left, who would stop His Majesty from acting rashly?”

“I believe that’s your and Lord Ernat’s duty as the chancellor and his son, no?”

“Absolutely not,” the two said simultaneously.

“Really…?”

Ellelaura seemed exasperated by all three of us.

“In any case, I’ll ask Yuna, but don’t blame me if she doesn’t have enough for you,” Ellelaura said as she left the office.

“How long will you allow that bear girl to come and go as she pleases, Father?”

Ernat started questioning me after Ellelaura left.

“Well, I certainly don’t intend to forbid her from entering.”

“How can you allow a commoner, much less one who wears a bear costume, to enter the castle as she pleases? You realize this affects your dignity, yes?”

“There are some things more important than dignity.”

“You’re saying that Yuna has something more important than your dignity as the king?”

Why did I have to bother with all this?

“Zhang already knows what I am about to say, but now I will tell you too. You know about the kraken parts, don’t you?”

“Yes. We still do not know where they came from, right?”

“The bear girl slayed the kraken and I bought the parts from her.”

To be more precise, Yuna had given the kraken to the town she had saved, then Cliff, Ellelaura’s husband, had bought and sold the parts to me in order to provide the seaport with reconstruction funds.

“You’re joking.”

I suppose any normal person would assume I was.

“It’s the truth. You know the student who Lutum lost to at the academy festival?”

“Yes, I heard that Sir Lutum, who doesn’t believe women should wield a blade, lost to a girl. I couldn’t believe it. I thought he must have been going easy on her.”

“He wasn’t. Or rather, in that location, the rules prevented him from fighting at full strength, but he lost for certain, nonetheless. Lutum was defeated by the bear girl.”

“You can’t be serious,” Ernat snorted.

“Did you read the report on Dezelt?”

“Yes, I did. I couldn’t believe you tasked an adventurer with something like that. It’s an important town in neutral ground. Had another country come to their aid before us, what would we have done?”

“That adventurer was also the bear girl. She had the kraken’s mana gem, so I asked her to do it.”

Ernat was in disbelief. Things were getting entertaining.

“Father, if you’re joking, it’s not funny.”

“This is no joke.”

I turned to look at Zhang.

“It may seem difficult to believe, but it is indeed true, Your Highness.”

Ernat trusted that Zhang wouldn’t lie to him. He went silent.

“You remember the issue with Ghoulzam?”

“Yes, the entire castle was in chaos. I believe an A-rank adventurer slayed the monsters.”

“That was the bear girl too.”

“…”

“Would you have me cut off someone so powerful?”

“If all this is true, then isn’t she dangerous? What if she goes on a rampage in the castle?”

“She has no ill will toward us. It’s as if she’s made entirely of goodness. That said, she holds grudges against those she doesn’t like. It would be better to befriend her.”

“True, but…”

“Plus, all of the food she brings is delicious. I will not allow even my son to deprive me of that happiness. You shall not do anything to her.”

Yuna had brought something entirely new, something special to this castle. I wasn’t going to stop that.

“All right…” Ernat said. He nodded, seeming convinced.

Once I finished my work, I saw that Yuna had brought us a frozen dessert called ice cream. It was very cold, but also delicious.

I needed to protect that bear girl at all costs.

Chapter 36:
Exploring the Capital
Tiermina Chronicles

BOOKSTORE COLLABORATION EXCLUSIVE STORY

“WHEN I OPEN THIS GATE, it will lead to the capital.”

Just as Yuna said, the capital was just past the open door. The castle looked exactly the same as I remembered it from my youth. But when I turned to look behind me, I saw Yuna’s house in the capital too.

I knew Yuna could do the impossible, but she had surprised me yet again. She had a magic item that allowed her to teleport instantly from Mileela to the capital. It wasn’t the type of thing an individual should own.

I remembered that Fina had once said that Yuna might be a princess from another land. At the time, I’d laughed it off, but after seeing such an impressive magical device, I started to consider what Fina had said. Even if it was true, I couldn’t very well ask her why she was in Crimonia on her own or how she had come into possession of this device.

She had saved my life, and Fina looked up to her like a sister. Regardless of her identity, she was a very important friend to our family.

“You’ve been to the capital before, right, Tiermina?”

“Yes, with Gentz and Roy long ago.”

That was back when we had all been adventurers.

“Want to take a look around?”

It wasn’t easy to make it to the capital. Normally, it took several days by carriage. To be perfectly honest, I did want to explore.

“Are you sure? I thought you and Fina were going somewhere?”

“I’m not in a hurry. As long as you let me take Fina tomorrow, that should be fine.”

It was like Yuna was joking. She always asked me if she could take Fina with her whenever she went off somewhere. I wasn’t ever worried when I left my daughters in Yuna’s care because I knew she would protect my daughters no matter what happened.

“Well, I suppose I’ll take you up on that offer.”

The four of us—Yuna, Fina, Shuri, and I—decided to take a tour around the capital.

As we walked through the capital, the people we passed by stared at us for some reason. Was it because of my clothes? Was something odd about my hair? I would have dressed up had I known this was the plan.

As I was checking my own appearance, Fina smiled.

“You’re being stared at again, Yuna.”

It seemed I wasn’t the one drawing the attention. It had been Yuna all along. I also heard people speaking about a bear around us. I’d gotten so used to Yuna’s bear costume that I’d forgotten. I was relieved that I wasn’t the issue until Yuna piped up.

“Should I wait at the house?”

She was trying to be considerate of us.

I tried to tell her not to worry and to stay with us, but my daughter cut in.

“No, I want to go around with you, Yuna.”

“Yeah, I wanna be with you.”

Fina and Shuri both grabbed her hands. Both of them had beaten me to the punch.

I was glad I’d raised such kind girls. If they had said they were embarrassed to be around Yuna, they would have been in for a scolding.

“Are you okay with me being here too, Tiermina?”

“Of course.”

I hugged Yuna along with my daughters. Yuna looked a little embarrassed, but she was happy.

We ignored the stares and whispers around us as we toured the capital.

“This takes me back,” I said.

Parts of town looked different, but so much of it was the same as I remembered it.

“That accessories store is still open. It was there before Fina was born, so it’s been here at least a decade.”

“It’s that old?”

Fina looked at the shop in surprise.

“Hee hee. I suppose it seems old to you and Shuri. But I remember it like it was yesterday. Roy gave me a present from that shop.”

The memory took me back.

“Really?”

“Don’t tell Gentz.”

I put my finger to my lips.

“You can’t tell him we came to the capital either,” Yuna warned my girls.

Right, we couldn’t tell anyone about today. We couldn’t even buy Gentz a souvenir. I felt sorry for him, but we’d already promised Yuna.

“I won’t,” Shuri said.

“Yeah. I won’t say anything.”

They both nodded, but I was a little worried. Fina and Shuri were the type to keep their promises, but Shuri might let something slip without meaning to. We needed to be careful.

Then, we went to a restaurant that Roy, Gentz, and I had gone to in the past.

“That was good.”

“I’m stuffed.”

They both looked satisfied.

“It’s just as good as I remember. I’m glad.”

Everything tasted the same as before. It all reminded me of Roy, and I had trouble stopping myself from tearing up.

“I didn’t expect them to remember me, though.”

When I ordered, the waitress seemed surprised to see my face. She’d known I was an adventurer, so when I stopped coming, she had assumed that I’d died. She was so happy to see me again she even gave us a free dish. Honestly, I was happier about the fact that she had remembered me than I was about the free dish. I couldn’t thank Yuna enough for bringing me here.

Yuna had saved my life, and I was able to enjoy time with my daughters. I’d even gotten to marry Gentz. When I was sick, I never could have imagined such a wonderful life was waiting for me.

We decided to finally go to the castle before going home.

“You’ve been to the castle before, haven’t you, Fina?”

Normally, commoners like us weren’t allowed into castles. I had heard that our feudal lord’s wife, Ellelaura, had arranged for a tour of the castle for her, though.

“Yeah, we ate with Her Highness, His Majesty, and Her Majesty.”

I thought Fina would tell me what the inside of the castle was like, not this. I must have turned white as a sheet. I’d known that she had gone to the capital and entered the castle, but not that she had met and eaten with the royal family.

“Were you okay?”

“The first time I met the princess, I was so nervous. I don’t even remember anything,” Fina said as she smiled.

“The first time? You’ve seen her again?”

“Uh-huh…”

It was unbelievable for commoners like us to even see royalty once, much less twice. Somehow, my very own daughter

had had that opportunity.

“The pwincess was weally cute.”

“You met her too?”

“Uh-huh, and her mommy too.”

Wouldn’t that be Her Majesty?

“Yuna!”

“We just happened to run into them while we were touring the castle. They were on their best behavior, so don’t worry,” Yuna said, almost as though she was trying to explain it away.

Fina was more mature than other kids her age, but Shuri acted just her age. I worried that she might have done something rude to the royal family.

“Are you sure everything went fine, Yuna? If they did anything to offend the royalty, the soldiers and knights would come for our family.”

I placed a firm hand on Yuna’s shoulder.

“It’ll be fine. They got along with everyone.”

Got along? With the royalty?

“Yuna, what are you planning to do with my daughters?!”

“Nothing at all. They came over to us while we were looking around, so it’s not my fault they met. Don’t worry. If the worst ever happens, I’d protect Fina.”

The worst? And how would she protect Fina, anyway? I could easily imagine Yuna punching the king.

I did want her to protect my daughter, but thinking about it was a somewhat frightening prospect.

Chapter 37:
Making Weapons and Armor
Jade Chronicles

ANIMATE EXCLUSIVE STORY

"THIS LOOKS GREAT."

We all had armor made using the scorpion shell Yuna had given us.

"We have to thank Yuna for this," Mel said as she looked over the silver gauntlet she wore.

We had painted all of them in our favorite colors.

"They're light, so they don't get in the way when I wear them. I never really needed armor like this anyway, since I'm in the rear."

"That's not true. The rear can be dangerous too. Those gauntlets might save your life someday."

"That's right. It's a kind of good-luck charm too," Senia agreed.

She was wearing leg braces, and had gauntlets just like Mel.

"They're light, so they won't slow you down when you need to run. And if you kick Toya, it won't hurt."

"Don't kick me!" Toya shouted as he changed.

Toya had armor on his arms, legs, and chest, just like me.

"Are you sure about giving the rest to me, Jade? If you take the extra, you'll be able to have replacements made if anything breaks."

Monteux piped up. He was the one who had made our armor.

"That's all right. We want to get Toya a mithril sword, so every little bit counts."

"In that case, I'll happily buy the extra," Monteux said as he gave us the money.

“Are you sure it’s worth this much?”

“You brought in a giant scorpion shell, and that caused quite a commotion. There’s going to be some adventurers out there who want armor made, even if it’s a little expensive.”

“In that case, we’ll gladly accept. Thank you.”

“Don’t thank me. If you get your hands on more scorpion shells, come bring them by.”

Monteux grinned. Maybe that was his real motive for overpaying us?

“I’ve said it before, but I’m afraid the location is secret.”

“Uragan was tightlipped too. Is your source really that hush-hush?”

“We promised the person we got the shell from.”

“That’s right. They’ve helped us out and we owe them. We can’t betray them.”

“If even Uragan is keeping it under wraps, we’re definitely not going to say anything.”

Mel and Senia backed me up. Even Uragan hadn’t told anyone about Yuna. He wouldn’t say a word even when fellow adventurers asked him, and his party members hadn’t breathed a word either. The guy was arrogant, but he kept his promises. And when it came down to it, he cared about his party mates and he’d always get his jobs done.

“Are you sure about using all of this to buy a mithril sword for me?” Toya asked hesitantly.

“It’s not an issue. It’ll bring the entire party’s level up.”

“Yup, if we’ve got a stronger vanguard, that helps the rearguard too.”

A strong vanguard meant the rear didn’t need to worry as much about safety.

“I’d rather have a strong shield in front of me.”

“Hey, don’t call me a shield.”

“Right, my mistake. The stronger the meat shield, the better.”

“That sounds even worse. Jade!” Toya pleaded with his eyes for sympathy.

“If it’ll make you stronger, Toya, it won’t cause any problems for us.”

That seemed to console him.

“Where do you want to have it made?”

Not many blacksmiths could forge a mithril sword. Working with mithril was difficult, so you needed a skilled blacksmith to make one.

“While we’re here, how about we ask Ghazal to make one for you like he did for Yuna?”

The blacksmith who had made my mithril sword and Senia’s knives lived in another town, so we couldn’t ask him to make the sword for us.

“Let’s ask Ghazal.”

“Sure.”

“All right.”

“Yes.”

Everyone was in agreement.

We headed to Ghazal’s forge.

“Is this it?”

“From what I heard, it seems like it.”

“Isn’t he a really good blacksmith? Do you think he’ll be able to make it right away?”

“We’ll need to wait a while.”

It would take time to make a quality weapon. We weren’t in much of a hurry. If he could just make it for us, we wouldn’t have any problems.

“Okay, let’s head in.”

Toya looked excited for the mithril sword. He walked right in.

The very next moment, I heard Toya scream.

“What is that? …An iron golem?!”

There was a crash of falling debris.

“Toya!”

When we went into the forge, Toya had drawn his sword and had his back against the wall. Swords were scattered all over the ground at Toya’s feet. It seemed Toya had bumped into them, sending them clattering to the ground.

“Jade, be careful! It’s an iron golem.”

Just like Toya said, there was an iron golem. Luckily, I knew immediately that it couldn’t move.

“It’s okay, Toya. It won’t move or attack you.”

Toya calmed down.

“You’re right. Don’t scare me like that.”

Toya sheathed his sword.

“What’s going on here?”

A dwarf appeared from the back. This must have been Ghazal.

“I’m sorry for the commotion. I’m Jade, an adventurer.”

After looking at me, Ghazal looked at the swords strewn over the ground.

“What is this mess?”

“I’m sorry. He saw the iron golem and freaked out.”

I looked at Toya and apologized while cleaning up the swords.

Ghazal glared at Toya.

“What kind of adventurer is shocked by an iron golem?”

“Who wouldn’t be scared seeing one in an establishment out of nowhere?”

“So you get that shaken up when any old monster shows up without announcing itself, huh?”

“Well…”

“An adventurer’s got to be calm and collected in any situation. Somebody prone to panic, like you, is bound to put

lives in danger.”

Neither Toya nor I could counter that. If an adventurer panicked, their judgment couldn’t be trusted. They might put lives in danger.

“So, what brings you here?” Ghazal asked.

“I wanted to ask you to make me a mithril sword.”

“For you? Not for him?”

Ghazal looked at Toya, then turned to me.

“I have one, but he—Toya—would like a mithril sword of his own.”

After looking at Toya, Ghazal took another look around the room.

“Not possible. You couldn’t wield a mithril sword. It would be a waste in your hands. You’ll do well enough with one of those swords.”

“I can pay.”

“Money isn’t the issue. I won’t forge a weapon you can’t wield. Now, go on. I need to clean up and you’re in the way.”

“We’ll help.”

We tried to tidy up, but he shooed us away.

“We probably shouldn’t go back there again.”

I didn’t want to gain a bad reputation. Maybe I’d go later to apologize formally.

“Why? He still could have made one for me.”

“Ghazal had a point, Toya. You’re not composed enough.”

“That’s right. Maybe you do need to figure out how to stay composed.”

Senia and Mel agreed with Ghazal.

“Jade!”

“I know you’re capable. Once you learn how to keep your cool, you’ll have the qualifications to wield a mithril sword.”

“You can’t keep letting others give you an out.”

“That’s right. You’ve been too soft on him, Jade.”

Now Mel and Senia were objecting to me. The truth was that when he was focused, Toya was very powerful. The issue was that he didn't have a long attention span.

"Then what should we do? Should we find another blacksmith?"

There were blacksmiths around who knew how to work with mithril.

We thought it over, then Mel spoke up, "Oh, I know. One of the merchants I know asked me if I could help buy stuff from Rudnik. How about we ask Kusehlo while we're there? He made Jade's sword and Senia's knives, after all."

It was true, Senia and I had had our mithril weapons made in Rudnik by a blacksmith named Kusehlo.

"Great idea! I'm sure Kusehlo will see my true potential and make one for me!"

His potential didn't really matter, honestly. If we asked, Kusehlo would make one for him.

If Toya calmed down a little, he'd make a good adventurer. Until then, we'd have to keep an eye on him.

We took the quest Mel told us about and headed off to Rudnik.



ILLUSTRATION GALLERY_

Chapter 38:
Encounter with the Bear
Figo Chronicles

THE CAPTAIN DIDN'T BELIEVE women could become knights. He was always saying that women were weak and how he didn't want anyone who was a knight in name only. As for me, I didn't think women should be knights either.

Being a knight was no easy job. You had to hone your sword skills and fight as though your life depended on it whenever danger approached. You walk a deadly tightrope in this occupation. I could understand if women wanted to fight from the rear as mages. I knew several excellent female mages, in fact. Being a knight was another matter entirely.

Comparatively, women were weaker than men. They risked injury and even death. Eventually, many would marry and leave their work behind. As such, women simply weren't fit to wield the blade. I believe women should be protected, so they should not become knights.

I thought women were weak until I met an opponent who shattered my beliefs. A girl I fought at the academy festival, to be more precise. She was hardly taller than my chest and looked like a youth. She was just a child, but she still held a sword and faced me.

I was tasked with removing female knights from candidacy at the academy festival. In order to do so, the captain ordered me to give a sound thrashing to any girls trying to become a knight. I thought that was going a bit far, but I did agree it would be better to redirect them to a new career path earlier rather than later.

However, Lady Ellelaura objected. In order to prove that girls could be strong too, she asked His Majesty to sanction a duel between one of the female students and a knight. The captain accepted and I was ordered to take part.

I stood on the academy grounds and faced the young girl standing across from me. I felt heavy hearted, knowing I would

need to fight a young girl at my captain's command. I imagined it would be difficult for her to even swing the sword with her delicate arms. Her legs were so thin I doubted she could take on the blow from a blade and stay upright. And yet, I had to fight her.

I couldn't disobey direct orders from my captain. All I needed to do was avoid hurting her as we dueled. I figured that if I just scared her, she would accept defeat right away. I realized quickly what a mistake I had made.

As soon as the match started, I realized she was powerful. She parried my blade easily.

How could she hide all of that power in her thin arms? Were the bear gloves she wore magical? She was also seeing through every movement I made too. She blocked and parried every blow. Even if the bear-puppet-looking gloves were magic items, she couldn't have obtained such prowess from them alone.

I attempted to attack her from every angle, but she met my blade and parried me at every turn. I couldn't land a single blow on her.

Our eyes met, and there was no fear in hers. She had the eyes of a knight. She looked straight through me. Facing a man like me instilled no sense of fear in her. She was even smiling.

Who was this girl? Even my fellow knights would be afraid if I brought a sword down over them. I had been afraid too, when that happened to me as a student. Practice swords were still painful and could cause injuries, even if they weren't sharp.

Facing a sword was frightening. Overcoming that fear took training. After learning how to block your opponent's sword, the fear would subside somewhat. However, the girl in front of me looked directly into my eyes as she blocked me. Wasn't she afraid of seeing a sword being waved at her? She seemed sure I would never find her with my blade. How had she learned these techniques at such a young age? This was interesting...

I used my larger physique to try to drive her back, but that didn't work either. I wasn't going easy on her anymore. I was facing her with the same force and skill as I would for any normal knight. No, I was using even more. She was stronger than any knight I had ever fought. I had to admit that the girl in

front of me was powerful. I couldn't help but grin. I felt excited to face someone who knew how to fight, but I also couldn't allow myself to lose.

I lost, but the loss was invigorating. Despite everything, she had been going easy on me.

Directly after my match, she faced the captain. She used magic in that duel. In other words, she had been holding back during our match. For knights, using magic wasn't considered cowardly. It was just another tactic.

When I watched her fight from afar, I saw the girl's true strength. She hadn't used magic in our duel because she thought it wasn't allowed. She even complained when the captain used his own magic. Not only had she expertly honed her sword fighting skills at her young age, but she knew how to use magic too.

I couldn't help but laugh. I hadn't even considered the possibility that she was a magic user. If she had used her magic against me, I wouldn't have been able to defend myself at all. The duel would have been over much too quickly.

The duel between the captain and the girl continued.

Could she block him in time? Attempting to parry the captain when he was fighting using both his magic and his sword was no easy matter. I could see how she was able to parry me.

In the end, she won that fight too. The captain had lost. In fact, it had been an overwhelming defeat. Though they had seemed like they were on equal footing, I could see that the girl was holding back, while the captain was struggling to keep up. The captain had made a bet with Lady Ellelaura, and had agreed to leave his post as captain if he lost. I learned a few days later that he had taken up a new posting to mentor students at the academy who were hoping to become soldiers and knights.

I was nominated for the captain post, but I turned it down. I had no right to take it. I had fought female students under the captain's orders. I'd known that I was crushing their dreams, yet I'd done it anyway. I had no right to become a captain.

I didn’t deserve it.

I resolved to try to meet the girl again, but even after pulling strings, I never found her. It turned out no one knew who she was. I’d thought that Lady Ellelaura had known her, but I couldn’t confirm it.

I wanted to know just how strong she actually was. What she had felt as she fought. How she had become so powerful. I had so many questions for her.

All I wanted was the chance to make sure the rules were clear before we sparred again, so that the next time I had a chance, it would be a fair fight.

Chapter 39:
Wishing to Go to the Ocean
Shia Chronicles

THE DAY AFTER YUNA came to my house, I received a letter from Noa. Apparently, she and Yuna were going to visit the beach in Mileela.

Mileela was a town near Crimonia on the other side of a large mountain. The mountain range was tall and difficult to cross, so travel between Mileela and Crimonia used to be difficult. However, Mother told me that Yuna had dug a tunnel to connect them and that had made traveling between the towns much easier.

At first, I thought she was joking, but apparently it was true. Yuna planned to bring all of the kids working at her businesses to Mileela for a trip, along with Noa, Fina, and Misa. I could tell from Noa's letter that she was looking forward to it.

I had last seen Yuna the day before, and she hadn't said a word about this. I told Mother that I wanted to go back to Crimonia.

"Mother, I'd like to go to the beach."

"You can't."

"Why?" I said.

"You have the academy."

"It'll be fine. We'll have a long break in three days."

If I rushed, I could make it.

"Oh, right. I didn't have any long breaks when I was at the academy, so it slipped my mind entirely," Mother said.

She may have said that, but I was sure she had a long break when she was a student.

"I still think you ought to study rather than take a break."

She sighed, then gave me permission to go to Crimonia. However, there was one condition. I needed to have a guard.

“I’ll write a letter of introduction for you to the guild master. Take that with you. I’m sure any adventurer the guild master recommends will be good.”

“Thank you, Mother.”

“Maybe I’ll go to Crimonia with you too.”

Apparently, Mother requested time off the next day but was denied. While we were eating, she complained about His Majesty.

I worried that what she was saying could be considered treason.

A day later, once the academy was out of session, I headed to the adventurer guild. The person at the front desk looked over the letter Mother had written and took me to the guild master’s office.

The guild master of the capital was a beautiful elf named Sanya. She was the kind of beautiful career woman I wanted to become someday.

“I’ve finished reading the letter.”

Sanya placed the letter on the table.

“So you need adventurers you can trust, and a party that has women in it.”

She pondered for a moment.

“Let’s go to the front desk for now,” she said, then stood from her seat.

“All right.”

As we headed to the front desk, she started talking to a woman.

“Do you know of any trustworthy adventurers who have women in their party? It would be great if they’re familiar with Crimonia too.”

“Um, one moment. Jade’s party hasn’t been in lately. Oh! Those two came here from Crimonia recently, and are looking for a quest that will take them back to the capital.”

The receptionist indicated a kind-looking woman and a large man sitting at the back of the guild.

“Let’s ask them.”

Sanya and I approached the pair.

“May I have a moment?”

“Um, yes. What is it?”

The woman looked at us anxiously.

“I’m Sanya, the guild master.”

“The guild master?!”

The woman was shocked.

“What could the capital’s guild master need from us?”

“Nothing too much. If you’re returning to Crimonia, could you escort this girl?”

The woman looked at me.

“I’m Shia Fochrosé.”

“Fochrosé? Isn’t that the name of Crimonia’s lord?”

Having heard my name, she immediately knew who I was. Normally, unless they had a direct connection to them, people didn’t know the names of lords.

“Yes, this is his daughter Shia. She needs to go back to Crimonia, so could I ask you to escort her?”

“Wouldn’t it be better to use the Fochrosé’s soldiers over us adventurers?”

“She’s in a rush.”

“But…”

Maybe she was intimidated. If anything happened to a noble’s daughter, they would likely be severely punished. Abandoning a noble and running away was entirely different from doing the same to a regular person.

That said, this meant that the quest payment would be higher too.

“You’re adventurers from Crimonia, right? Do you know the bear girl?” Sanya was asking them about Yuna.

“You mean Yuna? Yeah, we know her.”

If they were adventurers from Crimonia, it made sense that they knew Yuna.

“This is the daughter of the Fochrosé family, and she has connections to Yuna.”

“You know Yuna too?” the adventurer asked.

“Yes, she’s helped me more times than I could count.”

“I see.”

“If she knows Yuna, we should take the quest.”

The man, who had been silent up to that point, piped up.

“Gil?”

“We’re heading back to Crimonia either way.”

“I suppose so.”

“And if Yuna finds out we refused and something happens to her…”

The man stopped and looked at the woman.

“You’re right. We’ll take the quest.”

I wasn’t sure what had just happened between the two of them, but they accepted the escort mission.

“Thank you,” Sanya said. “I’ll leave the details to you.”

She returned to her work.

The pair informed me that the woman’s name was Rulina and the man was called Gil.

“So, when are we heading out?”

“The academy finishes up tomorrow, so we’ll leave after that,” I told them. I wanted to get to Crimonia as quickly as possible.

“All right. We’ll head out as soon as classes are out. Are you okay with that, Gil?”

“Yeah.”

The man didn’t object, but he didn’t say anything else either.

After our quick meeting, they officially took the quest.

The next day, after the classes ended, we set off for Crimonia. We got there by horseback.

“I would never have guessed you would be a friend of Yuna, Shia. I think I’ve seen her with your younger sister, though. You’re the older one, aren’t you?”

I wasn’t sure how to handle people being formal with me, so I asked them not to use honorifics.

“My younger sister is Noir.”

She had written in the letter that she hung out with Yuna and Fina sometimes, and that she would be going to Mileela too.

“What is Yuna like when she’s in Crimonia?” I was curious. I had to ask.

“Well, all I can say is that she’s an enigmatic girl.”

Enigmatic? I suppose that was an apt word to describe Yuna.

“It’s a mystery how she’s so powerful. It’s also a mystery why she loves bears so much. Her house is shaped like a bear, she has two bear summons, and her shop is even called the Bear’s Lounge. All her spells are bear themed too. I’m almost in awe of how dedicated she is to them.”

Yuna really did love bears. Even when I asked her to wear a school uniform, she didn’t want to change out of her bear clothes. But finally, for me, she reluctantly agreed to wear the uniform.

She really must just love bears that much.

“Do you have any other stories about Yuna?”

“Hmm, right…”

Rulina started telling me about how she and Yuna had met.

“When Yuna first came to the adventurer guild, one of my old party members tried to meddle with her. He made her angry, and she ended up beating his face in. It was a huge issue because we had planned to slay goblins the next day.”

Rulina spoke as though she was reminiscing, but I struggled to understand why someone getting beaten up would

make her nostalgic.

“It was his fault, so I don’t blame Yuna. Yuna even took up the quest herself to make sure it didn’t count against us on our record.”

Apparently the whole party had qualms with that adventurer’s actions for a while, so they’d used that as an excuse to disband leaving behind the two other men in their foursome. Now they were a duo.

The man who tried to meddle with Yuna must have been intrepid. Then again, based on her cute bear suit, there’s no way anyone would intuit how powerful she actually was.

“I can’t blame him,” I said.

Then, I told Rulina how I had first met Yuna.

“You challenged her to a duel in order to test whether she was a fitting guard for your sister? Now *that’s* reckless.”

Remembering how I’d behaved at the time, I felt like bopping myself on the head.

“I agree. But at the time, I just thought Yuna was a strangely dressed girl.”

If Yuna hadn’t gone easy on me, I might have been injured so badly I couldn’t move, just like the man at the guild. I doubted even one person existed who would assume that Yuna was powerful upon first glance.

“The other surprising thing about Yuna was that she slayed a black viper on her own. That was unbelievable.”

“Wait, really?”

Mother had told me that it had happened, but I hadn’t believed her. Black vipers rarely appeared anywhere. They were gigantic monsters. I doubted anyone could defeat one on their own.

“Yes, it’s true. I saw it for myself when they were butchering. It was gigantic. When you see a dead black viper right in front of you, there’s nothing else you can do but believe it. No adventurer in Crimonia will mess with Yuna.”

Well, of course not. No one who knew anything about her would be foolish enough to pick a fight with Yuna.

After that had happened, they had gotten closer to Yuna, and she had hired them to guard her business after it had opened.

“Ha ha, right now her bear bread is a huge hit.”

“Bear bread you say?”

“It’s bread in the shape of a bear’s head. They’re so cute that you feel guilty when you eat them. They’re very good, though.”

I made a note to try one while I was in Crimonia.

“All right, that’s enough of a break. Let’s head out.”

We headed off to Crimonia.

Chapter 40:
Wishing to Become a Knight
Linea Chronicles

ALL OF THIS HAPPENED before I enrolled in the academy. My older brother was a knight, and in order to deliver items he had forgotten, I had to go to the castle.

Many knights were training on the grounds, and my brother was among them. Since he was training with the other knights, I couldn't give him his things right away. He noticed me, but he couldn't leave practice. I had to stay and watch until they were finished. Most people would be frightened to see their swords clash, but I had seen my brother fight since I was small. It wasn't scary to me.

Occasionally, I would pick up a sword and imitate my brother. My parents tried to stop me at first, telling me it was dangerous. But after I begged them over and over, they gave up. If I tried to fight with the knights though, I knew I would just drop the sword right away.

"What are you doing here?"

As I was watching the practice, I heard a voice from behind. I turned around to see a beautiful girl standing there. I recognized her. The beautiful girl behind me was Princess Teilia.

"..."

I was so surprised that she had spoken to me that I couldn't respond.

"What are you doing?" Lady Teilia repeated.

I came back to my senses.

"I came here to bring my brother some items he had forgotten, so now I'm waiting for him to finish practice."

"Ah, so you must have some free time. Would you spend some of it with me?"

Lady Teilia offered me her hand. I needed to give my brother his things, but I couldn't say no to Lady Teilia. I had no idea what to do.

“But…”

I looked down at my brother’s things.

“It should be fine so long as you give them to him. What’s your name?”

“It’s Linea.”

After I told her that, she looked out at the training knights.

“Is Linea’s brother here?!?!”

My brother was shocked when the princess called him. He looked like he didn’t know what to do, but he eventually raised his hand and said, “That’s me.”

“Linea brought you your things. Would you please take them?”

My brother looked at the highest-ranking knight among the group. They nodded, and then my brother sheathed his sword and walked over to me.

“Thank you, Linea.”

He had a strange look on his face as he took his things.

“Now your job is done, Linea. Come and spend some time with me,” Lady Teilia said, then she took my hand and started running.

“Okay!”

Since I was unfamiliar with the castle, she showed me around. We admired the beautiful flowers in the garden, then headed off to the kitchen for snacks. She was such a kind princess. It felt like a dream.

Afterward, I heard from my brother that the castle planned to give Lady Teilia a woman as her guard. I thought about it. Lady Teilia’s guard. I wanted to stand beside her, so I decided to work toward becoming a knight. I had my goal.

Time passed, and when I entered the academy, I came to know Shia, a noble. At first, I called her Lady Shia, but then she told me to drop the honorific. Even though she was part of the nobility, it was easy to talk to her.

She knew how to wield a sword and how to use magic. I tried dueling her many times, but I could never manage to win. If Shia tried to become a knight, she would have a higher chance of success than me. She told me that since she was the daughter of a noble, though, she only learned how to fight to protect herself.

My brother sometimes gave me sword fighting lessons too, but I was still nowhere close to Shia's level.

"You don't even need a guard, Shia. You're so powerful."

"If I run into a little trouble, I can at least protect myself."

"I could have become a knight had I been as skilled as you."

I wished to become Lady Teilia's guard. My family told me to make sure to think my goal over carefully, but they allowed me to chase my dream until I graduated from the academy.

If I could become better at magic, I might have been able to become her guard as a mage, but my magic skills were average. If I had honed my magic, there was a chance I could have done it anyway, but I chose to become a knight instead. Very few women attempted to become knights. Plus, if I could use some magic, I could use it as a knight too.

I was glad Shia hadn't tried to become a knight. I wouldn't have stood a chance if she had.

My days were spent learning from my teachers at the academy and from my brother at home.

Today, His Majesty would be coming to see all the people vying to become knights at the academy festival. We started to spar with the knights. If I caught His Majesty's eye, I could get one step closer to becoming Lady Teilia's knight.

The knights arrived, and His Majesty came soon after. I saw Lady Teilia with them as well. I tried my utmost to show my best side to His Majesty and Lady Teilia, but the boys were doing the same and I never had a chance to stand out before the duels ended. Next, we would duel the actual castle knights.

I hoped that I could recover during those duels, but the knights were larger than the boys at the academy and blocked

me no matter how I jabbed at them. When they tried to strike me, however, each consecutive blow was so heavy that I could hardly feel my hand.

This was supposed to be a practice where the castle knights would teach me how to fight through being my mentor, but all they did was unilaterally attack. My hand hurt. If I couldn't block something like this, I had no chance of becoming Lady Teilia's knight.

Just when I thought I couldn't bear it any longer, a knight called out to stop the match. It was the knight captain, Lord Lutum. I also saw Shia's mother, Lady Ellelaura there. She was young, and beautiful to boot. Lord Lutum, Lady Ellelaura, and His Majesty were discussing something. Apparently, they were organizing a new match where someone would represent all the girls trying to become knights. I had no idea what was going on.

Shia came up to me and asked if I would lend her my sword.

"Sure," I replied. "But Shia, what's going on?"

"I'm not sure if this will be helpful, but you should just watch. Whether she wins or loses, I think you'll learn a lot from this."

It was such a strange thing to say. Then, she simply took my sword and left. Soon, a girl even smaller than me appeared on the academy grounds. This little girl planned to fight a knight?

Her opponent was named Figo. He was well-known for being one of the more powerful knights. There was no way she could win. The fight started, and it soon took a turn I never would have expected.

It was impressive. The girl was good at both parrying and evading Figo's blows. She was only putting in the bare minimum effort, but she was still blocking the knight. I don't think she was even scared. She stared straight through her opponent. Wasn't she afraid of the sword being brought down on her? Whenever I tried to stop a blow, I had to look away. I was frightened whenever a sword was swung down over me. I knew that if I didn't overcome that fear, I couldn't stop the weapon from

striking me. She was handling a knight. Did I really have a classmate like this at the academy?

She won against the knight, in spite of all my expectations. Neither of them had used magic, but they'd both displayed amazing techniques with their swords. The people who were watching understood that and cheered.

I understood what Shia had meant when she had told me to watch the duel. A girl really could become strong. The girl had filled me with confidence. But somehow, that wasn't the only surprise she had in store.

The girl used magic to fight and win against the knight captain, Lord Lutum. She was a girl, but she was talented at sword fighting and magic as well. I was jealous of this girl. Even though she was smaller than me, she showed me that the most important thing was to fight without fear. She had fought bravely, without ever looking away from her opponent. If I were to become Lady Teilia's knight, that was something I needed.

I also learned not to wear my school uniform if I was going to be active. While she was fighting, I'd seen small peeks of something white from under her skirt.

Chapter 41:
The Rookie Adventurer and Yuna
Yuna Chronicles, Part 1

I WAS VISITING THE adventurer guild for the first time in a while. I'd been pulled into a bunch of trouble lately, so I hadn't been able to do any quests for some time.

When I entered, there was a little commotion, but no one tried to pick a fight with me.

"Welcome, Ms. Yuna."

I headed over to the receptionist who had called out to me.

"Hello, Helen."

"What brings you in today?"

"I was thinking of doing a quest for once. It'd be bad if I had my card revoked, after all."

Honestly, even if that happened, it wasn't a big deal since I was associated with the merchant guild.

"You've done some pretty large jobs for us. No matter how much time passes, we couldn't possibly take your card."

Apparently I wouldn't be allowed to quit being an adventurer even if I wanted to.

"If you do intend to take a quest, that would be helpful for the guild."

"Do you have any interesting jobs, then?"

"We don't have many jobs that'd be more interesting than slaying a black viper, I'm afraid."

"Slaying the black viper wasn't exactly what I'd call interesting though."

"Well, I won't soon forget how excited you were about going over to slay it. Do you even know how worried I was back then?"

"Sorry."

“You still saved many people. On behalf of the guild, all I can do is thank you.”

She actually praised me. It made me embarrassed.

I scurried off to the quest board. As I was casually looking over the quests, one in particular caught my eye.

Rank E and D Adventurer Guidance

For adventurers D rank and above (however, must have achieved D rank more than one year ago)

Client: Adventurer Guild

“What’s this, Helen?”

“Oh, that’s work to instruct the lower-rank adventurers. We hold these sessions regularly. It’s a loss for the guild if any adventurers die, and being an adventurer means walking hand in hand with danger. Because of that, we have the more experienced adventurers instruct the lower-ranking ones.”

“I had no idea you did this stuff.”

“That’s because you haven’t been around at the guild lately.”

“Well, if that’s how you’re going to be…”

“I’m joking.”

“If the guild pays for this, aren’t you losing money?”

“If it means the lower-ranking adventurers will improve, then it helps the guild in the long run. It also means they’ll injure themselves less, and learn how to avoid worst-case scenarios…”

Helen looked sullen. She had probably seen off adventurers who’d never come back. I sensed the conversation was going down a slightly dark path, so I changed the subject.

“What do they need to learn?”

“The rookies vary in ability, so it depends on the individual. If they need to work on their sword skills, then they might practice that. If they have the basics down, then they might go

into the woods with their mentor to slay monsters and learn how to do a search."

"A search?"

"Tracking a monster's path, for example, or how to handle a monster after discovering one."

"I see. So that's the kind of stuff you're teaching."

"Well, we only recently started doing it. We were mostly influenced by you teaching the rookie adventurers, Yuna."

"...? I don't remember doing that."

Helen gave me a look like she was reconsidering everything she knew about me. I just didn't remember doing anything like that!

"I mean Ms. Horn and her party."

"Horn?"

Horn was a rookie adventurer who was in a party with three boys from her hometown.

"You taught her a little magic when you had time."

It wasn't like I was trying to teach her a bunch of stuff or anything. I didn't go all out.

"Ms. Horn said she was no longer dragging down the rest of her group, thanks to you."

"Did she really say that?"

I was getting embarrassed again.

"I also heard you taught Shin how to use his sword."

Shin was part of Horn's group, and he was more or less the party leader. When I'd first met him, he made fun of my bear clothes. After some other stuff happened though, he apologized to me and I ended up teaching him sword fighting.

"Honestly, I only taught him a little bit," I said.

"According to him, it was difficult to wrap his head around what you were saying. Once he understood though, you apparently taught him the most important thing he'd ever learned."

Had I said something that profound to him? I sure didn't remember doing that.

"I really didn't say anything that important to him. He must have misunderstood me."

"I most certainly did not, Miss Yuna," someone replied.

I turned around to find four adventurers standing behind me. They were the people Helen had been talking about.

"It's been a while, Yuna," Horn said, shooting me smile.

"Yeah, it has," I said.

"You taught us some very important things about fighting."

"I did?"

"That's right. You told me not to focus on my opponent's sword, but instead to take in the whole picture," Shin answered in Horn's place.

"I don't remember saying that."

"I didn't get it at first since I was such a greenhorn, so it was a difficult lesson to understand. But once I got it, my field of vision expanded. I started to anticipate how others would move. That made it easier for me to give my party combat orders, and now battles are easier for us. We still can't win against veteran adventurers though. Before, we'd lose immediately, but now we can draw duels out a little."

"Wow, really?"

Apparently they really had learned some stuff from me teaching them. I was glad.

"You and Gil are my mentors."

Shin's eyes glittered. He was so different from how he was when we first met.

"It's amazing that you won against those veteran adventurers, Yuna."

"You heard about that?" I asked.

"Everyone was talking about it back when it happened. It was so bizarre and interesting."

"Honestly, all the rookie adventurers have heard about it."

“You defeated all the adventurers who made fun of you and tried to get their guild cards revoked, right?”

“Yeah, and you almost became one of them, Shin,” I replied.

“Right.”

When we first met, he kept bopping my head, and I’d almost snapped. If Helen hadn’t stopped him, he would’ve been in trouble.

“I really am sorry about back then,” he said.

“You’ve already apologized enough.”

I guess people really could change.

“We’ll only allow people to register here after we tell them not to antagonize the girl in the bear suit. Most rookie adventurers laugh that off, though, and it’s causing us so much trouble.”

Helen started explaining the new registration process to us. She looked over at Shin. He was trying to play everything off with a smile.

“So, what happened today?”

“We were off on our way to Brandaugh’s village when we saw Yuna. We came by to say hello before going.”

“Brandaugh’s village? Are they having monster trouble again?”

I’d met Brandaugh the first time I’d ridden Kumayuru into the woods. Back then, he’d tried to shoot my bear, thinking Kumayuru was the wild boar attacking the village. Fortunately, we got that sorted out right away and Kumayuru and I slayed the boar. Good times.

“Brandaugh is in town right now. He’s about to go back home,” Horn explained.

“The guild asked for an investigation near the village. We were going to go back with him on his wagon,” Shin added.

“It’d cost money to borrow a carriage or a horse, so we’re trying to be economical.”

“That’s good, but don’t be too cheap. It’s fine if you’re traveling nearby, but if you’re going somewhere far away, that’ll

take time and it won't be worth the reward. Worse yet, if you're tired from travel, you won't be able to fight the monsters. That'll put you in even more danger."

Travel meant using up some of your stamina. In a game, that basically meant that your HP was already low. That would really lower your odds of survival.

"Helen said the same thing. We always decide how we'll be traveling together."

"This time Brandaugh is being kind enough to let us ride his wagon, and we've taken him up on the offer."

"Well, it's time to head out."

"Please come by to see us practice again, Yuna."

They all waved and left the guild.

I didn't find any interesting quests there, so I headed home.

Chapter 42:
The Rookie Adventurer and Yuna
Yuna Chronicles, Part 2

ONCE HORN'S PARTY WAS BACK, they said they were going to practice with Rulina and Gil, so I headed to the outskirts of town. When I got there, Gil and Shin were already exchanging blows. I guess they weren't exchanging them so much as Shin was attacking and Gil was defending. Once Shin got tired, he tagged out with the axe-wielder in their party.

A little farther away, Rulina was watching Horn as she practiced her spells. The last member of the party, who used a bow and arrow, was working alone trying to hit a target.

I headed over to Rulina and Horn, who noticed me.

"Yuna!"

Horn stopped practicing and happily ran over to me. Gil also noticed I was here when he heard Horn and the others paused their practice.

"You guys look like you're working hard," I said.

"Yes. We all decided we wanted to become stronger."

"How's everyone doing, Rulina?"

"You taught them very well. It's been going really smoothly," Rulina replied.

"I haven't taught them all that much."

"Oh, come on, that's not true. Horn told me what you're doing, and it sounded great."

"It's just like Rulina said."

Gil had spoken up, which was unusual for him.

"Shin is taking action more effectively."

"That must be because he's been working hard at it," I replied.

"You're the one who told me to observe the entire battlefield instead of only focusing on my opponent's weapon."

I guess I might have said something like that.

“That helped me get a little better at anticipating my opponents’ moves. I can tell where Gil is trying to strike from and whether it’ll be a heavy blow or not.”

“Wow, that’s great.”

Being an adventurer was dangerous work. If I had taught them and helped them mature, then I was glad.

They’d stopped for a break because I had shown up, but Shin and Gil started practicing again. Shin was attacking while Gil was defending. Since they were different sizes, Gil and Shin didn’t fight the same way. Gil seemed to be assuming that they were practicing to fight orcs. Well, Gil was big, he definitely had the right build to be an orc.

Shin tried all sorts of ways to attack him, but Gil easily parried. Even if Shin had improved at fighting, Gil was still more experienced.

“I’m going to attack now.”

“All right!”

Gil’s brief words seemed to be enough of a warning for Shin as he replied.

Apparently, Gil was planning to counterattack based on Shin’s moves. Shin kept trying to get a blow in, but Gil would aim for his openings and gently take swings at him. Shin dodged away. I could see that Gil really had been trying to attack him, but for orcs, it was better to dodge something than to try and block it with a sword. In a battle of strength, Shin had no chance.

Gil lowered his sword slightly. Shin took Gil’s timing into consideration as he struck, but it didn’t work. Gil feinted, inviting Shin to charge. Shin fell for it. Gil parried Shin’s attack and brought his sword down on Shin. It made contact.

“Ow!”

He collapsed, holding his side.

“Shin!” Horn yelled in concern.

“I’m okay.”

They were using wooden swords, so it seemed like he hadn't been hurt too badly.

"Sorry. I couldn't stop," Gil said.

"No, it was my fault for not being able to block."

Gil had tried to stop before he hit Shin, but the momentum of the sword was too much to overcome.

"I thought I'd get one over on you, Gil."

It seemed Shin hadn't realized yet.

"Gil created an opening on purpose to get you to attack."

"An opening?"

"He was trying to get you to go on the offensive. If you know that someone is going to attack, you just need to dodge and then you can counterattack."

"Don't think Gil is being unfair. He's increasing the difficulty of the training because he thinks you've improved," Rulina explained.

"That's...great. So that means you think I've gotten stronger?"

"That's right. If you ever fight a bandit or someone of a similar nature, you'll need a strategy."

There was apparently a larger thought process behind Gil's actions. I thought that he'd feinted in order to teach Shin how to handle orcs, but he didn't explain himself. Since they were in the middle of a lesson, I didn't want to spoil anything by asking.

Looks like I'd matured into someone who could read the room.

"Gil, could we try again?"

"Are you sure, Shin?"

Shin got up, but he was still holding his side. It was a practice sword, but getting hit with it still hurt.

"Could you let me borrow that sword, Gil?"

Gil wordlessly offered the practice sword to me. I took it and pulled a cloth out of my bear storage. Then I wrapped the cloth around the sword.

“You’re so good at that, Yuna.”

I’d made Kumayuru and Kumakyu stuffed animals before, so I’d gotten pretty good at working with fabric. It took a while, but I finally finished wrapping the sword.

“Now it shouldn’t hurt.”

Rulina touched the fabric. Then Gil took the sword back and swung it a few times.

“How’s that?”

“It should be fine.”

It seemed Shin was in better shape than I thought. He started his training again. He got caught in Gil’s traps repeatedly, getting hit each time, but he never got seriously hurt. The boy with the axe tried his best too, but neither of them could land a single blow on Gil. They kept falling to the ground.

Horn had used up her mana while practicing, so she was resting.

“Which one of you is stronger, Yuna? You or Gil? I know that if you use magic, you would definitely win.” the boy with the bow asked me casually.

“If she can’t use magic, Gil would obviously win,” the boy with the axe answered from the ground.

“Gil and Yuna would fight differently though.”

Shin was still thinking it over, and seemed to be undecided which of us to pick.

“I heard Yuna fought with her bare hands and won against adventurers.”

I guess he was talking about when I’d first gotten here and some adventurers had picked a fight with me.

“After seeing Gil, could you still say that?”

“Well…”

Gil did have a lot of muscle. I patted my own belly. That was a lot of fat.

“Rulina, what do you think?”

Rulina, who had been silent until now, looked between me and Gil.

“Right. Well, if she could use magic, then I’m sure Yuna would win. I don’t think any adventurers in Crimonia would stand a chance against Yuna.”

“Is she really that powerful?”

“Then in a fight without magic, would Gil win?”

“I know that Yuna is powerful even without magic, but that’s just what I’ve heard. I haven’t seen it for myself. Since I haven’t seen her fight without magic, I’m not sure who would win.”

Right, whenever I’d been around Rulina, I’d always used magic. She didn’t know what my sword fighting skills were like.

“What do you think, Gil?” Rulina asked.

“Yuna is stronger.”

Without hesitation, Gil replied.

“You’re so direct.”

“Deboraney lost against her.”

Deboraney…I felt like I’d heard that name somewhere before. But I couldn’t remember where.

“Deboraney is the one you used to be in a party with, right, Rulina and Gil?”

“He was unpleasant, but he was strong. He still lost to Yuna.”

Aha! I remembered. That was the goblin adventurer who tried to pick a fight with me when I was registering at the adventurer guild.

“That’s right.”

“You didn’t even see the fight between him and Yuna, Gil. You’re still sure she would win?”

“Deboraney is powerful, but he lost.”

“Right.”

“I want to be certain. Yuna, please spar with me.”

This was unusual of Gil. I couldn't exactly turn him down, so I agreed.

I borrowed a wooden sword from Shin.

"Do you think you can win against Gil, Yuna?" Shin asked.

"Just watch me."

I didn't make any predictions.

We faced off.

"I want Shin to watch, so you can go first," I said.

"All right," Gil said, then he tried to attack.

He gave a large swing, but it was too weak. Even though it wasn't his full power, the swing was still heavy. I would've been blown away if it landed. I dodged. It seemed like he anticipated my moves, and he swung his sword from the side. I took a step back, just barely dodging it. Gil didn't stop there. He kept trying to attack over and over. I dodged at times and parried at others.

Then he stopped.

"Whew," he took a breath.

"How are you dodging that?" Shin asked, seeming surprised.

"I'm shocked too. You can dodge right at the last moment?"

That was a move I'd learned from my game. I'd died dozens, hundreds of times to perfect it. Since it was a game, I could try again no matter how many times I was hit or killed. It was only because I could grind that way that I'd been able to acquire the skill.

If I didn't dodge at the last moment, I couldn't attack. That was why I tried to wait until the very last moment to dodge before countering. That was the whole point of fighting this way.

"I'm not telling you to mimic me, but gain experience and keep an eye on your opponent's moves. Then you might be able to do this too."

"Uh, I don't think he could do something like that."

Rulina seemed to think it was impossible, but that might have been because she was a mage.

“Could you do this, Gil?”

“No. I rely on my brute strength to defeat opponents.”

That was another weapon a person could use. If you used one powerful blow, you could win. Some players in the game I played also would wait for an opening and one-hit K.O. enemies.

“Which is better?”

“You should think that over for yourself and figure out what works best for you.”

“What’s best for me…?”

“Or you could change how you fight based on your opponent. You might not be able to win against an opponent on the same playing field, in which case, you’ll need to beat them at something else.”

“The same playing field?”

“For example, if an opponent is faster than you, you won’t be able to win an agility contest against them.”

“Yeah.”

“In the same way, you can’t win a test of strength against someone who can overpower you.”

“Yeah.”

“If you want to win against Gil, you need to use your speed. If you want to win against me, you’ll need more power.”

“More power? If Gil couldn’t even hit you, then I can’t either. What’s the point?”

“That’s all dependent on your experience and your brains. No matter how fast you can move, it doesn’t matter if you can’t dodge. In order to evade an attack, you need to know how your opponent will attack you and try to read their moves before they are made.”

“And that’s using my brain?”

“In order to gain more experience, you need to face defeat and let it sink in. At some point, your body will move before your mind even needs to think about it.”

“With experience…”

“That’s why you need to practice.”

“So I guess you mean that I can’t just wave my sword around to get better.”

“This all applies to magic and archery too.”

I looked over at Horn and the archer.

“Of course.”

I restarted my fight with Gil and was able to land several blows on him with the wooden sword.

“Don’t feel down, Gil.”

“Right.”

Rulina comforted Gil, who hadn’t hit me a single time. He headed my way.

“I learned a lot from this. Please spar with me again sometime.”

“Sure.”

I accepted Gil’s request. I always used magic to fight, so I wanted some occasional sword practice too. After that, we started practice again and it seemed to me like everyone had grown stronger.

Being an adventurer was dangerous work. Avoiding injury was difficult. But at the very least, an adventurer needed to be strong enough to return home alive.

I never wanted to find out that either Horn or Rulina had died. Maybe it wasn’t such a bad thing to occasionally practice with them.

Chapter 43:
TV Show Novel, Part 1

D*ING!*

Hm? Was that the mail chime? I opened up my inbox. The sender was the god, just like I expected it to be.

“Uh, what’s this?”

“Dear Yuna, It seems that your exploits in this world are being turned into an anime!”

The message started right off the bat with some ridiculous nonsense.

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

The things I’d done while living in another world were being turned into an anime? No way. Who would actually even enjoy watching something like that? Who would that benefit?

“I’ve prepared a television for you, so make sure to tune in when it starts.”

I had no idea if the anime was real or just some joke, so I checked my bear storage again. There really was a TV in there. One with a big screen, too.

“Can I even watch TV in this world?”

Well, since I had one now, I might as well check it out. I made a stand for the TV using earth magic and set the screen on top. I didn’t have a place to plug it in. I mean, considering there wasn’t any electricity, that was no surprise. And where was I supposed to even get reception for this broadcast, huh? I had so many questions.

I tried pressing the on button just to see what would happen, and the light on the TV actually blinked on.

“Wait, is this really going to work?”

Something showed up on the screen.

“The *Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear* broadcast will be starting shortly.”

“What kind of title is that? Wait, is ‘Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear’ seriously the title of the anime about my adventures in another world? Wait, is it because of the bear suit? Is that why it’s called Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear?”

It was a pretty crappy title. It was just “bear” written in Japanese three times and then once more in English tacked on at the end. If they were going to name it seriously, they should’ve gone with something like, “*It’s Just Me against Another World in My OP Bear Onesie*,” or “*I’m the Most Powerful in the World, but Only When I’m Wearing My Bear Suit, so This Thing’s Never Coming Off*,” or “*Adventuring in My Bear Onesie*,” or “*When God Gives You a Bear Onesie, Go Live Your Best Life in Another World*,” or, y’know, a normal isekai title with the whole summary in the title. Who would know what the story is about if it was just called “Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear”? People might think it’s an anime about a real bear or something and never watch it.

I had a bone to pick with the person who decided on the name. But still, if the screen was working, that meant this wasn’t a joke. Like, an anime really existed out there about me. This wasn’t an April Fool’s joke or something, right?

I looked more closely at the screen and saw it had a notice about broadcast times.

“Check out the official anime website for the station and air time”?

Wait, I had an official site too?

When I looked at the remote the TV came with, there were buttons for each station and also one that said “official anime website.” I pressed it and the TV channel flipped.

“Wow. That’s us on there.”

I was met with an image of Fina and I riding Kumayuru and Kumakyu. Noa, Shia, Misa, and Shuri were there too. I also saw an anime video of us up. One of those PV things—promotional video or whatever. It was really me there, animated and dubbed on-screen as an anime character. It’s kind of late to be worried about this now, but I couldn’t believe I’d been walking around in that getup all around town.

Fina was cute. Noa, Misa, Shia, and Shuri were adorable. So were Kumayuru and Kumakyu. Just watching it, I felt like they were coming to life. But wait, did I ever even give anyone permission to make me an anime? Didn't I at least have rights to my own likeness?

Ding!

I had another message.

"This is another world. Those rules don't apply here."

Seriously? Oof.

There weren't any laws protecting your personal information here. But after seeing the PV, I was getting excited to see how it'd all look once it was animated for real. Even if I complained now, the god of this world wouldn't care. I figured it'd be better to just give in.

Could I find any more details about the anime?

"Huh?"

I looked up the announcement for Episode 1, and it was titled, "Fight against the Black Viper." Wait, it wasn't going to start at the beginning? Y'know, with the god yeeting me into another world, me meeting Fina, and all that?

I kept digging around, I found the summary for Episode 2.

"Looks like Episode 2 is about me getting here and meeting Fina."

When I met Fina, I was still convinced this was a video game instead of another reality altogether. I was shocked when I learned it was real. Still, I had my money from my original world and my OP bear gear, so everything ended up fine.

My one gripe was that my OP powers were associated with my bear gear and not me. Normal isekai stories were about people getting OP powers and living their best life in another world.

I was pretty miffed about that. Like, how many embarrassing memories had I already suffered because of this bear suit? Then again, there was no point in being angry now. I'd kind of gotten used to wearing the bear suit. Complacency sure was a dangerous thing.

Let’s see…what else is on the site…

I poked around trying to find anything entertaining, when I remembered the reason I’d visited the website in the first place. Oh, right. I wanted to know the airtime.

“Hm, where is it…oh, there it is.”

I clicked on a black bear at the top right of the page, where I found the broadcast and streaming link, which I also clicked. A whole list of channels and streamers showed up. There were some regions where it wouldn’t be airing on TV. Anyone without a local broadcast could just stream it though.

“Okay, but how is this supposed to help if it’s not written in the days of the week and time for this world?”

As soon as I said that, the letters and numbers on the screen transformed into exactly that.

“Wait, so it’s showing tonight?”

Could this TV record stuff? Oh, it can. Well, then I could watch it later with Fina and everyone.

If I could watch my anime, I wondered if I could watch other ones too. Maybe I could go back to being a shut-in? I pressed a button on the remote at random. But every time, I got a message that read “Only Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear can be watched on this television device.”

I felt like throwing the remote at the screen. I wanted to watch reruns of shows I’d left on in the background. I was curious what was airing now too.

This TV was useless. It could’ve at least let me play video games or something.

“Give me a console and some games, c’mon.”

I had no idea if the god was listening, but I thought it was worth a shot.

Ding!

A response.

“I’ll send you *Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear* if it ever becomes a game.”

“I don’t need that crap!”

Who’d want a game about themselves?

While I was messing around, the air time was approaching. I still needed to eat dinner, take a bath, and record it. Oh, and potato chips were a must if I was going to watch TV.

I quickly got myself ready before the broadcast started.

Chapter 44:
TV Show Novel, Part 2

I'D THOUGHT IT WAS all a joke, but apparently, the stuff happening in this world was being turned into an anime.

It was kind of surreal watching myself fight the black viper in a bear onesie in episode one. I mean, I couldn't exactly watch myself fight under normal circumstances. I hardly ever saw fight scenes that weren't even a little bit tense. Kumayuru and Kumakyu were adorable too. In both real life and anime, cuteness is strength.

The other thing that I was curious about was how my original world was shown at the end of the episode. I didn't have an iota of privacy. They were showing my whole room, not to mention me in loungewear in an anime. It was like the whole country was getting a peek into my home.

I wanted to complain, but I knew the god of this world would just tell me other worlds don't give people privacy. But wait, no. That wasn't right at all. Everyone needs privacy, even in another world. It wasn't like people could animate anything they wanted. The one saving grace was that they didn't show any scenes of me changing or in the bath. I mean, they wouldn't do something like that, right?

This god had thrown me into another world, dressed me as a bear, and forced me to wear bear underwear, though. I couldn't put anything past them. I couldn't let my guard down. On the other hand, the god had set me up financially and given me OP gear, so I was grateful to some extent. Still, it was my money to begin with, and the OP gear came in the shape of a bear onesie, so it was pretty hard to be genuinely grateful. That said, Kumayuru and Kumakyu were the best gifts ever, for sure. I was truly, really grateful for that, at least.

I patted the heads of my bears. They were in cub form, sitting on my lap. They both crooned at me happily.

My entire soul was healed.

I poked around the website again to see if I could find more info and found a miniseries called Bear Bear Bear Kuma! on the site.

Bear Bear Bear Kuma? Not Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear?

I dug into it more and learned it was a separate miniseries from the anime broadcasting on TV. I clicked the play button to check it out and the video started. I saw chibi versions of me, Kumayuru, and Kumakyu show up on the screen.

“Looks like I’m sleeping.”

I was enjoying a nap with my bears under a tree. Then Noa, Fina, and Shuri appeared and fell asleep beside me. All of them looked cute as chibis, of course, but weirdly enough, even a “ferocious” bear like me looked cute drawn in that style.

Uh, so apparently the mini series would be updating weekly too. It was too bad they were such short clips, but they were cute enough to be something to look forward to.

I noticed the second episode of the regular anime was also going to air tonight.

The first episode had been about the viper, but the summary of the second episode said that it would be about me and Fina meeting for the first time. I figured the second episode would also cover how I’d been dragged into this world in the first place before I ran into Fina.

I remembered that when I’d first met Fina, she’d asked me if I was going to eat her. I wasn’t going to do that, even if I was dressed as a bear.

Had I really been that scary? Well, either way, it was a nice memory.

Since episode two had Fina in it, I called Fina over to my house.

“Yuna, why did you ask me to bring over a sleepover kit out of nowhere?”

The situation was hard to explain. Besides, I wanted to surprise Fina, so I hadn’t told her about the anime yet.

“I wanted to watch an anime with you.”

She'd already taken a bath and was wearing cute pajamas. I was fully set up, so I started explaining what an anime was.

"Ah-knee-may?"

Fina tilted her head slightly. It was cute.

"It's easier to see it for yourself rather than having me explain it."

I brought her over to my room where the TV was.

"Is that a black plank?"

Fina noticed the TV. She'd been in my room lots of times, so she'd noticed the TV right away since it hadn't been there before.

"You sit here, Fina. Just watch this black screen...I mean plank."

I had Fina set herself up right in front of the TV. I was going to have her watch the first episode of the anime that I'd recorded the previous week. I grabbed the remote and pressed the replay button.

"The black plank is glowing."

The show started, beginning from the scene of the horse running.

"Yuna, the drawing is moving!"

She was looking out at the TV in wonder. The boy showed up, asking for someone to defeat the black viper, but no one would agree to take his quest.

Suddenly, someone came to his rescue...

"It's you, Yuna."

I took the quest to slay the black viper. Fina was completely speechless, fully entranced by the TV.

"It's the black viper!" "Wait, Yuna!" "It'll be dangerous, Yuna!"

She was yelling as she watched me fight against the black viper on the screen. Then the me in the anime finally slayed the black viper.

"Oh, good. So that's how you defeated it."

Next, the show returned to the Crimonian adventurer guild and I pressed the pause button. After that, the anime would

move on to showing my original world.

“So, what is this?”

“That’s an anime,” I replied.

“The pictures were moving. It was amazing. How is this possible?”

Fina’s eyes glittered as she asked questions. Obviously, I didn’t know the whole process for making an anime. I just said, “God made it.”

“God?”

It’d be too hard to try to explain everything off as a secret technique or something, so I just played it off as a little divine intervention. To be fair, I wasn’t lying.

“Wow. So you know god?!”

Fina’s eyes lit up. She was just eating this up.

“I haven’t met god, but I guess we’re somewhat acquainted.”

The messages were one-sided and we’d never actually interacted. Did that count as knowing each other? I changed the topic.

“So, about the anime. It looks like the next episode comes out tonight. You’ll show up in it, so I called you over. I was thinking of watching it with you.”

“I’m going to be one of these moving drawings?”

“Yeah. Want to watch it together?”

Fina thought for a moment.

“I do. It sounds embarrassing, though.”

I prepped some potato chips and drinks to have while we watched, then we sat in front of the TV. It was about to start.

Let’s see what they’ll cover next.

Chapter 45:
TV Show Novel, Part 3

FINA AND I SAT IN FRONT of the TV waiting for the anime to start. Soon, *Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear* the anime, episode two began.

“Wow, Yuna, you’re not dressed as a bear!”

She was commenting on the scene she saw of me in my original world. Fina was only focused on my lack of bear onesie and it seemed she hadn’t noticed anything else. Wasn’t she interested in any of the other details? Like my room and stuff?

Next, the opening music started. Fina swayed with the music.

“It’s a very good song. I wish I could sing like this.”

Uh, I was pretty sure the person singing the song voiced Fina too. I heard Fina’s voice actor in the PV, and she sounded exactly like the real Fina. How had the god found someone who was such a perfect match?

“I’m sure you could do it if you practice, Fina.”

“That would make me so happy.”

We didn’t have karaoke or ways to play music though, so it’d be pretty hard. If the god was going to send me a TV, they could’ve at least sent me some CDs and something to play them with too.

While I was lost in my thoughts, the opening sequence came to an end. I appeared in the middle of a forest in my bear gear.

“That’s you in your regular clothes, Yuna.”

Fina looked happy to see me in my element. When she saw the message from the god, she seemed convinced that I was some sort of prophet. I wasn’t though.

It wasn’t like we were in actual communication, exchanging messages on the regular. And I sure hadn’t been asked to save this world or anything. Yeah, there were monsters around, but no demon lord or anything.

…There wasn’t a demon lord or anything, right?

While I was thinking, the episode continued.

“Oh, someone’s asking for help.”

I was pretty sure that would be Fina. Just like I thought, Fina was being attacked by wolves.

“It’s me! I’m being attacked by wolves.”

While Fina yelled, my anime self gallantly saved Fina from the wolves attacking her.

“*Are you going to eat me?*” anime Fina asked me.

“Why did you think I was going to eat you back then?”

Even if I was dressed as a bear, I wasn’t actually a bear. It was kind of weird for me to say this, but I was a cute bear. Why would anyone assume I’d eat them?

“Um, back then, I thought that I was going to be eaten by the wolves that attacked me. And then a person dressed as a bear showed up. I was so relieved that I just blurted out the first thing that came to mind.”

In the anime, I tugged off my bear hood. The person under the hood was a pretty girl.

“Who is she?”

“That’s you, Yuna.”

“No way. She’s sparkling.”

They’d definitely taken some liberties, even for an anime. It was like when someone had a cute profile picture, but weren’t nearly as good looking when you met them in person. This anime looked facetuned to me. If anyone saw the *real* me, they’d be disappointed…though maybe I looked so different from anime-me that they wouldn’t even realize it was supposed to be me.

Anime Fina butchered the wolf, just like she actually had when we’d met. Once she finished, we headed to Crimonia together. We walked around town, and even in the world of the anime, my bear onesie stood out. Everyone we passed by stared at me. They’d still been doing that to me in the real world a few months ago, though things in Crimonia had settled down now.

Anime Yuna headed to the adventurers' guild to sell the wolf carcasses, then Fina showed me around town until we got to the inn. It was just how it happened in real life.

"If this is real, then did god bring you here from somewhere else?"

Fina asked her question, carefully choosing her words. This was probably the thing she'd most wanted to know up until now. I couldn't lie to her.

"Yeah, basically."

"You're not lonely without your mom or dad?"

"They weren't ever at home, so I was used to being on my own. I'm not lonely."

That was why I'd become a shut-in and learned how to cook and do my own laundry. It had been tough at first, but they were also memories I cherished. It wasn't like I could do everything from the start. I could only live in this world because I had that experience before I arrived.

That said, if I hadn't had my bear gear, I wouldn't have been able to kill those wolves. They would've killed Fina, which meant Tiermina would've died, Shuri would've been sent to the orphanage, the orphans would've been in big trouble (because of Cliff's mistake), and everyone would've been really unhappy. I found it hard to be grateful for my bear gear, but I also knew that a lot of people would've been devastated if I hadn't had it. I wasn't really sure how to feel about that.

"I see. I would be sad if I couldn't see Mom," Fina said.

If I hadn't met Fina, I don't think I would be enjoying this world. I probably would've left Crimonia and never met Tiermina, Shuri, or Noa either. If that had happened, then I wouldn't have met Ellelaura or Shia in the capital or Lady Flora, His Majesty, or Her Majesty at the castle. If I hadn't become friends with Shia, I wouldn't have gone to see the academy festival. I would've been leading a completely different life.

Thinking about it like that, my whole life here had begun with Fina.

"I'm glad I met you, Fina."

I plopped my bear puppet on her head as she sat next to me. She seemed embarrassed, but she gave me a smile and told me she was happy she'd met me too.

The anime had kept going while we were talking. I was checking out my bear gear and trying to become an adventurer.

Yeah, if you just ignored what it looked like, my gear really was OP.

Episode 2 ended with me partnering up with Fina.

That was when I'd asked Fina to do my butchering for me. It was a little odd to think that she was still doing that even now. I had no idea how long we'd have a relationship like this, but I hoped that it would last a long time.

If Fina ever got herself a boyfriend and then got married...

"Yuna, why are you crying?!"

"Oh, I was just thinking what would happen if you got yourself a beau and then tied the knot. Just the thought of it made me feel really lonely."

"You're sounding just like Dad. Once, when he was drunk, he said that I'd get married and leave too. I'm still just a kid."

"But kids grow so fast."

"Dad always says that too. But you'll definitely get married before I do."

"Oh, no way. You don't need to worry about that."

I shot that down with no hesitation. I couldn't even imagine marrying someone. I could easily imagine myself growing old all on my own.

Now that was a lonely prospect.

"In that case, I'll stay with you," Fina declared.

"No, you can't."

"Why not?"

"I'm happy you want to keep me company, but you should be happy and start a family."

"But I'm happy when I'm with you, Yuna."

“Aw, Fina…well. In that case, if I can’t manage to get married, I’ll take you up on that.”

“Okay!”

The anime’s ending theme played and the episode was over. Fina still seemed in awe that she had been moving on screen, but in the end, she enjoyed watching.

A few days after the second episode, I opened up the anime site—the only one that works on this TV—to check on info for the third episode.

I was shocked to my core.

“Is this some kind of joke?!”

I was face to face with a cartoonified figure of myself. Who would even want a figure of me?! If anything, this should have been a figure of Fina. Or Kumayuru and Kumakyu, acting as mascots. Why me?

I was a figure, I’d be sold all over the place.

“God! How could you make and sell these without my permission?!”

I heard the ding of a new message answer my cries.

“Everyone wants one. It won’t just be figures. There’s going to be a ton of Yuna merch in the future.”

“You think I’ll let you get away with this?”

“I’m God. I’m allowed to get away with anything.”

“Wha—”

“If you ever go back, I’m sure you’ll be very popular in your old world.”

Welp, there was another reason never to return.

“At least make Fina, Kumayuru, and Kumakyu figures too.”

“Tell the manufacturer that.”

“But you’re a god.”

“There are some things even a god can’t do.”

What a useless deity.

“I’m sure that if your figures sell, they’ll make those other ones too.”

Well, obviously. If the figures were popular, they’d make the other characters. If they weren’t, then it wouldn’t happen.

What a catch-22. I didn’t want my figures selling, but they had to sell if we were going to get figures of the other characters.

I decided to forget about the figures and look for info for the third episode. Oh, it was about Rulina and me going on the goblin-slaying quest and then facing off against a goblin king. The anime site showed Kumayuru and Kumakyu too. I guess they would be making their debut?

Maybe I’d watch the next episode with all of them?

Chapter 46:
TV Show Novel, Part 4

“AH!”

Since my bears were showing up in the next episode, Fina and I had my bears (in their cub forms) on our laps as we sat in front of the TV, waiting for the anime to start.

The moment the anime started, I screamed in horror. The episode started out with a changing scene. My underwear was visible on the screen for all the world. And they were the bear panties…

My biggest secret had been made public. Even if it was an anime, it was still my underwear.

Was this really being shown on TV? It couldn’t be, right? Maybe it was all a big joke from the god and not being broadcast anywhere else? Maybe the god had just made it to tease me?

I fervently hoped.

As I screamed, the scene ended and the opening theme started.

“Are you okay, Yuna?”

My bears both crooned. All three of them looked worried about me.

“I don’t think I am,” I said.

I buried my face into Kumakyu’s little back. The thought of my underwear being shown to all of Japan was mortifying. I would never be able to walk outside again. I’d have to be a shut-in for the rest of time.

“Y-you’ll be okay. Besides, you’re pretty.”

I already knew that I was a slim girl. It didn’t matter whether I was pretty or not. I just didn’t want my underwear shown.

“I don’t really understand it, but it’s only us watching it over here.”

“I guess so,” I said.

“Plus, the scene was short, so I don’t think anyone saw it.”

Uh, TVs could record stuff and there was a pause button. In other words, people would see me in my underwear 365 days a year, and twenty-four hours a day.

My life was over.

“I’ll never be able to get married now.”

Not that I’d ever intended to, anyway…

“Th-then I’ll stay with you.”

My bears both crooned at us.

Fina and my bears tried to comfort me.

“Fina, Kumakyu, Kumakyu!” I called out their names. I hugged all three of them and all memories of my underwear were blasted away to the far end of oblivion.

While I was wallowing, the anime had kept on going. I was getting a scolding from Helen for overhunting the monsters in the nearby woods. Actually, now that I remembered it, Helen had told me the woods were for rookies, so she’d told me to avoid them. But back then, I’d only become an adventurer a few days prior, so I would’ve counted as a rookie too. But Helen had cut me down by saying rookies couldn’t handle wolf packs and tigerwolves.

“Fina, aren’t I a rookie adventurer?”

I couldn’t accept it, so I asked Fina her opinion. Fina didn’t seem to know what to say.

“Um, I don’t think a rookie could fight a black viper.”

Fina didn’t consider me one then. Apparently being a rookie meant you’d only recently become an adventurer *and* that you were weak.

I wasn’t sure I could accept that. I mean, even amazing students and employees were still rookies when they were new.

While I was loitering in the guild, not sure what to do after Helen’s warning, a cute girl came in.

“Oh, it’s Rulina,” Fina said. It was. She was with Gil and another loud guy. What was his name again?

Since I'd vanquished the goblin in Rulina's party (his name was Debor-something or other), they didn't have their vanguard and couldn't fulfil their goblin-slaying quest.

Oh, right. That had happened. The memory of it took me back. So, since Rulina's party didn't know what to do, Helen suggested I take the place of Debor-something as a temporary party member.

Wait a sec... But hadn't that been the guild master's suggestion originally? Had Helen stolen his suggestion? He already barely made any appearances, poor guy.

"Is this when you fought the goblin king?"

"That's right," I said.

Fina hadn't been there, so she didn't know what had happened. Then I headed off with Rulina to slay the goblins. We were walking on foot.

"Where are Kumayuru and Kumakyu?"

Fina seemed to have noticed too.

"I didn't have Kumayuru and Kumakyu back then," I explained.

"Really?"

Fina didn't know how I'd gotten my bear summons.

"They were gifts from god, so I didn't have them yet."

"What? They're from god? Is that why they're so cute and strong?" Fina hugged Kumayuru.

But I'd gotten tired of walking and ended up picking up Rulina bridal style to carry her over.

"You're so fast, Yuna."

That was thanks to my bear shoes. Then we were in the forest where the goblins were before I knew it. Once we got there, Rulina was crying. Apparently, she hadn't been happy I was the first person to carry her bridal style like that.

"Poor Rulina." Fina sympathized with the Rulina in the TV.

"You don't like being carried either, Fina?"

“Like that? I wouldn’t want someone to run with me in their arms like that. You were trying to scare her on purpose, weren’t you, Yuna?”

Maybe she was saying this because of what I’d done to Luimin at the dwarves’ town. Well, then I’d show Fina being carried was nothing to be frightened of.

Then I slayed the Deboraney (the goblins) and the Deboraney-king (the goblin king) just like in real life. Rulina kept saying his name in the anime, which made me finally remembered said name, but I kept mistaking him for the goblins. Well, same difference, right?

Then I carried Rulina, bridal-style, back. Rulina thanked me for helping them with the goblin slaying.

Then, since I’d slayed the goblin king, I got my new skill—Bear Summons.

“Is this when the god gives you Kumayuru and Kumakyu?”

“That’s right,” I said.

The TV showed the moment my bears were summoned.

“Kumayuru is so cute.”

“Cwoon.” Kumayuru seemed very happy in Fina’s arms.

The anime me rode on Kumayuru. Kumakyu crooned sadly while watching.

“I didn’t forget you, okay?”

I gave Kumakyu a pat while coming up with excuses. In real life, I’d also summoned Kumayuru, rode on them, and then noticed Kumakyu after a while, but in the anime, I realized that I could summon a bear from my white puppet only after.

In real life, I’d saved a town from being attacked by pigs. They hadn’t had time for that in the anime, so they cut it. Instead, Kumakyu appeared from my white bear puppet.

“There’s Kumakyu. But Kumakyu is sulking.”

Just like Fina said, my bear in the show was pouting. Right, that had happened in real life too. I felt bad for Kumakyu, but it was so cute when my bear was sulky.

I was pretty sure I heard Fina say the same thing.

After that, I just hung out with Fina in the anime and then I built the bear house.

Fina was cute in real life, but she also was in the anime. Her smile in the end was just not fair. It made me want to do things for her.

The final scene showed someone suspicious with golden hair looking at my bear house.

“The person in the end must have been Lady Noa.”

“Of course.”

Even though her face hadn’t been shown, it was obviously Noa.

“Then will Lady Noa show up next?”

“I think so.”

The anime ending theme went on to play. Fina had been watching excitedly so far, but the ending theme only showed the two of us, so she seemed embarrassed.

In the end, I went to check the anime site for the fourth episode.

The next episode image showed Noa and Cliff for episode four. I knew that the suspicious person at the end of episode three had to have been Noa. It seemed that episode four was when I was called over by Cliff, the feudal lord.

When I looked up if there was other information, I realized that the miniseries had also updated. The second one was about a piggybank, and the third one was about Fina cleaning the bear house. As usual, Fina had healing energy when she was in chibi form.

While I was wondering where the information was, I found something that said the people who were acting as me and Fina would be doing a livestream. Would we be able to see the people doing our voices then? Oh, it was just a radio segment. No

visuals. I wondered if we could listen while in this world. I checked the streaming time just in case.

Then I saw that the anime's Blu-ray and DVDs would be going on sale all over Japan—which made me remember something I'd wanted to forget. In other words, they were selling the scene with my underwear. And it would be in HD.

Forget. It's just better that way. I tried to yeet the memory into oblivion.

"Um, so the limited edition version of volume one will have a pillow cover of Kumayuru and Kumakyu on reverse sides."

But which was the front and which was the back? I thought of Kumakyu sulking again. No, I hadn't just assumed Kumakyu would be the back. Also, we just didn't need to assume the cushion had a front and back. They were just the Kumakyu side and the Kumayuru side.

Plus there was an extra novel from the author who was writing this bear story. Did that make that person the god? The novel was called Bear God, which didn't mean anything to me. I was pretty sure it had to be another weird story.

I only felt anxious.

Chapter 47:
TV Show Novel, Part 5

TODAY WAS THE DAY of the fourth episode of the anime. So next, I called in Noa after Fina.

“I get to stay over at Yuna’s house today.”

Noa was happy, having just finished eating dinner and taking a bath. She was wearing a bear uniform, which seemed to be serving as her pajamas. Fina was also wearing one.

“So, why did you call me here today? I’ll come running over whenever you call me.”

She held Kumayuru in their cub form.

“I was thinking of watching an anime with you.”

“Ah-knee-may?”

She reacted exactly the same way as Fina. Well, I guess I needed to explain from that part. I should have known because it was obvious.

“I guess you could call it a moving picture book. It’s a story about us and you’re showing up in it today, so I called you.”

“A moving picture book? If I’m in it starting today, there were others, then?”

“There are twelve in total, and today is the fourth one.”

“The fourth? Have you already seen it, Fina?” Noa asked.

“Yes! The pictures of us move.”

“I see! How unfair. Why didn’t you call me here earlier?! I would have wanted to watch from the first one.”

“Well, you didn’t show up until now.”

That was the main reason I hadn’t called her before.

“Then was Fina in it from the start?”

“I’m in it from the second one.”

“Yeah, so I called Fina when she showed up.”

“So Fina is in the second and I’m in the fourth? I suppose it was inevitable, as you met Fina first, but I’m still jealous. But you could have still called me from the start.”

“Then, do you want to watch from the first episode? We can watch it.”

Luckily, the TV had a handy recording feature. I’d also recorded everything. In other words, my underwear was recorded for all posterity.

Wait, no, forget that.

“I’d like to see it.”

We had enough time, so we watched starting from the first episode. She’d be able to follow along better that way. It might not have been as fun just seeing the part she was in, with no context.

“You two go to my room first,” I said.

“Yes, let’s go, Fina.”

“Yes.”

They left with my bears. I pulled the snacks and drinks I’d prepped out of the refrigerator for the viewing, then headed to my room.

“So this tee-vee shows the moving pictures?”

“Yes, I was so shocked, since they look just like us.” Fina was explaining it to Noa.

“Sit, you two,” I said.

“Yes, let’s watch it together, Kumayuru.”

Noa held Kumayuru as she sat down in front of the TV. Fina also held Kumakyu and sat next to Noa. They were both dressed as bears too, so there was a lot of bear around.

I set the table up with drinks and food, then picked up the remote and played *Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear* from episode one. As Noa watched the anime on the TV, she kept muttering things like, “That’s amazing,” and “The pictures are moving.”

“So you were brought here by a god, Yuna?”

“Yeah, basically I guess so.”

“So that’s why you’re so strong and Kumayuru and Kumakyu can understand human language.”

My bears both crooned at us. Noa seemed to accept this. I was glad she was quick to understand.

“Ha ha. I’m glad I know how you fought the black viper now, Yuna. And how you two met…but Fina!”

“Eep!”

Noa grabbed Fina, who was next to her. Fina looked shocked to have her shoulders seized all of a sudden. She had no idea how to respond.

“Please don’t do dangerous things.”

“Lady Noa…”

“I had no idea you were struggling so much, Fina.”

“I wasn’t struggling.”

“No, even if I thought I knew how blessed I was, I didn’t *really* understand what that meant. You were trying to make money for your family. Meanwhile, I was…”

“You couldn’t have done anything about it. You were born into different circumstances and you have different statuses.”

It was impossible for them to be equal. Kids born to wealthy households would live in affluence. Kids born into poor families wouldn’t. But being wealthy didn’t mean being happy. Some parents would abuse their kids or spend all their time at work instead of taking care of their kids. On the other side of things, parents who had no money might be able to create a loving and happy household. My own parents hadn’t done much to care for me and had even sponged off their own kid for money. I hadn’t been loved like Fina was in her family.

“I see. I wish we would have met sooner, Fina.”

“You couldn’t have done anything to make that happen either. Meeting another person is like a miracle.”

“Meetings are miracles?”

“I think meeting Fina was like a miracle. That’s why I’m having so much fun now.”

“Yuna…I think the same thing. I’m so glad I met you.”

“Yuna, wh-what about me?”

“I think our meeting was a miracle too.”

Both of them were happy when I said all that. If I hadn’t met Fina, I might not have stayed in Crimonia. And if I hadn’t been in Crimonia, I might not have met Noa. Fina was definitely the one who had kept me in Crimonia.

Meeting people could change your life. I’d done things that I never would have even known about if I’d stayed a shut-in. If I hadn’t come to this other world, I might have stayed in my room and played my games without ever meeting anyone.

So, meeting Fina and Noa was like a miracle to me.

“I’m glad I met you two.”

“Me too.”

“I’m glad too.”

My bears both crooned at us.

“And I’m glad I met Kumayuru and Kumakyu too, of course.”

Everyone smiled.

“Okay, so the fourth episode is about to start. Shall we get ready for it?”

“Yes.”

Then the fourth episode started. It started with a scene of Fina learning how to harvest parts from the bloody viper through Gentz. So this was where episode one had left off then.

“You butchered the bloody viper, Fina?”

“Yes, it was very big and difficult.”

After she was done, Fina headed to my house. Using magic, I healed a cut she’d gotten while doing her butchering work, and she told me Helen had a message for me.

“Oh, that’s when Cliff called me over.”

“You mean Father? So that’s how you’ll finally meet me in the story.”

Noa watched the TV giddy with glee as Helen tried to stop me from running on the screen. My anime self wasn’t happy

about being called over. I remembered. I was trying to avoid going just because he was a noble. Then I started complaining about the aristocracy.

“Ugh…you’re so mean, Yuna! Father isn’t a terrible noble! And am I supposed to be one of those ‘arrogant’ children?” Noa pouted with her tiny mouth and started complaining.

I hadn’t had a good impression of nobles back then, though…

“That was just because I’d heard bad things about nobles.” They tended to have bad personalities in games, manga, and novels. “Like, remember that noble who tormented Misa? I thought they were like that.”

Misa’s town had had two feudal lords, and the father and son of the other family actually had been cruel.

“Please don’t lump me in with them.”

“Sorry.”

While I was making excuses for myself, the anime kept rolling and I was heading to Noa’s house. In that time, there was also a shot of Fina’s mom, Tiermina, while she was sick. Fina looked sad, and Noa seemed unsure what to say.

“I was playing with Kumayuru and Kumakyu while you were going through hardships,” she said to Fina, but she couldn’t have known.

While we were watching an anime and enjoying ourselves, people out there were probably getting into road accidents, getting murdered, or falling sick. A lot of bad things were happening in the world, but we couldn’t really do anything to stop it all. I could only hope that the people around us had others come to their aid when misfortune struck them.

“But don’t worry about it. I’m happy now.”

Meanwhile, in the TV, Noa was playing with Kumayuru and Kumakyu, and I was relaxing too. I laughed at how Cliff was being treated.

Then after I left Noa’s house, I found Fina crying in front of my bear house. At this point, I learned what kind of state Fina’s mom was in, so I headed over to her house with her.

“Tiermina looks so sick,” Noa said. Her expression was indescribable.

I felt terrible when I saw Shuri crying. They didn’t need to show this part. But just like in real life, I used healing magic and saved Tiermina from her illness.

“You’re amazing, Yuna,” Noa said.

I was so glad I’d been able to help heal her. If Tiermina had died, then Fina wouldn’t be smiling now. I looked at Fina. I was so glad that I could protect her smile.

The anime showed them as a happy family before the ending started to play.

“So that’s it then.”

“I only showed up at the beginning.”

“Well, that was actually how we met, and we go to the capital later too.”

“Will we be able to see us going to the capital?”

“I think so.”

Actually, I wondered how far they’d get in the story. Misa and Shia had been on the website, so I was sure we’d get to the capital at least.

“So, was that fun?”

“Yes, it was very odd seeing an image of myself move, but it was a lot of fun. And I’m glad that Tiermina got better in the end. Please invite me for the next one too.”

Then all five of us (including my bears) spent the night talking about the anime before we went to bed.

A few days later, I checked the anime website for more information.

I saw new episodes of the miniseries, like usual. This time, it was about me letting Noa try on my bear onesie. What bothered me was that my underwear showed up again. I wanted to delete it...

I pulled myself together and checked out the info on the next episode. Um, apparently that one was about the

orphanage. Should I let Noa see that? It was about Cliff failing at his duties of being a feudal lord. Would that hurt their relationship?

I started looking around for other information.

“Hm? Why? A collab cafe?”

The text was right in front of my eyes. They had to be kidding. This was a joke, right? No, it didn’t seem to be.

I even found the menu. There was a hamburger with a bear face that bore my name, and a bear-shaped pudding they called Kuma Kuma Kuma Pudding. The whole menu was bears, from top to bottom. It even looked like they were selling drinks based on me, Fina, and Noa.

It didn’t seem like a joke. This was really happening. The images did make all the food and drink look good...I kind of wanted some.

Then I looked at the merch corner. There were so many new things up for sale. They had button badges, keychains, acrylic standees, a tapestry of me and Fina, a front-cover phone case, clear files, and more...

Were they really going to sell stuff based on me in a bear suit? I had my doubts. They should’ve made merch of the real stars like Fina, Noa, or the mascot characters like Kumayuru and Kumakyu.

They also had a T-shirt with me on it. Who would wear that? Probably cute girls like Fina and Noa.

Yeah, definitely.

...or so I told myself.

Chapter 48:
TV Show Novel, Part 6

PICKING UP FROM the last time Fina and Noa were over at my place…

“Ha ha, I’m looking forward to this.”

“I wonder what it’ll be about this time?”

“It looks like it’s about the orphanage.”

“Then I won’t be in this one,” Noa said, seeming disappointed.

Noa hadn’t been involved in the orphanage stuff. The next time she’d make an appearance was probably when we headed to the capital.

I prepped snacks and stuff to drink, then waited for the anime to start.

“It’s starting!”

It started out with when I was getting eggs from the town where I’d slayed the black viper. Then when I went through a bear gate I’d set up in a cave near the village, Noa reacted.

“Wh-what is that?! That gate!”

“It’s called a bear transport gate. I can use it to travel to anywhere another gate is set up.”

Noa knew about the god, so I told her about the gate too.

“Did you know about these, Fina?” Noa looked at Fina.

“Oh, uh, yes.” She seemed unsure if that was the right answer.

“Ugh! That’s unfair.”

“Well, I just thought it’d be an issue if Cliff or Ellelaura found out.”

“I wouldn’t tell anyone if you would have told me,” Noa pouted.

Even while Noa was complaining, the anime kept going. A scene played of me eating at food stalls. Then I met the orphans.

They were looking over at the stall. The orphans had looked at the stalls when I'd met them in real life too.

"What are they doing?" Noa asked while watching the screen.

"They're waiting for people to leave leftovers."

"What…"

The food stall woman in the show also said the same thing.

Noa looked disappointed once she knew the truth. As a born and bred noble, she probably couldn't believe people would eat the leftovers someone else had thrown away. But for kids without parents, it was difficult to get food. If I hadn't been able to make my own money, who knew what would have happened to me back on Earth? That was why, when I saw those kids, I couldn't just leave them like that.

Or maybe it was just Fina's influence. Watching Fina work so hard to provide for her family had made me want to lend her a hand. Before I met Fina, I would've just felt sorry for the orphans and pretended I hadn't seen.

In the anime, I bought food at the stall and offered skewers to the orphans, then we headed to the orphanage. We got to the beat-up building.

"Was it really this bad?" Noa asked as she looked at the building.

"Yeah, it was really horrible," I said.

I'd fixed up the orphanage in real life. Noa looked a little shocked by what I said. Maybe I shouldn't have called her over to watch it.

Onscreen, the kids were enjoying the skewers I'd bought them. I swapped out their threadbare, cold-looking sheets for wolf furs, and the director of the orphanage told me that the feudal lord had stopped directing funds to the orphanage.

"Father did that…?" Noa looked like she couldn't believe it.

If I didn't clear this up real quick, Cliff's reputation as a lord, a person, and a parent was going to tank.

"Noa, I'll just tell you now that Cliff didn't actually stop the funds."

“Really?”

“Believe in your dad. He cares for the people in his fief.”

He just didn’t have eyes everywhere. The same was true for companies and schools. The more people there were under you, the less likely it was that you’d see everything. The subordinates and teachers in his employ were supposed to keep an eye on things, but if they weren’t good people, then they wouldn’t report back to the top. And that was exactly what had happened.

Trying to get everyone on the same page when you had a large group was tough.

“I probably should have talked to Cliff right away, back then.”

But the director had stopped me. I’d also just only met Cliff at the time, and been under the impression he might only have treated me nicely because Noa was present. For all I knew back then, he *was* actually as terrible as the director was saying. If he was actually a bad noble, he might well have thrown the director out for reals, in which case talking to him would only make more trouble for the director and the kids.

In the anime, I helped them make money using eggs and helped save the orphanage.

“So that’s why the orphanage has birds.”

They were still raising birds and selling eggs even now.

Once the egg business was doing well, Cliff caught wind of it. Back then, the Fochrosé household hadn’t been able to buy any eggs. I’d asked Milaine from the merchant guild not to sell them to Cliff.

“So you were doing that to antagonize Father,” Noa said.

“Well, back then, I thought that Cliff had stopped sending funds to the orphanage,” I explained.

So yeah, I’d kind of done it on purpose. Milaine wouldn’t normally have agreed to something like that, but she’d done it for me. In retrospect, she’d probably only been able to do it because she was the guild master. I’d thought she was just a regular employee up until she went to Mileela with me. My first assumption had been that she’d deceived me, but Milaine

claimed she hadn't been lying to me on purpose...just being less than forthcoming.

Then after Cliff heard from Milaine about the situation, he headed over to see me. He was angry after I told him about the orphanage.

"Father is so frightening."

Right, Cliff had been that angry. Then he stopped the people who were embezzling the orphanage's funds. He'd left management of the orphanage to a man.

"Enz accused Father of it. So that's why I haven't seen him lately."

I didn't know what happened to him after this, but I was glad he disappeared from Crimonia. Actually, now that I thought about it, I wanted to give him a punch. He had such a punchable face, and a sandbag gut to boot.

"But I'm glad Father hasn't actually done anything bad."

"But he still should have kept a better eye on his subordinates."

"You're right. He should have done better as someone who is responsible for others. That's why, lately, he said he doesn't just look over documents but also talks to people and goes to see things for himself."

I was glad that he was teaching his daughter not to repeat his mistake.

"That's why I think he keeps saying that when I go to the capital or Mileela, I need to see it for myself and talk to people in order to further my education."

Right, he was always saying that to her. Noa was learning about the world, just like Cliff was telling her to. I was sure she'd grow up to be a really great noblewoman.

The anime was about to end, and in it, I was embarrassed for doubting Cliff at all. Back then, I really had been embarrassed. I'd made assumptions about him. Everyone needed to learn from their mistakes. Not just Cliff.

Then the anime ending came up and announced that the show was over.

“It’s too bad I wasn’t in it this time, but I’m glad I found out what happened to the orphanage and about my father’s mistake.”

“Me too. And Mom has a job thanks to Yuna.”

It was all good as long as everyone was happy. Even if I had OP gear thanks to the god, I couldn’t make everyone happy. But I wanted to help people around me.

That night, we talked about the anime and fell asleep.

A few days later, I thought that I’d be able to find info on the sixth episode, so I went to the website to check.

I saw new information.

“Um…?”

The next story was about Gentz and Tiermina getting married, so it was mainly about Fina and Shuri. Actually, now that I thought about it, they hadn’t been married in the anime yet.

I really wanted them to be happy, so that Fina and Shuri would be happy too.

I went on to browse a bunch of stuff about the miniseries and more merch. They had keychains, acrylic standees, mugs, card holders, another new shirt of me, and a tote bag. That was a *lot* of stuff. The mugs had me and Fina on them. If you put them next to each other, it was like they were mugs for a couple. That was kind of embarrassing.

And there was also an internet autograph session with my voice actress. Wait, so she was going to do autographs and say the name she was signing for during the event or something? It didn’t say everyone would get one.

But pen names were okay. I think I’d be embarrassed if I put down my name and she called it out. But I might want one if it was a voice actor I liked.

I watched a lot of anime back during my shut-in days.

So, we were at the halfway point with the next episode. Time sure flies.

Chapter 49:
TV Show Novel, Part 7

TODAY, WE'D BE WATCHING the sixth episode of the anime. Just like last time, Fina and Noa came by my bear house.

"You might not show up on-screen today, Noa."

"That's okay. I still want to see it. It's teaching me all these things I didn't know before, like about Father. I'm really glad I know all that now."

Well, if Noa wanted that, then it was fine by me. Based on the preview, this one was going to be about Fina and Shuri. I got snacks and drinks ready, then waited for the anime to start.

"It's starting!"

It started with Gentz proposing to Tiermina. Yeah, this was good. I was glad. I wanted them to be happy. Anime Yuna was thinking the same thing as she elegantly drank some tea.

Wow, that god really was omniscient. They even knew what I was thinking.

The elegant scene didn't last long though. Fina showed up and said that Tiermina and Gentz had fought and were breaking up.

I spat out my tea—and onscreen, Anime Yuna did the exact same thing with hers. Apparently, we were in sync.

"Fina, did this ever happen?"

I didn't remember it.

"Um, I think the closest thing that happened was that his house was dirty because he didn't clean it."

Oh, right. When we helped him move, Gentz's place really had been a pigsty.

"He's not very clean."

Anime Gentz was upset about being criticized for his choice of seasonings, though. I'd heard about couples arguing over food, but making sure to eat healthy was important too. It wasn't good to drink or smoke too much either, or to be a shut-in who

never exercised, like I used to be. So I understood why Tiermina had said what she did. It was great that they'd gotten married, but there would be no point if Gentz let himself get so unhealthy he fell sick.

Anime Fina wanted her parents to get along. She came up with the idea of going to find a flower from Tiermina and Gentz's past.

"I've never heard of that flower," I said.

"Oh, I've heard about it."

But she hadn't actually gone out to look for it in the version of events I remembered. It seemed this was an anime original. In the anime, Fina and Shuri made up their minds to go find the flower. I was going to go as their escort along with Kumayuru and Kumakyu.

Noa seemed jealous when she saw that.

"I'm jealous you went out with the bears," she said.

"This is all just happening in the anime and not in real life," I told her.

We hadn't actually gone out like this. Well, I did go have a picnic with them in the past with my bears though. Since Noa would probably throw a fit if I told her, I decided not to mention it.

The anime kept going and Shuri started doing things on her own.

"A snake!"

"Shuri, that's dangerous!"

"Now there's a bee!"

"Shuri."

Shuri tried having a showdown with a snake and poked a beehive, and was causing a whole bunch of trouble. Fina and Noa watched at the edge of their seats. Apparently, Shuri was just curious to see what was going on. She didn't seem surprised by any of it. She was energetic and innocent. I guess she was the most childlike among them.

Fina was way too put together to be a kid. Noa was receiving an aristocrat's education, so she did a lot of things that didn't seem very childish. But when they were with my bears, they did act like kids still. I wondered what I was like as a kid. I had the feeling I was more bratty.

While I was thinking back to my childhood, Noa yelled, "No, Kumayuru! That's dangerous!"

"Cwoon!"

In the anime, Kumayuru tried to cross a rundown bridge and fell into a river. But my bear recovered right away. Well, it wasn't like my bears would be hurt by falling into a river anyway.

"Kumayuru, you can't cross any rundown bridges, okay?"

Noa warmed Kumayuru in her arms. But Kumayuru gave a croon of denial. Well, my Kumayuru wasn't like the one in the anime. But maybe Kumayuru actually had the same personality. Saying that to Kumayuru might trigger another sulking session, so I didn't say it out loud.

Then the anime kept going and Fina and Shuri kept looking for the flower but couldn't find it.

"Maybe it was the wrong season?" Noa said.

"I think maybe," Fina replied.

But Shuri wasn't ready to give up the search. But then Shuri found a bird caught in some vines. Shuri and Fina saved the bird, which flew off into the sky and left behind a blue feather.

It was pretty cliched. It was a nice story, but so cliched. Well, I would prefer a happy story over a sad one. Fina and Shuri took the blue feather back home. Then after showing Tiermina and Gentz the feather, Tiermina told them it was just like their father's good-luck charm.

"Fina, is that true?"

"I saw it in my dad's things."

Wow. That god sure knew everything. They even knew stuff I didn't know about.

Then Tiermina and Gentz made up, thanks to Fina and Shuri, and they were a happy family.

“I’m glad.”

Noa looked happy, like it was her own family.

Then Fina and Shuri came to my house. Shuri was exploring the inside of my bear house. Apparently she was looking for Kumayuru and Kumakyu. I explained to her that Kumayuru and Kumakyu were sleeping in my bear puppets, but I wondered if that was true. Since my bears couldn’t speak, I had no idea what happened to them. I wondered if they would be sleeping if I summoned them late at night.

Next we made pudding in the kitchen and ate dinner.

“I wish you had invited me too. You look like you’re having so much fun.”

“Well, you and Fina hadn’t met yet, so I couldn’t invite you back then.”

“Oh, I see.”

After dinner, it showed us in the bath.

“A bath…?”

I showed up on the TV in the bath.

“Wait, you two can’t watch this!”

I covered Noa’s eyes.

“Why are you covering my eyes?!”

“It just felt like the right thing to do.”

“I’ve already seen you without clothes, Yuna!”

“I know, but…”

I still felt embarrassed. That was why I covered her eyes.

The one good thing was that I was fully in the water, so my whole body wasn’t shown. I was set out as the sacrifice, but Fina and Shuri weren’t shown in the bath at least. I’d heard that anime have been stricter about showing kids without clothes, so maybe the god was being considerate of that. I didn’t know if it was because of their ages or just because it wouldn’t look good though.

I wondered what would happen with Ms. Kagari’s child form. She looked like a kid but she was a granny on the inside.

That sounded a whole lot like a certain show about a kid detective...

After the scene with me in my underwear and me in the bath, I really could never go back to Japan. I prayed this wasn't actually broadcasting on TV.

But the anime kept on going even while I felt embarrassed.

Fina and Shuri were staying the night. They were in their cute pajamas. I pulled out puddings for them.

"Only Fina and Shuri get pudding? That's not fair."

"I'll give you pudding, so don't complain about what's on the TV."

I pulled out some puddings in the real world.

Then Fina and Shuri fell asleep. I'd never thought that I'd sleep next to other people. Since coming to this world, I'd really changed. Then in the end, I handed out the puddings that I'd made, and Noa and Cliff showed up.

"I'm finally here again." Noa was happy.

Was it really that great to be in an anime? It was good that she liked herself so much, though. That meant she had self-confidence. I knew I had a terrible personality, so I didn't like myself much—something that occurred to me often when looking at Noa. I could take a page from her book.

In the end, Cliff asked me to take Noa to the capital.

"It looks like the three of us go to the capital next," Noa said.

"It does."

"I'm looking forward to it."

My bears crooned at us. They were protesting since no one had mentioned them.

"It was a lot of fun going to the capital with Kumayuru and Kumakyu," Noa said.

My bears crooned again. This time it was a gentler croon.

"So Misa, Shia, and Mother should appear next."

“I think so.”

“I want to see the next episode soon.”

Then the ending played and the anime ended. It happened so fast.

“Yuna, Fina, let’s sleep with each other today too.”

“Oh, uh, okay.”

“Right, sure.”

We all went to bed and talked like the times before. Then we talked about the episode we watched and a whole bunch of other things until Noa’s breathing settled when she fell asleep.

“Lady Noa is asleep.”

She looked so cute.

“It must have been fun for her.”

“I had fun too. I’m glad I met you and Lady Noa.”

“Same here. I’m glad too.”

“Me too. Zzz zzz…”

We both smiled at Noa and then fell asleep too.

The anime was halfway over, so the next episode would be the latter half of the season.

A few days later, I checked out the website for more info. I saw a picture of Shia, Misa, and Ellelaura on the screen.

“So the next one really is about going to the capital then.”

I was looking forward to seeing Shia and Misa in the anime.

I looked for other information, and found the mini series, just like usual. This next episode was about me, Fina, Shuri, and Noa all going to sleep while counting bears. Our faces were cute as we slept, but we should have been counting sheep. Then in the end, it showed me being crushed by a mountain of bears and ended. I wished I wasn’t being used as the butt end of a joke.

Next I was curious about the Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear Exhibition being held.

“A book event is planned, featuring merch of new illustrations for sale, an art exhibit of the world of the work, and more.”

So it said. There wasn’t much other information up about it.

It made me curious.

Chapter 50:
TV Show Novel, Part 8

TODAY, THE SEVENTH EPISODE of the anime would be airing.

“It’s finally the episode where we go to the royal capital. Isn’t this exciting, Fina?”

“Uh-huh.”

Just like usual, Fina and Noa held Kumayuru and Kumakyu in their cub forms and were ready for the anime. I also prepped snacks and drinks, then sat on my bed.

“It’s starting!”

The black screen flipped to the broadcast. It started with me and Fina getting to Noa’s house.

“Looks like this is where Fina meets Noa.”

“This is so nostalgic. We did meet in front of the estate, didn’t we?” Noa said.

“Uh-huh. I was so nervous when I knew I was going to meet you,” Fina replied.

“You were?”

“I didn’t know until that morning that I would be going to the royal capital with you,” Fina said, sounding slightly discontent.

“Did I not tell you?” I asked.

“You didn’t tell me until that morning, Yuna.”

Okay, that sounded like something I might’ve done.

“But if you knew you were going with a noble, I don’t think you would’ve come with us,” I said.

“You’re right. I think I would have said no.”

“But then you probably wouldn’t have become friends with Noa,” I told her.

“I can’t allow that!” Noa yelled. “I can’t even imagine not becoming friends with Fina.”

“Really, Lady Noa?”

See, I knew I’d done the right thing by not telling her until then. Back then, Fina hadn’t known the first thing about nobles. Even talking to Noa had made her nervous.

“I’m so very happy we’re friends, Fina.”

“Me too, Lady Noa.”

They both smiled at each other. They were close now, but the anime was showing exactly what they’d been like when they first met.

The Fina in the anime tried to introduce herself to Noa and Cliff.

“I stuttered,” she said in real life.

“You did,” Noa agreed.

“Oh, this is so embarrassing!”

Seeing Fina so nervous around Noa really took me back. These days, they could talk and even would go out to do things together. Fina had even gone with Noa to Misa’s birthday, and I’d say they were friends now.

In the show, we got permission from Noa and Cliff for Fina to tag along, but then anime Noa pointed her finger at Fina and yelled, *“I’m not letting you have the bear!”*

“Did I really say such a thing?” Noa tilted her head when she heard herself say that.

“I think you did,” I said.

“Um, yes,” Fina replied.

She might’ve said it a little differently in real life, but I definitely remembered her saying something like that. I also remembered Fina letting Noa have the front seat on Kumayuru and them getting along after that. The same thing happened in the anime, and it showed them chatting with each other.

After that, the sun set in the anime world, and I pulled out a bear house for camping.

“I was so shocked when you brought out that bear house out of nowhere,” Noa commented.

Sleeping outdoors was dangerous, but the bear house was safe and comfortable. The anime versions of us were even sharing a happy meal inside of it.

“We had a delicious meal, a bath, and a bed. That was the first time I’d ever camped so comfortably.”

Just like Noa mentioned, we took a bath, but the anime didn’t show that. Good. I didn’t want two episodes in a row showing me naked to all of Japan.

The second half of the show started with us slaying orcs. They cut the part showing how we found the orcs.

“It hardly shows you doing much, Yuna,” Noa said, seeming disappointed.

Cuts were a normal part of anime because of time issues. If this were a longer anime, maybe there would be more fight scenes. I mean, this was the god’s anime, so I didn’t see why it couldn’t have been four cours long at least. *Just don’t show scenes of me naked or in my underwear.* This whole anime thing wouldn’t be too bad as long as they didn’t cross *that* line.

Then, just like in real life, Misa and Gran made their debut after the orcs were dead.

“It’s Misa! If only we could have invited Misa to watch the anime with us,” Noa commented.

“But Misa isn’t in Crimonia.”

Since Misa was in another town, we couldn’t just call her over.

“That’s too bad.”

While my anime self was being asked by Gran if we could travel together to the capital, Misa was hugging Kumayuru and Kumakyu and just generally being adorable.

Just like I had originally, I left the decision on whether to travel with Misa to Noa. In the anime, she weighed going with Misa to the capital against camping out in the bear house. Back then, I didn’t want anyone knowing about the bear house, so I’d told her if we traveled with Misa we wouldn’t be able to use it.

At that time, I still hadn’t known much about this world, so I wasn’t sure what I could say. That was just how it was back then.

Also, this was my first time meeting Misa and Gran. I wouldn't hide the bear house from them now. That was how well I'd gotten to know them.

Even though she seemed to want the comfort of the bear house's bed and bath, Noa chose Misa in the end.

"You're so nice, Lady Noa," Fina said.

"Misa is like a little sister to me, and a friend," Noa said. She held her head high.

"Well, if she is, you sure took your time thinking it over," I said.

"I-I did not," Noa retorted.

Hmm, it looked like she'd given it a lot of thought to me. But I agreed with Fina. She chose Misa in the end, so Noa was nice.

After that, we arrived in the capital. The capital was huge when you could see all of it. Still, I seemed to remember some other things happening on the way... Must be my imagination.

Once we got through the gates, we parted ways with Misa and Gran, then headed to Ellelaura's estate—that's Noa's mom. As soon as we got there, a woman with blonde hair came running over. She grabbed Noa without saying anything. That was Ellelaura.

"Ellelaura looks so young."

"Yes, she's always beautiful. I want to be like her when I grow up," Noa said.

"I'm sure you will be," I told her.

Well, Noa was still more cute than beautiful, but she'd become pretty once she grew up.

After that, we introduced ourselves to Ellelaura and handed her the letter from Cliff and the goblin king's sword.

As we were doing that, Noa's older sister, Shia, got home from the academy. When Shia came inside, she was surprised to see Noa riding on Kumayuru. Then she did a double take when

seeing Ellelaura riding on Kumakyu. Finally, she did a triple take when she saw me.

“Haha, Shia is acting a little *too* shocked,” Noa said.

I was pretty sure shock was the appropriate reaction to coming home and finding your mom and little sister riding on bears.

As soon as I met her, Shia said she didn’t believe that a girl dressed as a bear could be a guard. Right, I remembered her doing that.

Then Ellelaura said something and I ended up having a match with Shia. It was supposed to be part of Shia’s education or something. I wish Ellelaura hadn’t used me for it though.

Shia and I faced off with our swords.

“Oh yes, that’s right. You know how to use a sword, Yuna,” Noa commented.

“Yeah, I used to fight like that, but magic is more convenient, so I don’t use swords as much anymore.”

I could cast magic from a distance, and it was strong thanks to the bear gear I got from the god, so I didn’t need to get close to any opponents with a sword. Recently I’d been using knives, but I didn’t get to pull them out that often either.

I kept beating Shia in the anime. I felt bad, but I’d fought thousands of battles before in the game. Sometimes I’d ended up almost dying too.

I just had more experience than her, plus I’d died a lot too. In the game, I could learn from dying, but in reality, once you were dead, that was it. That made a huge difference in experience.

“Yuna, would you teach me how to wield a sword someday?” Noa asked.

“I don’t think you need to learn, since you’re a noble,” I told her.

In the manga and novels I’d seen, girls from nobility wore pretty dresses, hosted tea parties, practiced dancing, did embroidery, and gossiped about handsome princes and other nobility. Almost none of the girls knew how to swordfight.

“What do you mean?” Noa said. “I need to be able to defend myself.”

“But it’s not like you’re always going to be walking around with a sword, right?”

“Shia always has hers in her item bag.”

Oh, come to think of it, when we were exploring Talgwei, Shia *did* have a sword. While we were chatting, the match with Shia ended, then we made up and had some pudding.

The next scene was set a day later. Fina and my anime self were walking around the capital.

“Wh-why am I not with you?!” Noa exclaimed.

“Like it said, you’re going around visiting other nobles.”

“Oh, yes, you’re right. Since I don’t go to the capital often, I went with my mother to greet everyone.”

Since Noa was off visiting nobles, Fina and I were together buying yummy treats and having fun around the capital.

“Aww, I’m so jealous of you, Fina.”

“You’ll definitely show up after this,” I said.

But right after I said that, it wasn’t even her who showed up.

“Is that Morin and Karin?!”

“It is.”

Morin and Karin were there when we were buying bread. We were just their customers at that point. I knew what happened after this, so I felt weird in a way I couldn’t describe. The versions of us in the anime had no idea while we started eating the bread.

Then I got some potatoes and found some cheese that the vendor couldn’t sell because of the mold on it. After that, I made a hamburger and ate it.

“It looks delicious.”

“Don’t eat before bed or you’ll put on weight,” I warned her.

“But we’re allowed to eat these snacks?”

Noa and Fina looked at the potato chips on the table.

“A-a little should be fine.”

You always had to have snacks and drinks while watching something. We had some every time we watched the anime. Was I gaining weight? I touched my stomach. I hadn’t...right?

Then the TV showed a monster’s eyes glinting deep in a forest. A dirty man appeared on screen, and the seventh episode ended.

“What was that?” Noa asked.

“It looked like a monster’s eyes.”

“There was also a man.”

Was it *that*? But the guy didn’t seem familiar.

“You’ll have to find out next week,” I said.

“I can’t wait. Also, I’m so glad I showed up a lot this time.”

Noa seemed happy with today’s episode.

A few days later, I went to check out the official site as per usual.

They had a summary of the next episode. Since there was a picture of Princess Flora and the king, I guess we were going to the castle. I also saw that dirty man again. Who was that?

From the summary I guess it was a guy named Ghoulzam. Actually, wasn’t that the guy who’d gathered ten thousand monsters or whatever? I guess the anime was covering stuff I hadn’t seen.

There was also another mini series episode where Noa and Misa were having a conversation in a room that looked awfully familiar. It seemed like one of those talk shows where they gossip about famous people. No way, that couldn’t be right.

I also saw some text about a new collab café. Another one?

It looked like they didn’t have all the details yet.

Judging by the café’s name, I guess maids served the customers? This world had real life maids though. If I went to Noa’s house, her maid Lala would look after guests and serve

them tea. Since I was a shut-in in my original world, I'd never been to a place like that. I might have gone now though if I were still there.

Chapter 51:
TV Show Novel, Part 9

“HEE HEE, it’s new anime episode day.”

Like Noa said, the eighth episode of the anime was coming out today.

“I wonder what kind of story it’s going to be this time,” Noa said.

I thought it was probably going to be about when the horde of monsters showed up.

I prepped our snacks and drinks as usual. Since we only did this once a week, I hoped the fat god would overlook us.

“Fina, sit next to me,” Noa said.

“Okay.”

The two cozied up to sit in front of the TV. And, of course, they were holding Kumayuru and Kumakyu in their cub forms.

“Quickly, Yuna, you come sit too,” Noa urged me over.

“There’s no need to rush,” I said.

I sat on top of my bed and waited for the show to start. Then, Noa piped up like she usually would when the anime began.

“It’s starting.”

But it didn’t look like it was our anime this time. There was a man shouting in a dimly lit room.

I almost thought we were watching the wrong show, but then the king appeared. Then, right when I thought this was going to be an execution scene, the usual opening played. I guess it was our anime all along.

“Wh-what was that?!” Noa asked.

“It was a little scary,” Fina said.

Noa and Fina seemed to both feel the same. What actually was that scene just now? I didn’t know either.

Then after the opening was over, there was the black screen that seemed to be for commercials. Then the anime started.

“It’s pizza.”

A new scene in a completely different tone showed up where we were happily eating pizza. Misa, Shia, and Ellelaura were with us. We were all there.

“Yuna, I want pizza too,” Noa said as she watched the anime scene of everyone eating. Well, I got where she was coming from.

“It’s bad to have pizza before bed. We have potato chips.”

We probably shouldn’t have been eating the chips either, but it was just once a week.

Noa grabbed some chips and took a bite.

“They’re delicious.”

Fina also savored them.

In the anime, Noa was getting permission from me to let her borrow Fina.

“Oh yeah, you two both went out somewhere with Misa, didn’t you?” I said.

“Oh, it must be *that*!” Noa said.

I guess Noa had remembered something.

“What thing?” I asked her.

“Oh, um, n-nothing.” She looked away. She was clearly hiding something. “If the story is about *that*, Yuna might find out.”

Noa was whispering, but I could hear everything since I was right next to her.

“Do you know, Fina?” I said.

“Um, well…”

While Fina hesitated, Noa put a finger up to her lips. It didn’t seem to me like there was a point in doing that when I was right here. Since I might figure out what Noa and Fina were up to if I watched the anime, I stopped grilling them.

The next day, Noa, Fina, and Misa headed out together while Shia was at school. Now on my own, I ended up going with Ellelaura to the castle. Fina had actually been with me when I'd gone in the past, but I guess in the show it was just me.

Then I got a tour of the castle and met Princess Flora. While I was busy meeting Princess Flora, Fina, Noa, and Misa were merrily walking around the castle's town. Fina asked Noa where they were going in the anime.

"Oh no! I knew it. Yuna, you can't watch anymore." Noa went to cover my eyes, but she wasn't strong enough to overpower me.

In the anime, Noa's group got to some shop. It looked like they were asking for something. Then Noa, looking pretty happy with herself, was holding something like a card in her hand. Apparently, she'd ordered some cards to be printed.

"Bear fan club?" Misa muttered in the anime as she looked at the card.

"Bear fan club?" I repeated in real life.

"No, you found out."

Apparently Noa had made bear fan club membership cards without telling me. I was going to ask her why she made those, when the anime Noa answered for me.

"Yeah! We are the bear friends! We'll tell each other everything we see and hear about Yuna, Kumayuru, and Kumakyu and together learn everything about bears!"

Misa was on board too.

Hold on, at what point had they become bear friends? And they wanted to learn everything about bears? Was there even that much to know? Other than Kumayuru and Kumakyu not being dangerous to be around, I was pretty sure they were just like normal bears. Probably.

Then at the end, Noa said something terrifying in the anime.

"Our goal is ten thousand members!"

"That many?!"

I mean, the box of cards Noa had did seem pretty big, but ten thousand? Really?

“Right now I’m focusing on quality over quantity, so I don’t have plans to get that many members.”

“By the way, who are the members of this bear fan club?” I asked.

“Well, there’s me, Fina, Misa, Shia, Shuri, and Sherry. So six.”

They were all people I knew. Or rather they were all people associated with Noa.

“So what do you do in this fan club? You said you talk about me and my bears?”

“We just occasionally have tea together while we talk to each other about you and your bears.”

I guess it was like when fans of an idol come together for a social event.

“As it so happens, I’m the president of the fan club, so I have the member number 0001. Fina is the vice president with number 0002.”

They even had a president and vice president? This was actually kinda serious.

Since they were just talking about bears I wouldn’t force them to stop, but I didn’t really want them to gain more members.

While Noa and I were discussing the fan club, the anime continued right on broadcasting. On the TV, I was headed out with Noa and Fina, still completely unaware that the bear fan club had been created. Around that time, we learned that monsters had appeared on the road to the capital.

When Noa heard that, she worried about Cliff, who was on his way to the capital. For Noa’s sake, I ended up heading out to meet up with Cliff. Then the anime switched to show Ellelaura.

“It’s Mother,” Noa said.

“His Majesty is there too,” Fina followed up.

Ellelaura was reporting to the king about the monsters that had appeared. Then the dirty-looking man from before showed

up, overpowered the guards, and made his way in front of the king and Ellelaura. He said his name was Ghoulzam.

“Ghoulzam…”

I’d heard that name before. I was sure that was the name of the person who’d gathered the ten thousand monsters. I guess this is what he looked like. I’d heard his name tons, but I hadn’t interacted with him directly, so this was the first time I was actually seeing him…or at least, anime him.

The king and Ellelaura looked dead serious when Ghoulzam told them about the monsters on the way to attack the capital.

Then the scene changed and showed me humming a tune while riding Kumayuru. The change in vibe was massive.

“Yuna…” Noa and Fina said at the same time. They gave me exasperated looks.

“Well, I had no idea that was happening in the castle. What else would I have done?”

After that, my anime self used my detection skill and found out there were a lot of monsters. I decided it would be too much work to escort Cliff to the capital while guarding him, so I decided to just slay them all.

“Yuna, you really decided to slay all those monsters? I can’t believe it,” Noa said.

“I thought it would be easier that way,” I said.

The image on the screen was replaced with the castle, where we saw the king, Ellelaura, and Sanya making her anime debut. Now that I thought about it, in the anime I never went to the adventurer guild, so I guess I hadn’t met Sanya yet? I didn’t know what was going on behind the scenes though.

In the anime, Sanya used her bird summon to report every detail of the monsters to the king. Did that mean that she’d seen me?

Sanya was relaying what she saw: *“The bear riding the bear is—” “The bear is engaging with the monsters—”*

The king didn’t look like he understood what was happening.

I could see me and my bears in the anime and knew what she was talking about, but it would have been really unclear for the king. *Sanya, you have to be clearer when you make your reports…*

Then after defeating the monsters, I also fought the wyrm and Ghoulzam, who had shown up in the anime.

I guess in the anime I ended up meeting him. Well, it wasn't a meeting so much as exchanging a few words before I punched him. Well, if I'd actually met him like that, I probably wouldn't have remembered his face anyway.

"It's very odd. I know that man is bad, but at the same time I feel bad for him," Noa said.

"Me too," Fina agreed.

I'd prevented his revenge and undone years of Ghoulzam's work. If he had been trying to do something good, I would've felt bad, but since he tried doing something evil, it was good I'd stopped him. It would've been too late if I'd waited until there were casualties.

Finally, I found Cliff safe and sound. I tried bargaining with him because I'd given him the goblin king's sword, but the instant I got to the capital, Ellelaura grabbed me anyway and took me to the castle. It had actually happened a little differently, but I was taken to the castle in real life too.

Well, since the anime showed the scene where Sanya was watching me with her bird summon, I guess I should've known they would bring me in.

After that, my anime self basically said the same thing as me. I hadn't killed the monsters for money or glory. I'd just done it to protect Noa's smile.

"Yuna…"

I patted Noa's head. If Cliff had been killed by monsters, I don't think she would be smiling right now.

After that, we headed back with Ellelaura to her estate. Noa and Cliff reunited without a hitch. My anime self patted the head of a worried-looking Fina, and then the episode came to a close.

A few days later, I pulled up the official anime site to check on the next installment out of curiosity. It looked like Morin and Karin would be making their anime debuts in the ninth episode, and their shop would be set up. Well, the title “Bear, Opens Shop,” did kinda seem like a spoiler.

There was also a new mini series where Princess Flora was devouring bites of pudding one after another. Where’d she even put it all?

And then there was a whole bunch of other stuff, like about how the opening and ending were available for karaoke.

Chapter 52:
TV Show Novel, Part 10

TODAY THE NINTH EPISODE of the anime was airing, so of course Fina and Noa were coming over to my place. We ate dinner, hopped in the bath, and were perfectly prepared to watch the show.

"There are a total of twelve episodes, right, Yuna?"

"That's right."

"So including today, there are four left. That's too bad, isn't it, Fina?"

"Uh-huh. I was a little embarrassed at the beginning, but now I'm looking forward to them, so it's too bad."

There were only twelve episodes, so it had to come to an end sometime. If the god used their power, they could probably make the show weekly like one of those national anime shows. But I wasn't really sure I wanted a broadcast about me every week.

"All right, it's starting soon."

Since this was our weekly slumber party, I got our snacks and drinks together, then we all sat down in front of the TV.

The anime started. It picked up with the king's birthday party. People were having a good time and eating pudding. It was kind of water under the bridge at this point, but the king made way too big of a deal about the pudding, just in my opinion.

After that, the opening played, then there was a section where the screen was black. I was pretty sure this was for commercials.

"There's always a black screen. You said that's where they show commercials?" Noa asked.

"That's right. I think it's probably where they advertise other anime and show openings and endings."

"Other anime?"

“Yeah, there are shows about people going to other worlds, people who are reincarnated, worlds under attack, and some about idols—those are singers—coming of age, coffee shops, and a lot more.”

“There are that many anime?”

“I think there are more than one hundred per year.”

I only watched stuff I was interested in, so I didn’t know a ton about the overall offerings, but I figured that was about right.

“I want to watch other anime, Yuna. You want to watch them too, right, Fina?” Noa said.

“Um, yes. I want to watch them.”

“No, I’m afraid we can’t. This TV only shows our anime, so I don’t think we can watch other ones.”

I’d tried all sorts of different things, but this TV could only be used to watch the *Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear* anime and to visit the official website.

“Oh, that’s too bad.”

If I could watch other anime, I would definitely become a shut-in in this other world. It’d be great if I could get my hand on a console and video games, or if I could download things. I’d have the ultimate shut-in life.

As I was thinking that, the episode started. The TV showed the king coming to my bear house, Princess Flora, Shia practicing with her sword, and pleasant scenes of everyday life at the capital. Then before returning home, I toured the capital with Fina, since I hadn’t hung out with her much during that time.

“I’m so jealous you two went out without me. What was I even doing when this was happening?!” Noa complained when she saw the two of us sightseeing. Only the Noa in the TV knew the answer to that.

“Maybe greeting other nobles?” I said. “Since Cliff also got to the capital.”

“Hmm, maybe. Or maybe I was visiting Misa.”

It seemed like a lot of work for the nobles to go around greeting each other so much. I was glad I was just a commoner.

My anime self walked around the capital with Fina. We fed each other food, relaxed, and seemed to be having a blast.

“You two are so close,” Noa grumbled enviously.

Yeah, it was kind of embarrassing watching us.

“We’ll we’re not on bad terms for sure,” I said.

“Yeah.”

Fina and I headed to Morin and Karin’s bakery to get some of the bread to eat that we had before, but the shop was closed. Morin and Karin were both inside tidying up the shop. When we asked them about it in the anime, they said a corrupt merchant had cheated them and they had to give up the shop.

That was more or less what had actually happened, but there weren’t men inside the store acting violently. I wanted to punch those guys again after remembering that.

That was one spot where the anime departed again. If that corrupt merchant showed up, then Sanya and the king would need to too, and I didn’t know what my relationship was with Sanya in the anime. If they changed one thing, then they would have to make everything that followed afterward make sense too. Making an anime seemed hard.

If they included one story, they’d have to take out a different part. Thinking about it that way, maybe it was a lot easier writing a novel where you didn’t have to worry about pacing.

Just like it happened in real life, I ended up hiring Morin and Karin. If I hadn’t done that then I never would have opened the Bear’s Lounge.

Good job me. I did a great job back then.

The first half came to an end, then there was a black commercial break and the second half started.

Once I got back to Crimonia, I went to the Merchant Guild to speak with Milaine about the shop. Tiermina was also with me, but it looked like she didn’t know the reason why I’d asked her to come.

I knew exactly how I felt at that moment. Managing businesses was way too much work, so I was completely ready to let Tiermina handle all of it. She complained, but I was thankful she still did the work.

“You sure do cause trouble for Tiermina.”

“Yuna is always making Mom do things, but she says she’s happy to be working every day.”

Was I really being that heavy handed about it? But I knew what Fina was saying. You got to meet a lot of people while working, and that could be energizing.

Well, I guess that depended on the person as well. I was really fortunate to have met the people around me now when I first came to this world. In my original world, even my parents hadn’t been great people from the get-go.

“Me too. Every day has been so fun since I met you, Yuna,” Fina said.

“Thank you.”

I gave Fina a pat on her head as she gave me a genuine smile.

“M-me too! Meeting you has been so much fun!”

Noa forced her way in between Fina and me.

“Thank you too, Noa.”

It was much more pleasant than them saying it *wasn’t* fun to be around me. If I’d stayed a shut-in in this world, no one would have ever said any of this stuff to me.

After that, I showed Morin and Karin around the store after they got to Crimonia.

“They were so surprised when they saw the shop.”

The building used to be a small estate for a noble family.

“I think anyone would be shocked to have a mansion as a shop.”

Even though it was for a small noble residence, it was huge for a business.

After that, the plan was to hire orphans who wanted to work. Once the kids grew up, they'd have to leave the orphanage. When that happened, I figured they'd be better off with some skills. Morin could teach them how to bake bread and they could become bakers themselves, or they could get a customer service job from the skills they learned.

I was glad the experience working at the shop would be useful for their futures.

Next the orphans cleaned the inside of the shop, trimmed the grass in the yard, and helped get the preparations for opening the store in order. That had been tough in reality, but it only took about a minute in the anime.

With the preparations going smoothly, Milaine asked about the name of the shop, but I was terrible at coming up with names. Just look at Kumayuru and Kumakyu. The anime version of me said the same thing.

"But I think Kumayuru and Kumakyu are really cute names."

"I think they're cute too."

"Thank you."

I was happy they said that. I also thought that Kumayuru and Kumakyu were cute names, but they didn't really sound cool —although they were definitely names for bears.

In the anime I consulted with everyone from the orphanage about a name. But just like in real life, everyone just suggested things with the word "bear" in it.

"Aww, I wish I'd been able to participate in choosing a name for the shop too. Why did you leave me out?" Noa said.

It's not like I specifically excluded her. Actually, where had Noa been at the time?

"Then what would you have gone with, Noa?" I asked.

"Let's see. How about Bear Lovers Shop or Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear Shop?"

Not sure how it translated in this other world, but "kuma" was just bear in Japanese. Basically, that was just "bear" repeated

four times. But in the end, Noa's ideas were also just filled with bears.

After listening to the kids, Milaine said that she had uniforms made for the shop. Yeah, I knew what this was. Then, as expected, she brought out the bear clothes.

I personally would have thought Fina as a maid would've been cute. Maybe if I had Sherry make Fina a maid uniform, she'd try it on for me? After that, I wanted this place to be somewhere everyone could relax, so we went with the Bear's Lounge for the name.

That was the name we went with, but thanks to a certain someone's excessive marketing, a ton of customers flooded the store the day we opened and no one got to lounge at all. But thanks to a lot of peoples' help, the first day came to a close without a hitch. That pretty much was how it was when Cliff and Noa arrived at the shop.

"I finally showed up."

Noa came on screen for the first time in a while. She saw Fina and the others wearing bear uniforms, wanted one of her own, and ended up wearing one.

"That's not how it happened! It was during Misa's birthday party when I wore the bear uniform," Noa complained at her anime self.

I thought making it happen earlier was better though. We wouldn't get to Misa's birthday party in just three episodes, so I thought it was good she could at least put them on in the show.

As the anime Noa was gleefully wearing the bear uniform, I got an update about Morin's shop from Cliff. I'd actually gotten the report in the capital, but the anime needed to make the timing line up. Then just like in real life, even though Morin and Karin were able to reclaim their shop in the capital, they ended up staying in Crimonia. I really wasn't able to thank those two enough for staying.

Then the anime showed the memories of me coming to this world and ended on good vibes.

"Oh, it's already over. I only showed up for a little bit. I wish I had more time."

Noa really did like herself. It was to the point I envied her.

“I hope I’ll appear a lot in the next episode,” she said.

From what I remembered, I’d be going to the ocean in the next one. Noa wouldn’t be showing up. I didn’t want her complaining though, so I kept my mouth shut.

Several days later I checked on the official anime site as per usual. I saw that the next episode’s title was “Bear Goes to Sea.” There were also preview images of the snow-capped mountains and of Atola. That episode seemed like it would be about the kraken.

Noa didn’t appear, like I expected. I was glad I hadn’t mentioned anything. But sooner or later, she’d have her complaints on the day we watched it.

There was also a mini-series episode about Noa and Shuri playing catch. If I showed this to her, I thought Noa might enjoy it, but I wasn’t so sure about letting her see the face she made when she caught the ball from Shuri.

Chapter 53:
TV Show Novel, Part 11

TIME FLEW BY and today the tenth episode would be airing. There were only three episodes left. Like usual, Fina and Noa came over to my house.

“I wonder if I’ll show up? I’m so very excited,” Noa said.

“Probably shouldn’t get your hopes up,” I warned her.

From the preview, this episode was about going to Mileela, so I didn’t think Noa would show up. If she did, it would probably be brief.

“Why not? Do you know what’s going to happen?” she asked.

“I think this one’s going to be about going to Mileela.”

Since the anime mostly focused on me, it followed my memories. Also, I’d seen the preview.

“Oh yes, after the king’s birthday festival, you went to Mileela to see the ocean. Then Father got really busy and complained ever so much.”

I remembered Cliff around then had looked tired. Look, that wasn’t my fault, okay?

“So I probably won’t be showing up.”

Noa seemed to understand but looked disappointed.

“Then I wonder if I won’t show up either?”

Fina hadn’t had anything to do with Mileela at first either. She did visit after the stuff with the kraken, so if she showed up, it would be in the second half.

“It’s too bad, Fina, but let’s enjoy Yuna’s adventure today.”

“Uh-huh.”

They smiled at each other and leveled up their friendship.

But that all fell apart the instant the episode started. Fina appeared without warning.

“It’s Fina,” Noa said.

Fina was looking at her bear phone. Then I used my bear phone from the snowy mountain and started talking with her.

“Wh-what is that? That thing that’s shaped like a bear?! Wait, how are you both talking to each other from two different places?!”

“Well, it’s called a bear phone. It’s a magical device that lets people talk from far away.”

It was a new skill I’d learned after defeating that horde of monsters at the capital.

“Wait, so you’re saying she can talk to you at any time?” Noa asked.

“Um, I guess so?” I said.

“That’s so unfair, Fina. Why only you? Even worse, you betrayed the bear fan club by keeping something this important from the other members.”

Noa jabbed her finger at Fina. Even though just a moment ago they were united in their friendship, it all collapsed because of Fina and the bear phone.

“I asked Fina to keep it a secret. So don’t pin this one on her,” I said.

“All right, fine. But it’s not fair that only one of us has shown up in this episode. I want a bear phone at least.”

It would take too much energy to refuse, so I handed a bear phone to Noa.

“Now we can talk whenever I want.”

“I’ll take it away if you call for no reason,” I warned her. If she called me every day it wouldn’t just be annoying, it would be irritating.

After that, Fina was on the TV again playing with Kumayuru and Kumakyu in their cub forms. Their cubification was also a new skill I’d learned.

“It’s so unfair that only Fina gets everything.”

Then it went back to the blizzard on the snowy mountain. While I was talking to Fina on the bear phone, Kumayuru found

something. This was when I discovered the Mileelan fishers Damon and Yuula collapsed in the snow.

I rescued them and let them rest in my bear house. They told me about the kraken in the ocean and the bandits on the roads that were making it difficult to get food. Because of that, they were crossing over the mountain to get food from Crimonia, but they'd run themselves ragged and collapsed on the way.

"I heard about this from Father, but wow, a kraken, and even bandits. I suppose things really were difficult," Noa said.

It was difficult to understand the actual state of things just from hearing about it. That was the same as hearing horrible news about something overseas—you might feel bad for them, but that was the extent of your feelings. If you didn't experience it yourself, you probably wouldn't understand.

After that Damon and Yuula asked to go with me when I started to head to Mileela. They offered to pay me for the escort, but I couldn't take money from those two in that situation.

"You're so nice Yuna."

I wasn't so cruel that I would take advantage of people by demanding payment.

While I thought about that, the show continued. I rode Kumayuru while Damon and Yuula took Kumakyu. Then we arrived in the town of Mileela.

"All the people look so sad."

The town had no energy and the people looked gloomy. They didn't even react to my bear outfit. But some people were yelling about food. We found members of the merchant guild selling food at unreasonable prices while the townspeople protested. The people were angry with the high prices. That was when the merchant guild master showed up.

I barely remembered him, but I guess there was a guy like him around. He said that since fishermen and adventurers were risking their lives to bring in the food, it was obvious that it would be expensive.

"I don't like that large man," Noa said.

“They can’t buy anything at those prices,” Fina commented.

Noa and Fina were angry with the guild master’s speech. But water was worth more than gold and jewels in a desert. There were some things in this world money couldn’t buy. Since there wasn’t much food around, the same reasoning applied. So while I understood what that guy was saying, he was taking - advantage too much.

My group in the show headed to Damon’s house. Inside, their two worried children were waiting. They cried and hugged their parents.

“If you hadn’t wanted to see the ocean, they may have died.”

“Thank goodness.”

It was completely on accident, but I was glad I was able to rescue Damon and Yuula. I couldn’t save everyone, but I was happy the things I did could help some people.

Damon’s family seemed hungry, so I offered them some wolf meat that Fina had butchered.

“Fina’s work really saved me there.”

Fina looked happy when I said that.

After that I wanted to see if I could help with the food shortage, so I headed to the adventurer guild to offer them the wolves I’d slayed near the capital (and also to clean out my inventory).

Inside the guild was a sexy lady showing a lot of skin and drinking liquor.

“It’s Atola.”

“Isn’t she embarrassed in that outfit?”

They both knew her, so they recognized her right away.

When I first saw her, I thought I’d stumbled into an adult shop. She could pull off that look because she knew her proportions were good. I couldn’t pull off something like that with my thin frame. If I had to choose between wearing my bear onesie or a swimsuit through town, I’d take the onesie. Assuming, of course, I couldn’t wear anything over the top of the

swimsuit. In the game, you couldn’t use other gear if you were equipped with a swimsuit.

In the show, Atola didn’t believe me when I said I was an adventurer there to give them food (or rather, to clean out my inventory).

“But you really are an adventurer.”

“And you even have so many wolves.”

“Well, no one would think a girl dressed as a bear is an adventurer.”

But Atola’s attitude changed when she looked at my guild card, and I was able to give her the wolves without a hitch (to clean out my inventory).

The next day, I went to the ocean to see the kraken. It was swimming around doing what it wanted. Ships couldn’t go out to sea with it swimming like that.

“It’s so big.”

“You fought that huge monster, Yuna?”

“But Yuna doesn’t know how to fight it,” Noa said.

My anime self said as much, but I didn’t have a way to fight on the water. Even with my overpowered bear gear, it wasn’t like I could walk on water, and I couldn’t dive below the surface. I didn’t have a way to fight the kraken while it was in the ocean.

“But you did defeat it, right?”

“Well, I did.”

“How did you do it?”

“You’ll have to see in the episode.”

Well, I’d just used a giant wyrm as bait to lure it.

“I know that, but I want to know. Do you know Fina?” Noa asked.

“I don’t know either.”

With Fina in the same boat, Noa seemed satisfied and didn’t press further on how I took down the kraken.

After that, while I was by the ocean, Atola came over and asked me for that day's supply of wolves. The TV showed a shady person watching us.

"Ah, behind you, Yuna!"

"There's a suspicious person spying."

"But she doesn't know!"

They were both yelling at the TV, but I didn't have eyes on the back of my head, so of course I wouldn't have noticed.

Then night fell. I was sleeping comfortably, when Kumayuru and Kumakyu in their cub forms woke me up. They were staring at the door. I used my detection skill, saw some people, and noticed they stopped on the other side of my door.

"Is someone there?" Noa asked.

Then, without my permission, the knob turned and the door opened.

"It's some men."

Two unfamiliar men came into the room, but I was standing in the room when they came in. I was ticked off that my sleep was interrupted. Actually, shouldn't I have been angry that they'd entered a young girl's room without permission? Still, food, gaming, and sleep were essential parts of life.

I took the two intruders down with some bear punches.

"I wonder why they attacked Yuna."

I questioned the men in the show, and it seemed like they were after my item bag. It felt like someone had ordered them to do that, so I asked who, but they weren't talking.

The anime showed the same thing I'd done. I enlarged Kumayuru and Kumakyu to their big (normal) sizes and had them threaten the men with bared teeth.

"Kumayuru and Kumakyu aren't very cute there."

I had to agree with that.

"Cwoon," Kumayuru and Kumakyu let out sad cries from Fina's and Noa's arms.

“Well, I did ask them to be scary for me.”

The threat worked, and the men blabbed everything. The highway bandits were the ones who attacked me and they were trying to get my item bag with the wolves. Not that they could steal one of my bear puppets anyway.

After my sleep was interrupted, I discovered the location of the bandits’ hideout, then headed there with Kumayuru and Kumakyu to defeat them. They were drinking happily when I attacked. After that the episode came to an end.

“Aww, it’s over. What happened to the bandits?”

“Well, I think you know since I’m right here.”

“I mean I guess. It’s mean for them to end the episode at such a good part.”

“Gotta wait until next week,” I said.

“That’s so long.”

There was nothing that could be done about that. Noa hadn’t shown up, but it seemed like she’d still enjoyed it.

A few days later, I did my usual check of the official website. This had become somewhat of a routine even though the show was ending in two weeks. Three months had gone by in a flash.

I checked the website for the next episode, and it looked like it would be about defeating the kraken. Well, I did fight the kraken after taking down the bandits. The show was following that plot.

It seemed like that anime would end after the kraken. That was too bad, but it had to come to an end sometime. When I thought about it, the anime would end before showing the employee trip. We all went to Mileela for a visit in the summer. In other words, we wouldn’t see the swimsuits. Maybe that was actually a good thing, since it’d be embarrassing otherwise.

While I was looking around for whether there was any other stuff, I saw that there was a new mini-series episode. Fina was playing with my hair in it. Seeing Fina like that, I could imagine her being a hair and makeup artist in the future.

Other than that, there was a raffle where you could win the scripts from the anime. I wonder which episode would be popular. I guess for me, it’d be...

Chapter 54:
TV Show Novel, Part 12

THE ELEVENTH EPISODE was airing today. This was the second-to-last one.

“It’s continuing from last time. I wonder what happened with the bandits? I was worrying about it all week.”

“Me too.”

Noa and Fina hugged Kumayuru and Kumakyu as they sat in front of the TV. I prepared tea and sweets as usual, then sat down on my bed.

Then the anime started right on time with a sleepy-looking Atola and two men tied and bound on the ground in front of her. They were the bandits who had woken me up in the middle of the night.

Then, adding to those two on the ground, I appeared with two more bandits on Kumayuru and Kumakyu.

“Yuna, you captured all the bandits by yourself?”

Actually, it hadn’t just been me. I’d fought and captured the bandits with Blitz and the members of his harem party, but I guess that part of the story had been cut.

Maybe they didn’t have enough time to include Blitz’s group. There were only two episodes left, after all. I’d seen other anime cut and simplify things too. They’d probably been cut because of time constraints, but too bad for Blitz and the others.

The anime me handed the bandits over to Atola and started to go back to her room to get some more sleep but was stopped.

“That’s dangerous, Atola.”

“You shouldn’t get in between Yuna and her sleep.”

They were probably talking about what happened last week and were worried for Atola.

“Nah, I’d never hit Atola no matter how tired I am,” I said.

I only got angry when my sleep was interrupted for no good reason.

In the end, my anime version wasn't able to get any sleep since she had to explain everything to Atola. Then the merchant guild master showed up on screen casually drinking some wine.

"That man looks evil. He's definitely a villain. You think so too, right, Fina?" Noa said.

"Um, I think so." Fina gave a hesitant nod.

I also had problems being judged based on my appearance, so I wanted to tell them not to do that to others, but he was actually corrupt. Since I knew he was doing evil things, I decided not to tell them anything. Then as if to immediately show that, the man got flustered when a subordinate told him that the bandits were caught. He ran to what looked like a treasure room in his house.

"He's going to take the money and run!"

Just as Noa said, the man was grabbing valuables and making a break for it, but Atola showed up right away. I wonder if that was because she had been watching him?

Then Atola, like a detective, walked through the evidence that tied the guild master to the bandits and questioned him. But the thieves I'd caught had already spilled the beans. As Atola and the guild master were having their back and forth, anime me was yawning and completely unconcerned.

"You seem tired, Yuna."

The bandits had woken me up in the middle of the night and I hadn't gone back to bed since then. That just showed how important sleep was. But hey, pay a bit more attention to what's happening in front of you, anime me!

The man looked like he was going to run for it, but Atola smacked him and caught him. His cheek was bright red, which looked painful, but it was probably better than getting a punch from me. He would've been way worse off with one of my bear punches (remembering back to Deboranay's face).

"I'm glad he was caught."

"Yeah, now they can use the roads."

With the bandit situation resolved, people could use the road. Now they could get to other towns and they'd be able to fix some of their food shortage. But as long as the kraken was in the ocean, their main problem wouldn't be solved.

Then, back at the inn, Deigha and Anz treated me to a meal to thank me for catching the bandits. I had fish, rice, and miso soup, which I'd never dreamed of finding here.

"Yuna, you're crying."

"It tastes like your hometown's food? But isn't the Land of Wa across the ocean? I want to try going there sometime. Don't you, Fina?" Noa said.

"Um…well…I suppose." Fina seemed flustered. Then she looked over at me, and finally nodded.

"Wh-what was that? Wait, have you already been to the Land of Wa?" Noa started questioning Fina after feeling that something was off from her reaction.

"Well…"

"Noa, the anime is going to end." I changed the subject to save Fina.

"This is more important!"

"Are you sure?"

The anime continued on, showing me looking out across the ocean, thinking of a way to defeat the kraken. Noa looked back and forth between Fina and the TV. We couldn't stop the broadcast.

"All right, Fina. We shall discuss this later," Noa said, then looked at the TV.

Fina was giving me a troubled look. I guess the cat was out of the bag. Noa already knew about the bear transportation gates.

I gave up and turned my attention back to the TV. On the show, I saw a caricature of myself in various scenes riding Kumayuru and Kumakyu, fighting the kraken, flying through the air while riding Kumakyu, and even fighting while inside a ball of air.

"Even Yuna can't fight underwater."

“But Yuna, can’t Kumayuru and Kumakyu run on top of water?”

Fina pointed out that Kumayuru and Kumakyu could actually run on top of the ocean. They knew the Bear Water Walking skill now, so I could ride them on any body of water, but they couldn’t at that time since they still hadn’t learned that ability.

“Wait, really?! Kumayuru and Kumakyu can run on water?”

Noa was shocked by Fina’s question. Come to think of it, Noa didn’t know that piece of info. The anime was exposing my secrets to Noa. But it was too late now. They both even knew about the god.

“The god hadn’t taught me how at that point,” I said, since they both knew about the god.

Well, the skills were actually given to me by the god, so it wasn’t a lie. If I knew Bear Water Walking at the time, the fight with the kraken would have probably been much easier. It would be nice if the god could be a bit more accommodating.

In the anime, I couldn’t think of a way to defeat the kraken and end up getting invited to dinner with Yuula, who I’d saved in the mountains. With the merchant guild master captured, the fish that the guild was controlling were being distributed again. Yuula kindly treated me to a meal. On the table there was a pot filled with seafood.

“Hot pot looks so good. I want some,” Noa said as she watched the anime. When I watched fancy cooking shows I wanted to try the food too.

“Then should we do hot pot next week?”

“Really?”

“Next week is the final episode.”

We could do it for the finale.

“Oh, I guess it is. The next one is the last one. I haven’t really shown up much.”

Noa actually was disappointed that she hadn’t been in the anime for a while.

“Noa, it looks like Yuna thought of a way to beat the kraken.”

While we were chatting, the show had continued. I was looking at the pot, planning how to defeat the kraken, then I was talking with Atola.

“You’re going to beat the kraken.”

Noa looked relieved.

After that I went with Atola to the cliff along the coast. Just like in real life, I took a wyrm out of my bear storage, tied a rope around it, and hung it from the cliff.

“You were able to summon the kraken with a wyrm?”

Earthworms could also be used for bait during fishing, but this time it was for a squid.

“You’ll see if you keep watching.”

Right when I said that the kraken made its move and grabbed the wyrm. Just like in real life, my anime self used bear earth magic and made bear statues.

“Those are such big bears.”

The bear statues stopped the kraken from escaping. I’d used up a lot of mana after making so many large bear statues to cut the kraken’s escape route off. It would have been better if I’d changed into my white bear outfit after that. But just like in real life, I stayed in my black outfit and threw so many magic fire bears at the kraken that I was melting the rock.

“Hang in there, Yuna!”

“You can do it Yuna.”

They both called out to the TV. This was all in the past. It wasn’t like I could try harder now. I guess this was what kids were like at stage performances too.

Then the kraken was defeated right as I ran out of mana.

“You won!”

“Thank goodness.”

My anime self staggered. I remembered that at the time I'd used up too much mana and collapsed. When I came to, I was back on a bed in the inn. In the anime, I fell asleep on Atola's back. I guess she put me to bed like that back at the inn.

After that, the anime wrapped up and the ending played. Now there was only one episode left.

"Well now, will you tell me about the Land of Wa?" Noa said.

Looks like she hadn't forgotten. I left out the part about Talgwei, but told her about the time I went to the Land of Wa, set up a bear transportation gate, and then brought Fina over.

"You're so mean. I was the only one left out. I want to go to the Land of Wa too."

"I hear ya. I'll bring you along next time."

"Really? You promise?"

It goes without saying, but that night when the three of us went to bed, Noa asked us all kinds of questions about the Land of Wa.

Several days later, I checked out the official anime website. The next episode was titled "The Bear and Fina." What did that mean? When I looked at the preview, it looked like it was about after I'd defeated the kraken. Then why was the title "The Bear and Fina"? I was curious.

There was another mini-series episode where Noa wanted to take care of me, so she asked me to get sick. It was scary, since it seemed like something she would say.

But this really was the finale. I was happy that I wouldn't have to watch any more embarrassing scenes, but I was also feeling sad. I didn't think my feelings about the anime would change this much, but the fact that the next episode was the finale wasn't going to change.

Chapter 55:
TV Show Novel, Part 13

TODAY WAS THE FINALE. At first I didn't like that someone had made an anime of me without asking, but now that it was coming to an end, I felt a little sad. I might have been depressed if I watched it on my own, but Fina and Noa were coming over again.

"I'm stuffed. I couldn't eat another bite."

"I'm so full."

Noa and Fina were looking satisfied. As promised a week ago, dinner today was seafood hot pot. We threw in kombu dashi, slices of fish, shellfish, and some veggies. It was great that we could eat seafood whenever we wanted. It was worth all that work defeating the kraken and digging the tunnel between Crimonia and Mileela.

We cleaned up the dishes and then, after a short break, hopped in the bath.

"Today's the last time we'll all bathe together," Noa said.

"Oh, it is."

Noa and Fina looked a little sad.

"The anime might be over, but you could still spend the night," I offered.

"Are you sure?"

"Yup, but only if you get Cliff's permission."

"All right, Fina, let's have another slumber party together."

"Okay!"

The two smiled happily. I'd be lonely too without them staying over every week. So I was glad we'd do this again later.

We finished washing up. Feeling refreshed, we transferred over to my room where the TV was to watch the anime finale.

As always, Fina and Noa held Kumayuru and Kumakyu in their cub forms as they sat in front of the TV while I took the bed.

“It’s starting.”

The TV showed me eating fresh seafood that Anz had prepared. Then, excited with how delicious the food was, I told Anz, “*I want you to come to Crimonia*” and “*I want you*.”

“I know those phrases. It’s what you say when you want to marry someone.”

“R-really?”

Fina was surprised when Noa said that.

“I heard that men say that to women,” Noa explained.

“How’d you learn that?” I asked.

“Lala told me.”

Oh, Lala. What are you teaching Noa? But what I’d meant was that I wanted Anz to come set up a shop in Crimonia.

After that, Atola showed up and asked for a letter to be delivered to the lord of Crimonia to help secure Mileela’s future.

“A letter for Father?”

“Yeah, after thinking about the future of the town, they were going to ask for help from Cliff.”

Actually, I had fond memories of taking Cliff and Milaine to Mileela.

After that I returned to Crimonia, where Fina greeted me. She looked delighted to see me after so long, but she looked sad when I told her I had to work.

“Oh no, you rejected Fina.”

“Don’t make it sound bad,” I said.

“Yuna was just busy with important work. She couldn’t help it.”

After I left Fina, I went to meet Cliff at his estate. That was when Noa appeared for the first time in a while.

“It’s me!” she said in front of the TV.

But she was immediately caught by Lala and taken away. Just how many times had I seen that in real life?

“Aww, but I just showed up. Silly Lala.”

With Noa abducted, I headed to Cliff to report on the status of Mileela. Cliff listened, but he told me it was possible to help, since the Elezent Mountains made it so hard to get there. But then I told him that I’d dug a tunnel that connected Mileela to Crimonia.

I’d dug and fortified, dug and fortified, dug and fortified, dug and fortified, dug and fortified…

Thinking back on it now, I really had put in some hard work. I did it to help Mileela, of course, but my main goal was to get Anz to come to Crimonia for me. I’d worked hard so I could eat seafood anytime in Crimonia.

Now that he knew about the tunnel, Cliff decided to take Milaine to Mileela. This was when I found out that Milaine was actually the Merchant Guild’s master. Apparently her hobby was to sit at the reception desk and observe things. That was why when I wanted to buy a plot of land for my bear house I’d been able to get it cheap. It was also why she’d listened to my ridiculous request to not sell kokekko eggs to Cliff and how I was able to get favorable treatment for my shops and various other things.

Thinking back, a regular receptionist wouldn’t have that kind of authority and wouldn’t have been able to go against a noble lord.

I headed off to Mileela with Cliff and Milaine while riding Kumayuru and Kumakyu.

Also, when I’d looked at the list of voice actors, I noticed Milaine and Kumakyu were played by the same person. In other words, she was riding herself. That was kind of funny for them to be paired together.

We passed through the tunnel I’d made while we rode my bears and came to the town of Mileela. Then we met with Atola.

Now that my job was done, I was going to leave the rest to Cliff, Atola, and Milaine, but they caught me when I tried to sneak away and forced me to do more work. Those three were so cruel. Even though I'd already worked so hard to defeat the bandits, kill the kraken, and dig that tunnel, they still made me work more.

After that I was completely exhausted and met back up with Fina. It probably didn't come across in the show, but I really had done my best to meet Cliff, Milaine, and Atola's unreasonable requests. I wanted to tell my anime self *"Thanks for the hard work."*

Even though I was tired, I had a promise to keep with Fina and invited her out to Mileela.

"Wh-why didn't you invite me, then!"

Noa was ticked off. Wait, why hadn't I?

"I guess I just didn't think about taking you with me?"

"You're so cruel, Yuna."

Noa sulked. I felt that it would have been crueler if I'd told her I never intended to take her along in the first place. She seemed disappointed when she found out Fina and Shuri were both with me in the anime.

"Fina wanted to go alone with you," Noa said.

"Really?"

"No, I didn't," Fina said, seeming embarrassed.

I could see some distance between Fina and myself in the anime though. Maybe the anime Fina was feeling left out.

After that I took Fina and Shuri and we headed for Mileela. They were shocked when they saw the tunnel, the ocean, and the big bear house I'd made there.

"I'm so jealous of Fina and Shuri."

Then when we toured the town, I ended up surrounded by the townsfolk. Fina looked at me sadly in the anime.

“Fina must be lonely since Yuna was taken away from her,” Noa said bluntly.

“I-I wasn’t thinking that,” Fina said as she blushed.

In real life, Fina and Shuri had been having fun. But maybe I just hadn’t noticed like in the anime and made Fina feel lonely.

“Sorry, Fina,” I said.

“No, please don’t apologize. It really wasn’t like that.”

After touring Mileela, we returned to Crimonia. Then Noa appeared on the TV in front of my bear house.

“That’s the second time I’ve appeared today.”

Noa was really happy seeing herself. The anime Noa was facing the bear house and calling my name, but Fina came out covered in blood.

“Fina, you’re hurt!”

“I think I was just butchering.”

Just like she said, Fina was holding a knife. She really shouldn’t carry a knife when seeing guests.

Noa had come to see me after finishing her studies, but unfortunately, I wasn’t around. She seemed worried that Fina looked lonely, so Fina talked about her relationship with me.

“So that’s what you were thinking, Fina.”

I patted her head from where I sat behind her.

“That’s not what I’m thinking!”

“You don’t have to be so embarrassed. The god said they made this anime based on us, you know.”

“…”

Fina went silent. Then she slowly began to speak.

“But I think I’d be lonely if you went away.” Fina shared what she really thought. I was happy to hear it since I didn’t even think anyone thought that in my original world.

“I’m not going anywhere.”

“Yuna…”

Even if I went back to my original world, this anime of me had aired. I couldn't go back if anyone I knew had seen it. Even if I was a shut-in, I just couldn't do it. I still had to go shopping and get outside for a change of pace. Yup, going home wasn't an option now.

"I'd be lonely too if Yuna disappeared. I'd cry."

"Thanks, Noa."

I was so grateful there were people who cared about me.

In the show, Noa looked worried but gave Fina a letter addressed to me and then returned home. The letter was from Ellelaura about how Princess Flora wanted to see me. I invited Fina to go with me, but she said no.

"All things considered, this anime Fina isn't very straightforward. It would be better if she just clearly told you that she wanted to be with you."

"The real Fina isn't straightforward either," I said.

"No, that's not true," Fina denied it, but she kept things bottled inside a lot.

When her mother was sick, she didn't want to bother Gentz, so she had gone to the forest to pick medical herbs herself. You wouldn't know from her face what a tough life she'd lived. Maybe the anime Fina was the same and kept her inner feelings to herself.

In the anime, Fina and I kept slipping past each other. Fina took a break from her butchering work with me and said she was going to study under Gentz. She wanted to be useful, so she was honing her butchering skills.

I understood from watching the anime, but my anime self didn't understand Fina's feelings. It was like something out of a romance manga. It was actually embarrassing to watch. Next to me, Fina's ears had turned red too.

In the anime, I didn't know what I was feeling, so I went to the Merchant Guild to get ready for Anz's shop, then went to go check on Fina.

“You’re both so exhausting,” Noa said very directly.

I didn’t have any friends before, so I knew how I felt in the anime. I didn’t know how to approach the situation.

If Fina had left me, would I have stopped her? I didn’t know if I could talk to her about it. After all, Fina hadn’t ever left my side.

Noa came to me in the anime and explained everything. It was like she had years of experience when she talked. Then she gave me a push in the back.

“The anime Noa is nothing like the real one,” I said.

“Yes, this isn’t like her.”

“You both are so mean. I’ll have you know that I have a big heart.”

While I was being lectured by Noa, Fina was being lectured by Gentz. How fatherlike.

After that, Fina and I talked to confirm our feelings for each other. It was just like a yuri anime. Fina and I shared our feelings for each other and reaffirmed how important we were to each other. Now, that was embarrassing.

After that, the ending theme played.

“Wh-what is this?! It’s as though you and Fina are in love,” Noa yelled.

“I-I’m so embarrassed,” Fina said.

It wasn’t just Fina who was feeling mortified.

“I’m not letting you have Yuna!”

Wait, who just said she has a big heart? The anime Noa was mature, but the real Noa was childishly clinging to me. No, wait, the anime Noa also said that she wouldn’t lose, so maybe they were actually alike.

That night until bedtime, Fina looked embarrassed and Noa wouldn’t leave my side.

A few days later, I went to take a look at the official anime website. I didn’t see anything about new episodes, so this really did seem like it was the end.

But the moment the website loaded, I saw something unbelievable. There was an illustration and the words “TV Anime Season 2 Confirmed!”

Wait, Season 2? Really? This wasn’t some joke? I wasn’t being pranked?

There was also a lot more merch. They were even selling an official fan book.

I guess my anime was going to continue.

Afterword

I'M KUMANANO. Thank you for picking up Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear Volume 20.5.

This volume includes thirty-seven short stories that were included as extras in volumes 10 to 16, five stories commissioned for this book, and thirteen-anime-adapted stories that appeared on the internet for a total of fifty collected works.

Compared to volume 11.5, there are five more stories.

I write about five short stories for each volume's store-exclusive bonus stories. Back during the first volume, I wrote three, and once I reached the fourth volume, I ended up writing four, then starting from the tenth volume on, I've written five.

I think it's hard to collect all the bonus stories. But I think some readers probably wanted to read them. I'm very happy that those readers will now be able to get the stories.

I can't thank the publishers enough for making this possible. I hope that we can continue to work hard in order to make sure the stories are available from the seventeenth volume on too.

The twenty-first volume should be coming out next. It'll be the start of a new adventure for Yuna, so I hope that you'll follow along with her.

I hope you'll keep following along with Kuma.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone who strived to get this book out. Thank you for drawing such wonderful illustrations, 029. I'm always relying on my editor as well. Thank you to the many other people who also were involved in this book.

I'm grateful for the readers who have read along thus far.

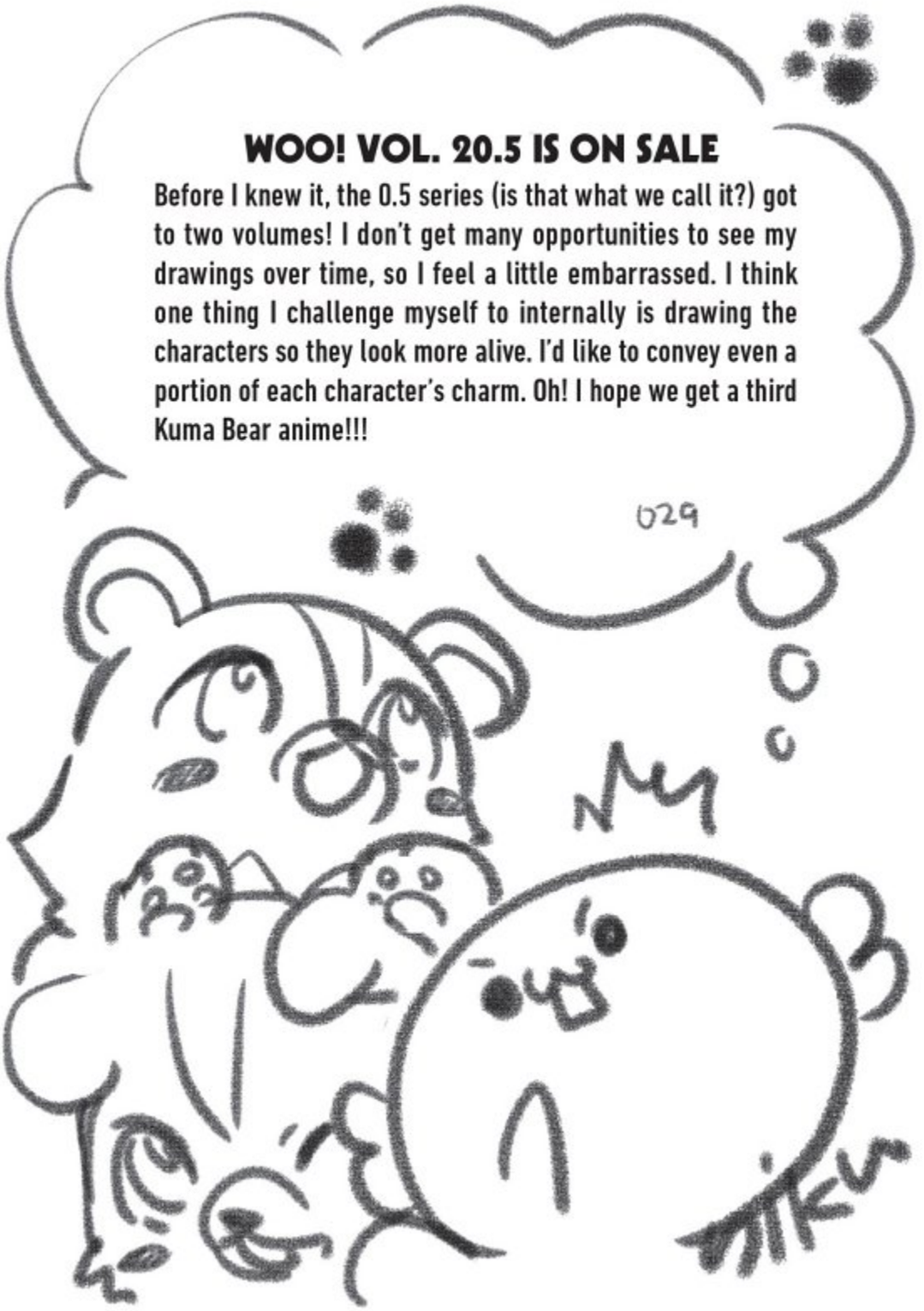
Well, I hope we can meet again in the twenty-first volume.

KUMANANO — ON A DAY IN MAY 2024


20.5
CONGRATULATIONS
KUMANANO FOR VOL. 20.5
I'LL KEEP FOLLOWING YUNA AND THE GANG'S ADVENTURES WITH ALL THE READERS.
BEAR!
滝沢りえん
RINEN TAKIZAWA

WOO! VOL. 20.5 IS ON SALE

Before I knew it, the 0.5 series (is that what we call it?) got to two volumes! I don't get many opportunities to see my drawings over time, so I feel a little embarrassed. I think one thing I challenge myself to internally is drawing the characters so they look more alive. I'd like to convey even a portion of each character's charm. Oh! I hope we get a third Kuma Bear anime!!!




KUMA KUMA BEAR KINDERGARTEN
NEW SPECIAL MANGA FROM SERGEI
IN SOME TOWN ...
THIS IS IN SOME WORLD ...
WHERE THERE ARE ENERGETIC KINDER-GARTENERS AND BEARS.
THIS IS A STORY ABOUT A KINDER-GARTEN.


BEAR
NOM
NOM
I WANNA PLAY WITH THE BEAR TOO!
HEY! NO FAIR!
EVERY-ONE LOVES THE BEARS SO MUCH.
WAAH!
WAAH!
GEEZ... DON'T FIGHT OVER THE POOR THING.
ALL HERS
MEANWHILE, FINA'S GETTING AWAY WITH THIS...

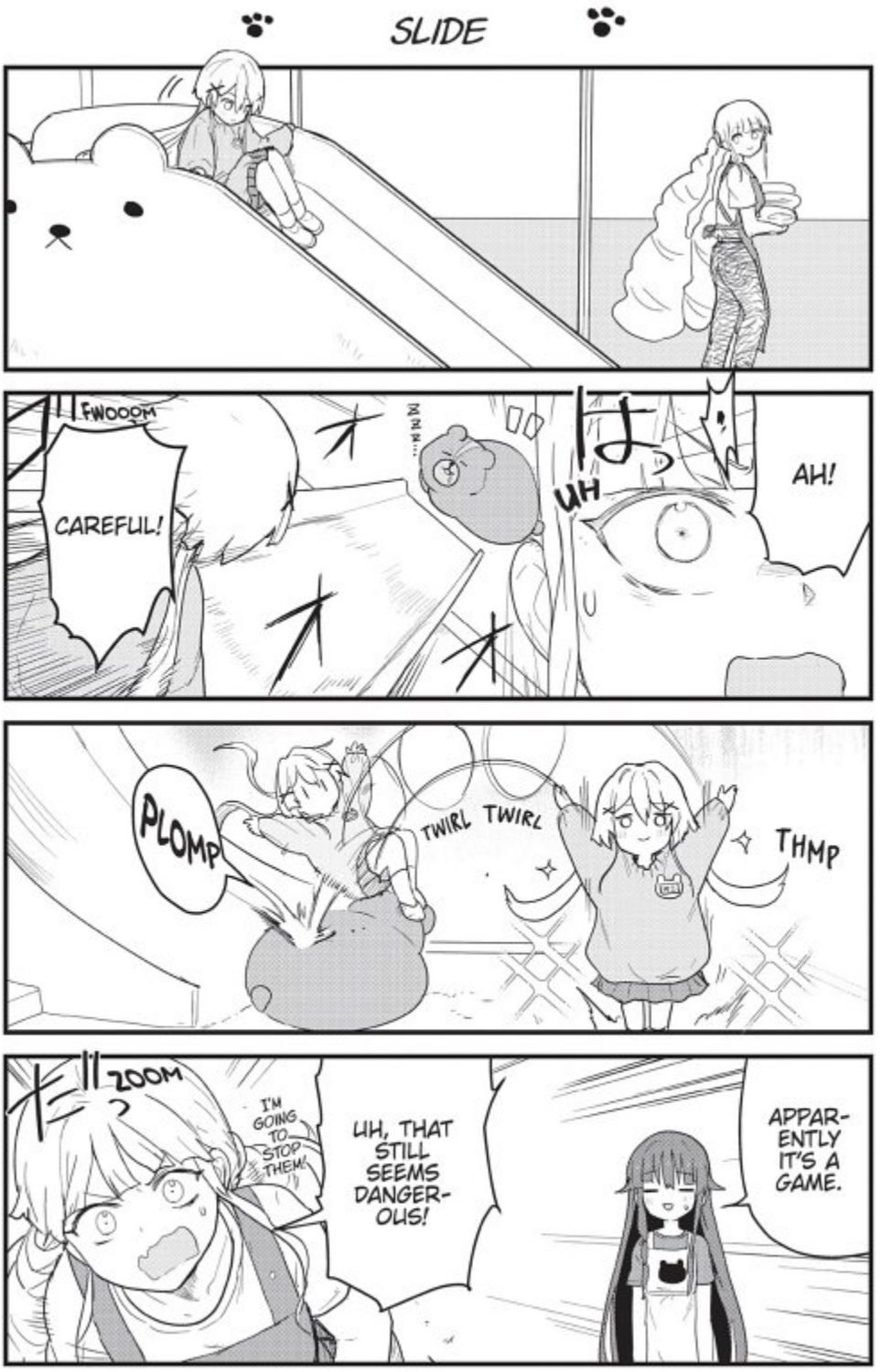
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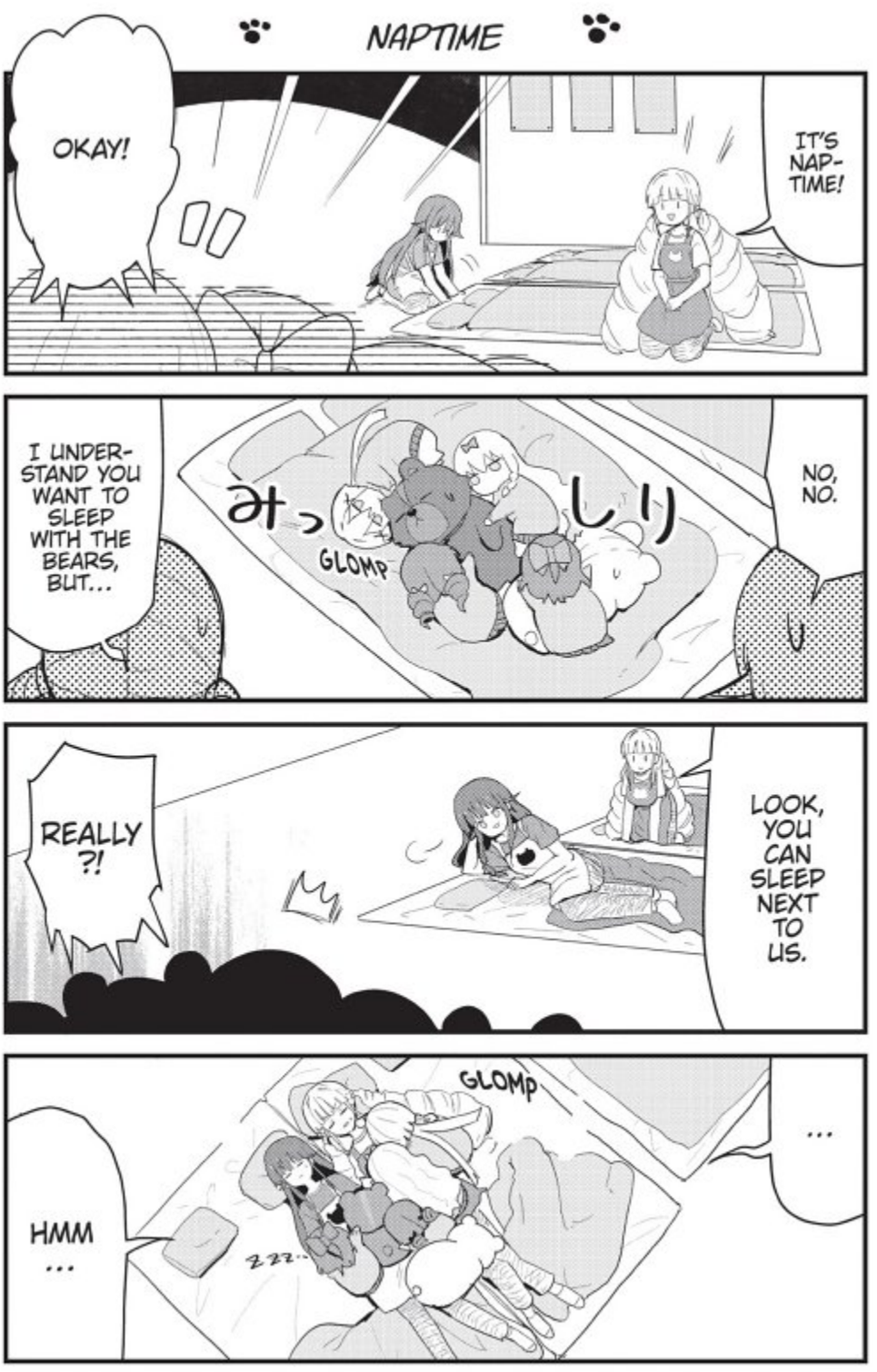









SLIDE
FWOOOM
CAREFUL!
MMM...
UH
AH!
PLOMP
TWIRL TWIRL
THMP
ZOOM
I'M GOING TO STOP THEM!
UH, THAT STILL SEEMS DANGER-OUS!
APPAR-ENTLY IT'S A GAME.


NAPTIME
OKAY!
IT'S NAP-TIME!
I UNDER-STAND YOU WANT TO SLEEP WITH THE BEARS, BUT...
みっしり
GLOMP
NO, NO.
REALLY ?!
LOOK, YOU CAN SLEEP NEXT TO US.
GLOMP
...
HMM ...
ZZZ...
THE END



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Manga from Sergei Newsletter