Supana Onikage

Illustrator: Youta

1



Lazy Dungeon Master


"So, Keima. Would you mind KILLING all of these bandits for me?"
This dungeon's already COMPLETELY FRIGGIN' SCREWED.
In short, this dungeon had no meandering hallways, no traps, no monsters, no stash of DP... and its singular room had been conquered by bandits.


Dungeon Core Number 89
HAKU
Young Dog-Eared Girl
NIKU
Dungeon Core Number 695
ROKUKO
Dungeon Master
KEIMA MASUDA
The first thing we saw after exiting the forest and looking towards the cave was something neither of us ever expected.


HAAAH,
HAAAH...
Her skin was nice and smooth, plus her hair smelled nice.
But it didn't take long for a problem to arise.


"NOW THEN, SHALL WE BEGIN?"
VS
"SISTER! I'LL DO MY BEST!"
DUNGEON BATTLE START!

CONTENTS

Prologue

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Epilogue

Extra Episode

Rokuko is a Dakimakura



Prologue

In the midst of an expansive white room with basically nothing in it, I, Keima Masuda, was checking my dungeon map.

“...Hey. Why’s there only one room and one hallway in this dungeon? I’m not even gonna count the entrance.”

“My dungeon’s all about beating down intruders with monsters! I heard that’s the best thing to do!” I don’t know who told her that, but the girl who just brushed aside her waist-length golden blonde hair and grinned with her hands on her hips was my partner, Rokuko.

I had just become the Dungeon Master of this dungeon a few minutes ago, making both it and this girl my responsibility. The girl, by the way, was the physical avatar of the Dungeon Core. Which does in fact mean that she, not I, made this terrible dungeon that ended as soon as you entered it.

And of course... the heart of this dungeon—the Dungeon Core—was placed in the sole existing room.

But the map I was looking at also showed eight red dots in that room. The word “Bandit” was displayed above each one as supplementary information.

“O-Oh, I get it! These, uh... these bandits are monsters protecting your dungeon, right?”

“Ah, no! Those are the intruders!” Rokuko said something unbelievable with a broad smile on her face.

Yeah... yep. They do look like enemies on the map. I don’t know what I was expecting. As far as I could tell from the map, the bandits seemed to be surrounding the Dungeon Core.

...And I was in the Master Room, located right within the Dungeon Core.

The Master Room was an odd, pure white expanse without any walls or even a floor. It was about as wide as a gymnasium, leading me to believe that it

might have also served as a storeroom. If I were to take even a single step out of this bizarro world, I would be surrounded by all of the bandits.

The Dungeon Core itself was about the size of a basketball, so how could a gym-sized room fit inside of it? ...It would probably be a waste of time to even think about it.

“So, Keima. Would you mind killing all of these bandits for me?” Without blinking an eye, my partner asked me to do something pretty crazy.

Honestly, I kind of just want to cradle my head and groan... But it’s still too early to give up.

Dungeon Masters can expend Dungeon Points (DP) to make rooms, set traps, and summon monsters. Although the only thing you could do once the core room was invaded by intruders was summon monsters, you still had a fighting chance at survival as long as you had DP on your side.

Or at least, that’s what I thought before I realized the grim truth.

“...Uh, it looks like we’ve only got 9 DP left. What can we do with that?”

“Hm? That’s not even enough to summon a goblin. Those cost 20 DP.”

“Still, you need to do something about this.”

My last hope, vanquished.

“It cost me a whole 1000 DP to summon you, Keima. Don’t expect me to have any left over after that.”

“Oh wow, [I] cost you that much DP? Huh. Nice...”

Without DP, you can’t set traps and you can’t summon monsters. In short, this dungeon had no meandering hallways, no traps, no monsters, no stash of DP... and its singular room had been conquered by bandits.

This dungeon’s already completely friggin’ screwed.

Chapter 1

Day ?

I hadn't been doing anything special on that day. It all happened when I was, like always, sleeping in my ash gray shirt and sweatpants that were much more comfy than pajamas.

"Hey. Would you mind waking up? Mr. Keima Masuda?"

Someone I didn't know was calling out my name, and before I knew it, everything except the clothes on my back was gone. My bed, my pillow, my apartment—heck, the apartment building, and even the ground were all gone, leaving me stranded in a star-dotted vacuum that looked a lot like space.

After making sure that I could breathe properly, I opened my eyes. I felt a floaty sensation, as if I were still asleep. For a second I wondered if I had been kidnapped, but after seeing my surroundings, I assumed I was dreaming and tried to go back to sleep.

This feels nice and floaty. I'm definitely getting a good night's sleep tonight.

"Um, would you please listen to me? I am a god, after all."

"Huh...? Yeah, yeah, I'm listening... zzz..."

"Is that true? You're not sleeping or anything, right? I don't have much time here. You're being summoned to another world right now. You'll regret it if you don't listen to me, okay?"

"I'm listening, I'm listening... zzz..."

"Mmm, I don't know if I've ever met someone so lazy before. But if you really are listening, I guess I'll go ahead and start explaining. First of all..." His explanation really dragged on, so I listened halfheartedly while focusing on sleep.

"So, you get one present from me. Is there something you want to do in the

world you're going to? I'll try to help you grant that wish. But in return, I'd like you to help me too, with what I just told you about."

Something I want to do? My friend, how about the opposite.

"I don't want to work." That was my response to the person who had called themselves a god.

Helping out a god sounds like a lot of annoying work. No thanks.

"...Um, what am I supposed to do about that? I want to know what you *do* want to do, so I can help you with that."

"The best life is one where you don't have to work..."

"...Should I just reincarnate you as a tree?"

"Aaah, that sounds like it'd be nice."

The god sighed and shook his head at me.

"Hey. Did you forget why I was asking you what you wanted to do?"

"Huh? Yeah, I guess I did."

It was probably something about restoring the flow of mana or exterminating monsters or whatever. I hadn't been listening very closely.

"You were studying things like golems in your world, right? I thought you would be pretty excited about this..."

"Huh? Hahaha! Not a chance, not a friggin' chance. That's just how we youths are nowadays."

My dream was to create a maid robot that could take care of everything for me.

People always look at me like I'm a waste of space as soon as they learn about that. Don't expect too much from me, Mr. God-being-whatever.

By the way, my "research" was just me playing around with robots about thirty centimeters tall that I got from ready-made kits. *Huh? I should build them myself? That sounds like a lotta work...*

"Well, it looks like we're out of time... I hate to let you go, but I guess I'll just

have to ask the next person that comes by here.”

“Whaaat...”

“...But I’ll at least make sure you can understand the other world’s language. And if you do help me out, I’ll make sure you’re repaid for your efforts.”

“I wish not to wooork...”

“The world you’re being summoned to has magic, but civilization there hasn’t developed very much. You’ll have to work to survive. Plus, the fact you’re being summoned means someone out there wants you to do some kind of job for them.”

“I want to go home...”

“Well, good luck.”

A bright light enveloped me, blinding my vision.

Day 1

“A-Alright! The summoning was successful! ...Wait, what?! A-A human?! But why?!”

I didn’t know how it worked, but I appeared in a room with a faintly glowing floor and white walls... is it still a “room” if it’s as big as a gymnasium? Either way, that’s where I ended up.

In front of me was a beautiful girl that looked a lot like the kind of princess knight you could find in all sorts of video games. She had golden hair that reached all the way down to her waist and a firm, though somewhat childish gaze. And lastly, long white boots that went all the way up to her thighs.

Yep, those are some good legs. I’ve got a foot fetish, though, so would you mind taking those boots off for a second? I really wanna see what’s under them. And after that, I’d appreciate it if you would put on some knee socks. Even some black ones would be fine. But I’m getting off-track here.

Apparently that hadn’t been a dream, but the real issue was how extremely

sleepy I was.

I love sleeping more than I love eating three meals a day. Seriously.

“But why?! I spent all of my DP, why’d I have to get a small fry like thiiis...”

“...Mind if I go back to sleep?”

“Eh?!”

“You don’t mind, right? Oh, by the way, do you have a bed or something?”

“I-IT TAAAAALKED?!”

What’s with this girl? I just want to sleep, but she’s screeching and ruining the mood.

She’s pretty attractive (mainly her feet), but I guess looks are only skin deep. What a shame. She’d be some really nice eye candy otherwise.

“Grrr, what’s going on?! I’ve never heard of gacha monsters talking! ...Oh, right, it’s a human. Makes sense that it can talk, then. I guess.”

“Hey, what’s with you? Keep it down, you’re making my ears hurt.”

“Ah, o-okay... Wait, no, what’s with *you*? I’m the one who summoned you, so you should just listen to everything I say.”

“...Is your mom or dad nearby? I kinda wanna go home, so...”

“I’m not a child! Listen up! You’re a monster that’s been summoned by me, this dungeon’s Core! I’ll work you to the bone until you die, got it?!”

Dungeon Core... Monster... Yeah, I have no idea what’s going on. If that god was telling the truth, I’ve been summoned to another world, and this girl is the person who summoned me... but it doesn’t look like I’m a hero or anything. Whew. That’s a relief. I don’t want to get wrapped up in anything annoying like protecting the world or whatever. That’d get in the way of my precious sleeping time.

“C’mon, stand up and go outside already! Kill all those bandits! I spent 1000 DP on you, so you’re actually really strong, right?!”

Holy crap, girl. You sure started saying some pretty violent things all of a sudden. I’m a little less sleepy now, seriously.

“Alright, I’ll listen to what you’ve got to say, but first you’ve gotta help me out a little here. What’s a Dungeon Core? What are monsters? What’s DP? I can tell that, uh... you summoned me here.”

“Oh wow, I’m impressed. Makes sense that a talking creature like you is a little smart too. Maybe you’re a wizard-type monster... Well, whatever. This is my dungeon. And obviously, this is the Master Room within me, the Dungeon Core.”

“Alright. What about the... Dungeon Master?”

“Oh, you know about Dungeon Masters? That’s interesting. But my dungeon doesn’t have one. Oh, wait. I guess that would make me the Dungeon Master, kinda?”

Naturally, I knew nothing about the Dungeon Masters of this world, but I could guess that they existed thanks to how many fantasy games I’ve played.

But she also mentioned a Dungeon Core... That must be the “heart” of this dungeon. And also... this girl?

“Hey, wait a second. You said I’m a small fry since I’m a human, but aren’t you a human too?”

“Nuh-uh. This is just my human form... Hey! Wait a second! You need to start calling me ‘master!’”

“Aaah, that’s right, you haven’t told me your name yet. What is it?”

“Me? I’m Dungeon Core Number 695.”

A number? Really? That’s pretty lazy... but wait. If she’s number 695, that must mean there’s 694 other dungeons. Okay, I take it back. I would get pretty lazy naming them too. I don’t even know if I could think up that many names.

“Alright, you’re Rokuko now.”

“Um? I’m what?”

“I mean, it’d be pretty hard to call you Dungeon Whatever Number Whatever, so I’ll just name you Rokuko. Full name being Rokuko Dungeon Core. Oh, by the way, my name’s Keima Masuda. Go ahead and call me Keima. Not Masuda, Keima.”

Dungeon Core Number 695, henceforth known as Rokuko, looked at me with complete bafflement in her eyes.

“What? Masuda... Master Keima...? Is that a fake name or something? ...Wait, what did you just make me sa—”

“Keima Masuda has been recognized as Dungeon Master.”

“Wha?” “Wha?”

Rokuko and I both said the exact same thing at the same time.

A transparent, green window popped up before my eyes. It looked like the kind of message window you see in video games all the time. Written on that window in white letters was a message describing that I had been recognized as this dungeon’s master.

I have no idea what’s going on, but I guess I’m a Dungeon Master now.

“Menu! Hold on! I take it back! Cancel! Undo what just happened!”

The blonde girl... Rokuko summoned her own window and shouted at it, but nothing in particular happened.

Aaah. My ears are really starting to hurt, sheesh.

“Hey, you’re being loud as hell right now. Tone it down a little. Actually, just shut up entirely.”

“Wh-What’s with you? Don’t order... me... aro—!”

She shut up.

Oh, yeah. I’m the Dungeon Master now. And it looks like dungeons have to obey their master no matter what. Heheheh.

A perfect life without work may have just fallen straight into my lap. That’s right. I won’t have to work anymore. I’ll make this blonde girl do all my work for me while I sleep all day every day! It’ll be perfect! .....Yeah, I’d have to be a completely trash person to do something like that. Wow.

“...Not to mention, she’s a girl. It just wouldn’t work out.”

If she were my age or older, I could at least rest easy while making her do my chores or whatever, but... she looks younger than me.

She's like a middle schooler at best? Considering how well-developed some elementary schoolers are nowadays, she could probably get discounts at theme parks without trying too hard.

"Uhhh, menu? Woah! It actually popped up. Let's see... What do we have here..."

A transparent window appeared before me after I called out for it. It was basically a video game menu. Everything I could do was listed out for me in a clear, easy to comprehend way. I had three main options available to me: -Dungeon

-Minions

-Dungeon Point Catalog

Everything was written in nice and easy Japanese for me.

...Wait. Or is this what that god meant when he said he'd help me understand the language? Yeah, that must be it. Dungeon Point Catalog... Looks like I can use that DP Rokuko was talking about earlier to do things here.

"...Mgggh! Ngggh!"

Oh wow, she's glaring at me pretty hard. Hahaha, you aren't scary at aaaall. You're actually pretty cute when you can't talk. I'll give her head a little rub. Oh, that just made her more angry. She's screaming, but no words are coming out. Fantastic.

"Alright, you can talk again."

"Trash! Idiot! Ah, f-finally, I can talk again! What did you do to me, you piece of walking garbage?!"

"Uh-huh. I'm afraid to say that the only idiot here is you, Rokuko. It seems like you accidentally made me your master... or in other words, your Dungeon Master."

"Undo that!"

"Why?"

"B-Because! I'm! I'm the most important person here! Obey me! OBEY!"

The blonde girl glared at me, cheeks flushed red and eyes brimming with tears.

But now I know for sure. This girl's an idiot.

"Don't call me an idiot!"

"Oh, did I say that out loud? But seriously. Think about it... Why did you summon me?"

"Well, to make you a monster in my dungeon."

"In other words, if I obey you, I'll be forced to fight as a dungeon monster under your command. I'd live or die by the orders you give me. Actually, I'm pretty confident that any order you'd give me would just lead to me dying. So, I'm not gonna give up my power over you. No way. I love sleeping, but I'm a bit young to start sleeping for eternity, if you catch my drift."

"W-Well, that's just how dungeon monsters work... And you look pretty weak, so..."

Looks like we're finally on the same page. Though she's not too happy about it.

"I said this earlier, but you can call me Keima."

"Mhm. Okay, Keima... Ngh! I can't resist you...!"

"Anyway. I'm gonna check out the dungeon real fast. I'd like my sleeping arrangements to be nice and safe, after all." I selected "Dungeon" from the menu. Just touching it worked fine, but I imagine it would have responded to voice commands as well.

Okay, let's check out this dungeon map. She was saying something about bandits, so...

* * *

"So, it looks to me that the Dungeon Core is right in the middle of the room filled with invading bandits."

"It looks that way to me too."

"...Why?"

“Eh? Don’t you know that the Dungeon Core won’t work unless it’s placed inside of the dungeon? That’s just common sense.” I was starting to get a headache.

Dungeon Cores don’t work unless they’re placed inside of a dungeon. This dungeon only had one room. So, the Dungeon Core was placed inside of that room. And there were eight bandits inside that very same room.

This dungeon’s already completely friggin’ screwed.

It was a complete checkmate.

Why did she let things get this bad...?

“This is why I used all the DP I had to summon a monster that could beat all those bandits. But what I got instead was you, Keima. This must be some mistake... I wonder if I can trade you for something stronger...”

“Yeah, that sounds good to me too. Can I go home?”

“No. That’s impossible. Well, it’s not completely impossible, since it was possible for you to be summoned here, but there’s no way we have enough DP for that. Anyway, hurry up and get rid of those bandits. Like, do you actually have an awesome secret skill that could slaughter all those bandits in seconds... or something?”

“Nope. I’m just some guy, who’s as weak as he looks...”

To be honest, I think the smartest move here would be abandoning this dungeon. And if possible, setting up shop somewhere else.

“By the way... What’ll happen to me, the Dungeon Master, if the Dungeon Core gets destroyed?”

“Well, obviously, you’ll die. The Master and the Core are connected, they live and die together.”

Holy crap, I’m gonna die. I’m completely done for. Oh god.

“Don’t worry, it’s okay. The Core will be fine even if the Master dies.”

“What’s okay about that?! And weren’t you just talking about us living and dying together?!”

“Aaah, yeah... Really, don’t worry. You’re not going to die yet.”

After hearing that, I realized that I wasn’t dead yet despite how it had been several minutes since I first saw that the Core was surrounded. I glanced at Rokuko and saw that she was looking at me with an irritated expression that said, “Hmph, why are you getting so worked up over nothing?”.

How about I tickle your feet until you pee yourself, huh? Huh?

“...What’s going on?”

“Well, about that. It’s been three days since these bandits invaded my dungeon, but they haven’t tried to destroy its core at all.”

“...Wha?”

“Look, you can use the Dungeon Menu to look into the dungeon and monitor it directly.”

As advised, I opened a monitor through the Dungeon Menu. A new window appeared from thin air before me, displaying what looked like video footage from a security camera placed inside of the dungeon. The bandits were all sleeping around the Dungeon Core.

Two of them seem to be awake and keeping guard, but... Alright. They don’t seem like they’re about to attack the Core.

By the way, the Core was about the size of a basketball and was glowing much like the walls and floor of the room I was in.

“...See? I don’t really know what’s going on, but we’re safe for now. Plus, I get more DP when intruders are in the dungeon, so it works out.”

How long are we gonna be safe like that, though? Wait. I don’t even need to ask her that. She used all her DP to summon a monster specifically because she knows this isn’t safe or good. But for now, it does indeed look like we won’t be dying anytime soon.

“...Alright. By the way, how do you get more DP?”

“Ummm, so.”

To summarize what Rokuko said:

1) Absorb it from the surrounding ground. (This tends to be about 10 DP a day) 2) Allow time to pass while an intruder is inside of the dungeon. (Varies depending on the strength of the intruder) 3) Kill an intruder. (Varies depending on the strength of the intruder) 4) Offer up a corpse. (Varies depending on the former strength of whoever died) 5) Offer up treasure. (Varies depending on the treasure)

Those were the main ways.

By the way, it would cost about 20 DP to summon one goblin. Under normal circumstances she would be able to summon one goblin every two days, but the eight bandits sleeping in the dungeon boosted her DP gain by an additional 80 DP each day (and apparently that number would increase if they stayed inside the dungeon for longer). So, using the 900 DP she saved up through ten days of being inhabited by bandits, in addition to 100 DP she had stashed away for a rainy day, Rokuko had pooled all of her 1000 DP into rolling a single Monster Gacha.

Yeah. I can understand why she would expect something as strong as fifty goblins after spending fifty goblins' worth of DP on something. But sometimes, you gamble and you lose.

And wait a second, I'm what she got out of a gacha roll? Seriously? Well, the automatic translator that god gave me may just be translating something else into gacha, but still. I'm feeling preeetty conflicted right now. How rare am I?

As an aside, there were multiple ranks to the Monster Gacha. A 100 DP rank, a 1,000 DP rank, a 10,000 DP rank... and so on and so on. It goes up a degree each time, without ever reaching an upper limit. In other words, the gacha that I came from was second from the bottom. Apparently, there have been cases where a 100,000 DP gacha pulled a goblin and a 1,000 DP gacha pulled a dragon. The chances for a rare may go up the more DP you spend, but it all still relied on luck.

"So, why aren't you a dragon?!"

"I mean, it wouldn't be surprising if you had rolled a goblin. You're being too greedy."

Rokoku was just way too egotistical. Did she think she was the center of the

universe or something? Bad things happen to everyone, you can't expect everything to go well for you. You might even end up being summoned to another world and forced to work against your will even though you just want to sleep.

"Oh, I forgot to mention. Right now, the 10 DP from the ground doesn't count."

"Huh? Why not?" Rokuko's explanation about DP hadn't mentioned anything about intruders getting in the way of drawing DP from the ground.

"Well, it costs some DP for me to maintain this form."

Speaking of which, Rokuko had mentioned that she was the avatar of the Dungeon Core or something like that. *...Does that mean she could save us some DP by vanishing?*

"Eh? No, you're misunderstanding something. This is just a special form I use when I want to look fancy. I didn't want the monster I summoned to look down on me."

"In other words, that's just a temporary form... Oh, can you go back to your normal form, then? You're wasting DP."

"Eh? It's not 'temporary' or anything, but okay. One second... Nnn!"

Rokuko flashed brightly, and then where she once stood was a blonde loli that looked just like a younger Rokuko. She was wearing a white dress and would only reach my waist even if she stood on her tippy-toes. She looked so small and cute a lolicon would be drooling at the sight of her. Even her childishly spoiled gaze just made me smile as if I were looking at a rowdy kid.



“So, what do you think? This is the low-energy form I use to save DP.”

“Oh, that’s your low-energy form, huh... You look pretty young.”

“Hm? Well, I guess I do look like a child from a human’s perspective. What, do you like this body more?”

I’m not a lolicon, so I think she looked hotter before. I still love her toes even though they’re smaller, but I’m not perverted enough to lay my hands on someone that looks like a little girl.

“So, now we’re getting 10 DP again, yeah?”

“Uh-huh. 10 DP a day.”

“...And we have 9 DP total right now.”

She must have waited until the very moment she had 1,000 DP to roll the gacha, given how basically no DP was left over. I scrolled through the DP Catalog, but found that you couldn’t even summon a goblin with 9 DP. *How about a dragon? Lady, even the weakest dragon there, a Lesser Dragon, costs 100,000 DP. Hahah! Whoever thought they could get an expensive monster like that for 1,000 DP sure is an idiot.* I searched the Household Goods page and discovered that I could buy lots of things even with just 9 DP.

“Alright, I’ve decided.”

“On what, Keima?”

I exchanged 5 DP for a [Buckwheat Pillow].

“I’m going to bed.”

“Eh?! Hold on! What about the bandits?!”

“Be quiet while I’m sleeping. Night.”

Yep. DP sure is useful. Now just need to save up 50 DP so I can buy a [Futon]. I’ve also got my eye on that 10,000 DP [Heavenly Pillow] and that 100,000 DP [First-Rate Futon]. I rolled onto my side and closed my eyes, listening as Rokuko’s noisy cries slowly faded into silence.

Day 2

I stood up after waking up and stretched my stiff muscles. The floor was pretty warm, not cold at all, but it was also hard and constantly glowing. Not exactly the best place to get a good night's sleep. I had been hoping that I might find myself back in my room after waking up, but had no such luck. I glanced to the side and... saw Rokuko glaring at me.

"Grr! Y-You're finally awake, Keima!"

"Yo, Rokuko. How long was I asleep?"

"As if I know! You slept for nine hours! Aaah, my mouth said that on its own..."

I didn't know if time moved at the same speed as it did on Earth, but I decided to just roll with it and assume I had indeed slept for nine hours.

I checked our DP and saw that our 4 DP had turned into 34 DP. *...I guess the bandits' DP trickles in over time. The bandits probably aren't all as strong as each other, either, so I should just give up on making precise estimations of DP gain.*

"What time is it right now?"

"It's eight in the morning! By the way, one day has twenty-four hours in it! Wait! Aaah, why am I answering yooou?!"

"Thanks, much appreciated. By the way, end every sentence you say with 'meow.'"

"Don't mess with meow!"

Each day consisted of twenty-four hours. As an aside, each year seemed to consist of twelve months, or three hundred sixty-five days. *Basically the same thing as Earth. Perfect, I won't have any trouble remembering that.*

Just for peace of mind, I investigated how much weight my orders held and learned that Rokuko's body would execute them on its own. *I'm in another world and there's a girl who has to listen to everything I say... If I weren't a gentleman dedicated to sleep, there would be some adult-only things happening right now.* I canceled the "meow" order and decided to double-check the

situation.

“What’s going on with the bandits?”

“They just woke up and went outside. One stayed behind to stand guard.”

“Hm...”

“So, let’s summon a goblin or something! DP Summoning! Goblin!”

“What?” While I was in the middle of being stunned, a faintly glowing circle appeared on the ground. It then flashed brightly, and before I knew it, there was a small, ugly-looking person with green skin standing where the circle used to be. *...The same thing probably happened when I got summoned.*

“Okay!”

“Not okay!”

“Owie?!”

I thumped Rokuko on the head. I checked our DP and saw that we only had 14 DP left. 20 DP was gone, just like that.

“Wh-Why’d you do that?! Getting hit like that hurts! What’ll you do if you break me?!”

“Don’t just up and use DP on your own like that, idiot!”

“Whaaat? It’s *my* DP, I can do whatever I want with it.” *Okay, yeah. She’s an idiot.*

I grabbed onto Rokuko’s head and forced her to look me in the eyes.

“It’s not your DP anymore. It’s my DP. If you reaaally wanna use it for something, get my permission first. You don’t wanna die, right?”

“Wh-What, are you threatening me?! But if I die, you’ll die too!”

“That’s right. If the Dungeon Core gets destroyed, I’ll die too. That’s why I’m telling you not to do anything on your own!” After hearing me say that in a forceful tone, Rokuko trembled in surprise with tears forming in her eyes.

“Ngh... Y-You’re right. Sorry. But what else are we supposed to do?”

“That depends. Tell me more about this place first. And... can we return this

goblin?”

“Nope. Ah, but if it dies inside of the dungeon, we get 2 DP.”

“Only a tenth...? Alright. We’ll keep him around for now.”

I ordered the goblin to wait in a corner for now. *Sheesh... This room really is big. That corner’s really far away. Though, I guess it has to be if we can summon things like dragons in here.*

“Ummm, okay. So, we’re right by Tsia Mountain... By the way, this dungeon’s name is [Ordinary Cave]! I heard an adventurer say that.”

Seriously? They’re not even thinking of this place as a dungeon. C’mon. Or so I thought, but apparently some dungeons just have names like that. Confusing.

Well, maybe things would be different if there were some rooms with brick floors or something, but yeah, right now this place just looks like an ordinary cave.

“What’s an adventurer?”

“Apparently, humans made something called the Adventurer’s Guild. I wonder what makes it different from the Knight’s Order. I don’t really know the details.”

Guess there’s a knight’s order too. I can guess that the difference between them is like the difference between a private organization and a public peace-keeping organization.

Wait... If that’s all Rokuko knows, doesn’t that mean I know more than her already? I mean, I’m just assuming, but still.

“Are there any human settlements nearby? Show me a map if you have one.”

“You can look at one through the menu. I think it was somewhere in the Dungeon Menu.”

I don’t remember an option like that. I went ahead and double-checked the Menu. There I found an option called “Surrounding Area Information,” and further within that, “Map.” Apparently there was a major road just down the mountain. The bandits were probably raiding it.

I fiddled with zooming in on the map to try and learn more about the lay of the land. But... basically all I could see was the immediate area surrounding this mountain. There was Tsia Mountain, a single large town nearby, and an ocean beyond the mountain. Oh yeah, and there were also a few small villages scattered about.

By the way, the map was very vague. Not really detailed at all. I really wished it would give more information, like distance or something. Better than nothing, though. Apparently it was the kind of map people use in this world, so yeah.

“Heeey, won’t you kill that bandit for me? We would get lots of DP if you kill him. Mmm, it feels like he would be worth about 200 DP.”

That may sound nice, but he would be worth just as much if he stuck around the dungeon for ten full days.

“Nah, we’re not going to attack the bandits yet.”

“Why not? He’s all alone. We could take him down if we had... around ten goblins.”

“You’d spend 200 DP to earn 200 DP...? And we don’t even have enough DP to summon that many, anyway.” *But seriously. Goblins are as weak as they look, huh? Ten goblins to take down one bandit. Dang.*

“We’re gonna keep saving DP for now. Don’t waste any of it. We’ll be better off saving a ton and using it all at once, and right now, we’re better off not agitating the bandits. What’ll you do if we send out goblins and they decide to destroy the Dungeon Core to stop that from happening again?”

“...Ah! I didn’t think about that at all. You sure are smart, Keima!”

“Nah, you’re just an idiot. And now that you know that, listen to everything I say. Got it?”

“O-Okay. I will.” Rokuko nodded obediently.

I guess in her energy-saving form, both her body and her mind are that of a kid’s. ...Nah, she was always like that. She’s a ditzy airhead through and through. But I knew she wouldn’t try to do anything on her own after I ordered her not to. She was being forced to obey my orders whether she wanted to or

not, after all.

Anyway, I should check out what else I can do in this menu.

"...Uhhh, Construct? Let's see how much it takes to build a room... It depends on the size, but a simple small room with bare rock floors and stuff only costs about 200 DP. The size of hallways connecting rooms determines what kind of traps can be used in them, too."

"That's right! Adding rooms is a total waste of DP, it would be way better to just summon more monsters instead. That's why I've never used the Construct Menu before."

"Looks like I can use DP to get treasure and place it in the dungeon, too. Aaah, I see. Pillows and stuff are considered treasure too. Household Goods-tier treasure."

"That's true, but what's the point in doing that? If you have DP to spare for treasure, you should be using it to summon monsters that can kill the intruders... hey, what are you looking at me like that for? Gross, stop staring at me."

Whoops, my bad. I was giving her the kind of warm look a parent gives their idiot kid after they say something dumb.

"...But y'know, when I think about dungeons, it's not monsters that come to mind. It's traps and treasure."

"Really? The other Cores I know never say anything like that."

"Oh yeah. You said you were Dungeon Core Number 695 or something like that. Does that mean there are at least 694 other dungeons?"

"There's a lot of Cores that have gotten dest... that have died, so there's less than that. The Dungeon Core is our heart, after all. When it gets destroyed, we die."

"You're a pretty risky girl, letting your heart be defenseless in the only room of your dungeon."

"But the other Cores always say it doesn't matter how many rooms you have!"

The blonde loli puffs up her nonexistent chest in pride. *I wanna rub it. I wanna rub that washboard chest.*

“Wait. How are you contacting those other cores?”

“Ummm... We have gatherings. I couldn’t go this time due to all the intruders, but... it happens once a year. It’s kind of like a party. We talk about a lot of important things there.”

“Oh, so that’s where you learned all the stuff you’ve been bringing up?”

“Mhm. Dungeon Core Number 89 told me everything I know. She’s my big sister. Core 89 is a human-type dungeon just like me, but her dungeon is right in the middle of a capital city! She’s amazing! Her core number is only two digits and she ranks in the top ten for having the most DP! She takes really good care of me.”

Yeah, this girl’s definitely getting tricked.

“By the way, Core 89 has pulled a dragon from a 1000 DP gacha before.”

“Wooow. I’m mainly interested in those rankings you mentioned, and that capital, but eeeh... I’ll ask about those later. We’ve gotta take care of the danger in front of us first.”

“That’s true. We need to get rid of these bandits.”

All of a sudden, my stomach grumbled. *...Oh yeah. I haven’t eaten anything since yesterday.*

“Alright, time to eat. Got any food?”

“Eh? Ah, right. Monsters need to eat food, riiight. I don’t need to eat anything, so I totally forgot about that.” *Guess she’s still gonna treat me like a monster. Rude.*

By the way, up until this point, Rokuko would use all the DP she had to summon goblins whenever intruders came. Adventurers would come once or twice a month, massacre the goblins, and then go home after butchering their corpses.

I flipped through the DP Catalog for food. There were lots of things there, but I went ahead and spent 5 DP to buy bread and water. A magic circle appeared

with a flash, and soon enough, darkish bread and a wood cup appeared above it. After splitting half of it with the quietly sitting goblin, we ate together like pals. The bread... was really, really hard. I felt as if it were just sitting in clumps in my stomach, but I was tired enough to just go back to sleep right away.

Day 3

Two days had passed since I was summoned. *Looks like we've got 179 DP now... wait, no. It just went up to 180. I could summon nine whole goblins with this much.*

As an aside, I had figured out why the bandits hadn't destroyed the Dungeon Core. They were using it in place of a foot warmer. The Dungeon Core glowed faintly and was just a little warm. The boss of the bandits had built his bed in the Core room and was putting his feet on it as he slept. I learned that we could look directly out of the Master Room, but after trying it out, an entire wall turned into a closeup of a dirty foot. Naturally, it was terrible. *Hello, Miss Dungeon Core. How does it feel to have your heart getting stepped on?*

"W-Well... I'm earning a lot of DP thanks to them being here, so... This is like, a win-win, you know? Hmph!"

Our lovable blonde loli had gotten teary-eyed after realizing that her heart was being trampled by stinky-looking feet. *Honestly, she gets cuter the more time I spend with her.*

I spent some more time investigating the menu and learned that I could look into the dungeon from basically any angle I wanted by using the existing walls and ceilings. I could peer into the dungeon from the ceilings of the hallways, the floors of the rooms, and basically any wall. By the way, Rokuko hadn't known about that. Not surprising. There's not much need for advanced reconnaissance when your dungeon only has one room.

"Alright. Guess I should finally start doing something..."

"You'll summon something, right? You'll summon a lot of goblins and kill them all, right?! Ah, buying a lizard man for 150 DP might be smart! I won't

forgive that bandit boss, let's stab him to death!"

"Idiot. They'll just kill us in revenge if we try that. Look at how many of them there are."

As expected, she felt humiliated over having her heart used as a simple foot warmer. She was practically barking like a dog and growling at the bandits' boss. Though given how cute her appearance was in energy-saving mode, she was more like a puppy than anything.

"There's eight of them. We're way too weak to take them on. And if you hadn't summoned that first goblin, we wouldn't need to waste so much DP on food."

"Mmm, the maintenance cost. I had never thought of that before... Wait! Didn't you waste a bunch of DP on that [Futon] or whatever?!" *Don't be ridiculous. That [Futon (50 DP)] was an absolutely necessary expense.*

"So, what are you going to do?"

"I've got a plan, but... Hey, Rokuko, do you know how to write words? And do you think those bandits can read?"

"Writing? Uh-huh, I can write. I saw those bandits reading a book they stole from someone before, so... they can definitely read simple things."

"Sweet. Then listen closely and write the things I tell you to."

"Okaaay."

Bandit's Perspective

"Boooss! Wake uuup!"

"Ngggh...?"

The boss of the bandits woke up in the cave and saw a chest in front of him. *Was this thing here yesterday? Nah, no way. I woulda saw it before sleepin'.*

"The hell is this thing? Where'd it come from?"

"We dunno, boss. Rodrige was on guard and he said nobody brought it inside

or nothin'."

"So what yer saying is... It just poofed and appeared in the middle of this cave like magic?"

"Er... I guess so?"

The bandit boss investigated the chest, but didn't find any traps inside of it. He opened it carefully and saw that an iron helmet was resting inside. It was a high-quality helmet, and it looked new too.

"Heh, this thing is pretty nice. We could sell it for a lot of money. Or we could use it, either way."

"Boss, there's somethin' written on the bottom of the chest."

"Eh? The hell? ...Letters? Hey, Brakin! You can read, right? Read this!"

"You got it, boss! Leeet's see..."

The boss showed the chest to a subordinate and made him read it. The contents of the message were unbelievable. "I am the Dungeon Core. Thank you for defeating those goblins. This is a present from me. It may take some time, but if you bring me corpses, I can give you more presents."

"Dungeon Core...? Hey, are we in a fucking dungeon?"

"I dunno, I heard this place was just an ordinary cave."

"Ah! Wait a second, boss! I used to be an adventurer, and I remember hearing about a dungeon called [Ordinary Cave]!"

"Really, Johnny?!" The boss of the bandits was stunned.

There was a glowing stone sticking out of the ground that was perfect for warming feet. He just realized that might, in fact, be a Dungeon Core.

He had never heard of anyone talking to dungeons before, but right in front of him was a letter (in a box) from a dungeon. It might just have been a trick, but the guard didn't see anyone coming in, and the helmet was too pristine for any of the bandits to have gotten a hold of themselves. Not to mention, the letter suggested that the helmet was a reward for them defeating goblins. That was probably referring to the goblins near the cave that he slaughtered after first

going there. Five goblins posed no threat whatsoever to the boss of the bandits. And yet killing weaklings like them was enough to earn a fancy steel helmet.

“Woah now, seriously? Looks like luck’s finally on my side...!”

Dungeons were very famous. One dungeon, known as the [Ivory Labyrinth], was located in the middle of the capital. Rather, the capital had been built around that dungeon in the first place. There were monsters in the dungeon, but there were also valuable treasures to be found, like gold and enchanted armor. And this [Ordinary Cave] was a dungeon. But the boss hadn’t seen any monsters inside of it. At worst, there were those five goblins, but nothing more. But he had seen treasure. The steel helmet.

“Seems like this dungeon has taken a liking to me,” the boss of the bandits said with a grin.

Those who earn the favor of dungeons are rewarded with treasure... In other words, they obtain infinite wealth. Speaking of which, the letter had mentioned that they would be rewarded again if they offered up more corpses. The goblin corpses had vanished while he wasn’t looking. He had thought that one of his subordinates had taken care of them, but... In truth, the dungeon had likely absorbed them. A single glance confirmed that the treasure chest had vanished as well.

Keima’s Perspective

“GAAAAAAH! Why?! Why did you make me thank them?!” The blonde loli stomped around in a circle.

I can see your white panties, y’know. Absolutely shameful.

Though, I definitely understood why she was so upset. After all, I had spent every last DP we had giving that “present” to the bandits’ boss. To be specific, I had spent 5 DP on a [Pen and Ink], 5 DP on a [Treasure Chest], and 170 DP on a [High Quality Steel Helmet]. We now had absolutely no DP left. 0 DP. Zilch.

“Why?! It would have been way, way better for us to spend all that DP on goblins!”

“And then die after the bandits came swinging at us? Hahaha, sorry, but I don’t wanna die yet. I just want to sleep.”

“B-But still...! That was just...! Grr, you traitor!”

“Calm down. That gift just bought us some valuable time. I’ll kill them all soon enough, trust me.”

“Eh?” Rokuko blinked in surprise, as if she hadn’t expected me to say something like “I’ll kill them all.”

“But why? Didn’t you give them that gift because you’re a human and want to help them out?”

“What? No. I just want my sleeping arrangements to be safe. And that’s not gonna happen with dangerous guys like them hanging around.”

“Eeeh... Th-Then, well, don’t you feel bad about killing members of your own species?”

“Nope. I just wanna sleep. And it’s not like I’m gonna be doing anything to them myself, so... Ah, right. I don’t have anything else to do today, so I can just go ahead and sleep. Sweet. Night night.” I got into my futon and rolled onto my side.

“H-H-Hey! Wait, hold on! Explain what’s going on!”

“Alright, alright. I’ll explain everything... Tomorrow. Sleep tight!”

“D-DON’T GO TO SLEEEEP!” Rokuko’s voice faded out as I fell asleep.

Looks like that order I gave her yesterday is still working. Good night.

Day 4

“Aaah, I slept pretty well... not. Again. I really want a better futon...”

“Good morning. You really slept for the whole day... Don’t you get tired of doing that?”

“Not at all.”

“So, now that you’re awake, explain what’s going on... but first, look at the DP. What’s going on?”

I opened the menu to check our DP and saw that we now had 867 DP.

“Huh? Oh wow, it shot way up. Not quite as much as I was hoping for, but this will do.”

“Are you saying you knew this would happen?”

“Huh? Uhh, basically, but let me ask you this first. Did something happen?”

“...Some adventurers attacked.”

According to Rokuko, a bandit standing guard noticed that adventurers were on their way to the cave, so all the bandits hid in the main room out of sight from the entrance corridor before launching a surprise attack. They then defeated the four adventurers without a single scratch on any of them.

“So, after that, the bandits looted the adventurers’ corpses and offered up their corpses to me. They even went out of their way to push them against the Dungeon Core. I could do that on my own if they just left the corpses lying around in the dungeon, though. They figured that out after I went out of my way to absorb the corpses they weren’t pushing against me, I think.”

“They killed them inside of the dungeon, huh? I guess those bandits are smarter than you, Rokuko.”

“What do you mean by that?!” *I mean what I said.*

After hearing that, Rokuko’s smile became a peeved frown, cheeks puffing out. It looked less like she was angry and more like she was pouting.

“But how did you know that the adventurers were coming?”

“Seriously...? Didn’t you say yourself that adventurers come here once or twice a month?”

“Aaah... Now that you mention it, I did say that.”

This dungeon was probably being used as a training grounds for newbies where they could safely mop up weak goblins and get battle experience. The fact that nobody had destroyed the Core yet strongly implied that it was being

protected by some sort of rule. The Guild was basically saying “go get a look at a real Dungeon Core,” and that was that.

But think about it. Could rookie adventurers challenging a dungeon like this [Ordinary Cave] beat eight bandits? The answer was as you heard. No way would the bandits lose against rookies who had come here expecting five or six goblins. They couldn’t lose, so they attacked them. They stole from them. They killed them. Naturally. They are bandits, after all.

“So, what does all this have to do with the helmet and letter you sent them yesterday?”

“Bandits are greedy. If we act friendly and give them expensive-looking gifts, they’ll be nice and cooperative with us. Basically, the bandits are going to stay in this cave now that they know they’ll be rewarded for doing so... which in turn will net us DP as they kill adventurers.”

Unless they had some major fetishes, they wouldn’t bring corpses into the cave where they slept. But by showing them that we could make corpses disappear... they’d realize that the best way to get rid of evidence was to offer the corpses up to us, rather than leaving them around where somebody might find them. And they’d get treasure for it too. Why wouldn’t they bring corpses to us?

Plus, under normal circumstances, the bandits would abandon this [Ordinary Cave] if the adventurers ever figured out that they were held up here. It just wouldn’t be safe. Put all that together and the bandits would feel compelled to slaughter all adventurers for three reasons: To stay in the cave, for treasure, and just because it was their job anyway. The fact they chose to ambush the adventurers inside of the cave was just a nice bonus. Though, in the long-term, the best thing really would be to just run away without fighting... but they didn’t seem to realize that.

I’m glad they’re a bunch of idiots.

“...But Keima, wouldn’t you prefer it if the bandits left?”

“No, I wouldn’t. I can’t kill them all if they run away, right? There’s a bunch of DP right there waiting for us, I don’t want to waste it. I’m gonna squeeze every last bit of value from them that I can.”

“...Wow. You called them DP even though you’re a human too. Keima, I’m starting to respect you a little bit. You monster.”

“Thanks. Now, I’m gonna go back to sleep. Night night.”

“You’re going back to sleep even though you just woke up...?” *What an idiot. You can obviously only go back to sleep right after waking up. It’s a precious opportunity.*

However. Hooowever.

I don’t feel bad at all that adventurers died because of my plan. Though, to be fair, the bandits killed them while I was sleeping, and I didn’t even see their corpses. I wonder if I’ll have to start killing people myself at some point. How will I feel then? ...Eh, whatever. Like it or not, I’m a Dungeon Master now. That’s who I am and there’s no going back.

I went back to sleep and had a peaceful rest without having a single nightmare.

Our DP went up a little. The bandits might have gotten stronger from killing the adventurers, which in turn might have increased how much DP we got from them hanging around.

“Alright, we’re gonna add a room. We have enough ink to write another letter on a treasure chest, right?”

“Eh? Oh, right. We do. But are you really going to waste DP on a room? We have so much...” Rokuko said that while flipping through the DP Catalog and looking at all the monsters we could summon for 800 DP.

Ha ha ha! Will this blonde loli never learn?

“Alright, here I go... Huh, it says that we can place items wherever we want, but since intruders are on this floor, we can’t build any new rooms. Any monsters we summon will have to come out of the Dungeon Core, too. Oh well. We’ll just have to get the bandits outside. Write down what I say again. ...It shouldn’t be a problem if we just tell them the truth this time.”

“Okaaay, I’ll write whatever you want. I just need to write it on the bottom of the chest again, right?” After I used DP to summon another chest, Rokuko

scrawled another letter on the bottom of it.

Bandit’s Perspective

“Boooss! Another chest appeared!”

“Oooh! Outta the way, I’ve been waitin’ for this!” The boss of the bandits opened the chest that had basically grown out of the floor in front of him. Inside was... something that made him tilt his head in confusion.

“...A pillow? It looks pretty high quality, but... it’s not a magic tool or anything.”

The bandit boss wondered why five goblins got him a nice steel helmet, but four adventurers only got him a silly pillow. Did quantity matter over quality? Either way, his train of thought derailed after he noticed the letter on the bottom of the chest.

“You really saved me there! You’re really strong! Thanks for the corpses! You killed them inside of the dungeon, so I can give you your present faster. I’ll make some extra rooms for you. It’ll be dangerous for you if you stay inside, so go outside with everyone. Get really far away, okay?”

Everything made more sense. The boss had been thinking to himself that the cave was a bit cramped for eight whole people. And so, he took everyone and went outside. As soon as they were a fair distance away, the grinding sound of moving rocks reverberated out of the cave.

It took about ten minutes. They returned to the cave after the sounds stopped and saw that there was a new room on either side of the original room, separated by wooden doors. The boss panicked for a second after seeing that the Dungeon Core was missing, but he soon found it on the wall of the rightmost room.

The two new rooms looked exactly the same as the first room, but the addition of wooden doors suddenly made the cave feel a lot more like a hideout. They couldn’t believe that so much space had been added in only ten minutes. It would have taken at least a month for people to mine out two rooms of that size. Unless a trained magician helped out, that is, which would speed things up to about ten minutes as well.

Three rooms, lined up horizontally. Adding two rooms was all it took to triple the cave’s total space. And there was a bed in the rightmost room. Now the inclusion of the pillow in the treasure chest made sense.

What, the dungeon made all this for me? What a nice little cutie. The bandit boss murmured to himself.

Keima’s Perspective

“...God! Why, WHY did you make me spend 480 whole DP on that guy...!”

“Woah, now. 10 DP for the [Treasure Chest] and [Pillow], 20 DP for the two [Wooden Doors], and 50 DP for the [Simple Bed]... We only spent 80 DP on him.”

“Whaaat? It cost 200 DP each to add those rooms, didn’t it?”

“Don’t be stupid. Unlike that steel helmet, they can’t take those rooms from the dungeon and sell them. They’re permanently ours.”

Rokuko tilted her head with a confused expression on her face, not understanding what I had meant.

You know, she is a Dungeon Core from a fantasy world. She might actually be as young as she looks. She can change her appearance whenever she wants, after all. ...Actually, I bet this blonde loli is even younger than she looks right now. Definitely.

“We had to expand the dungeon at some point. Here, let me try and make this easy for you to understand... Say we can only place six goblins in one room. By adding two extra rooms, we can now place eighteen goblins in total.”

“Wow, what?! That’s amazing! Let’s add even more new rooms!”

Yeah, I’m pretty amazed that was all it took to convince you.

“...W-Wait a second! We have a big problem! All of our 870 DP is gone, completely gone!”

“Yeah, ’cause I used it all.”

“H-Huh?! On what?!”

“Take a look.” I showed her the dungeon map.

Using the camera, I went outside the dungeon and showed her that I had built another single-room cave elsewhere on the mountain and added a dirt path to connect it with the main body of the dungeon. The room had cost 200 DP and the five-meter-wide path had cost 30 DP. Since there was no need to move rock around outside, the path was pretty cheap despite ending up being almost a solid kilometer long. Though I had still ended up using every last bit of our DP.

“...Haaah. I never would have thought about expanding the dungeon from the outside. You sure have a looot of crazy ideas, Keima. But what are you going to do with that room? Wasn’t it a complete waste of DP?”

“Rejoice, my companion. This is a room made especially for goblins, just like you’ve always wanted.”

“Yaaay♪! ...Wait, did I want something like that?”

“Don’t you love goblins?”

She was always telling me to summon goblins this, summon goblins that. It took a bit, but it finally dawned on me. Rokuko loves goblins. She wants to be surrounded by goblins. She wants goblins to serve her. She wants to be queen of the goblins.

“...Um, I think you’re taking things the wrong way.”

“Don’t worry, I’m not going to make fun of you. Everyone has their own fetishes. My friend, I’ll fight by your side even if you do have a massive goblin fetish.”

“Hey, what do you mean by that?! What’s with that understanding look in your eyes?! You don’t understand anything!”

“By the way, I’m not a lolicon. I just love feet. The only thing I dig about your current body is your feet.”

“Hey, no, no! Seriously, what are you even saying?! And why do you look so condescending?!”

Anyway, there’s nothing left for us to do now that we’re out of DP. Time to go back to sleep for the third time.

I got back into my futon and listened to Rokuko’s voice fade out. *...How long is that order gonna last?*

Day 5

I’m awake again, but we still don’t have enough DP... Oh yeah. It might be a bit late for this, but I’ll go ahead and explain how I’m surviving in here. What I’m eating, how I’m using the bathroom, all that good stuff.

Food-wise, I was eating a [Bread and Water (5 DP)] set three times a day. By the way, the bread that came in that set wasn’t just hard rye bread. The menu was nice enough to allow me to pick between pastries and even bread prepared with other food items such as meat or vegetables. I would pick the bread with

as much food as possible and then split it with the goblin.

As for the bathroom, well, I was taking care of business in the corner of the room. Don't worry, I had set up a screen partition and got some toilet paper first. There was nothing else I could do, since I was stuck in the Master Room. If I tried leaving it, I would end up face to face with the bandits.

Thankfully, the Dungeon Core would suck up everything that came out of me, so we didn't have to worry about the smell or anything. Though Rokuko grimaced whenever she sucked up my poop.

"...How would you feel if someone pooped inside of your heart? Huh? Not good, right?"

"Hahaha, you're a girl, you shouldn't be saying 'poop.' What's your problem, anyway? The goblin is pooping inside of you too. Shouldn't a goblin fetishist like you be crying of happiness?"

"Hey, seriously, is that really what you think of me?! You know I'm an intelligent life form, right?!"

"Eeeh, uhhh... You're still kind of a mystery to me, honestly. Oh, but like I said before, I definitely love your feet. They're pale but nice and curvy. The definition of healthy feet. They're so hot that if you were in your other form, I would—"

"Oh geez! This Dungeon Master is scary!"

Despite all that, I hadn't showered at all since being summoned. Just when I was thinking about how my hair would probably start to stink soon, I looked at the goblin next to me. His face was as gruesome as ever, and his massive tusk-like fangs looked like they would really hurt if he bit you with them. His clothes? Nothing but a raggedy cloth wrapped around his waist. *He's a pretty wild guy.*

I would have thought that a wild guy like this would start stinking like a dog after few days of no washing, but he was still completely clean. Did he have some kind of secret I didn't know about? My questions were all answered by Rokuko.

"Oh, I've been using the Survival Magic {Purification} on him."

It was literally magic. *Right, right. This is a fantasy world.*

“Magic, huh? Well, that’s that, then. Would you mind casting it on me too?”

“Wha? You need {Purification} too?”

“...Oh, I see. You’re playing favorites with the goblin because you have a goblin fetish.”

“No! I just didn’t know that Dungeon Masters needed {Purification}! And anyway, do that yourself, sheesh!”

“Hey, now, why are you acting like I can use magic?”

“Eh? You can’t?”

Apparently, all humans were capable of using magic. Even the bandits had been using it when I wasn’t looking.

Wait, seriously? Do I just know nothing about nothing? Oh, wait. This is a fantasy world, obviously I don’t know much of anything. I wonder if I can use {Purification} too. I’ll try asking her how to use it.

“You just, like, build up your mana and cast {Purification}. That’s all.”

That didn’t help at all. What do you mean, build up my mana? What do you mean, just cast {Purification}? You’re like a cookbook that says to add “some salt” without listing grams or teaspoons or anything. C’mon, I’m a human from a world where magic doesn’t even exist. I’m as much of a beginner as you can possibly be.

“...Keima. You can use the Menu, can’t you? It’s basically the same thing as that.”

“Seriously? {Purification}... Oh wow, that actually worked.”

A fluffy, lemony sensation washed over my body from head to toe and purified it. *Now I can sleep as much as I want, completely clean.* I could cast {Purification} on myself right after waking up and go back to sleep immediately, feeling refreshed. I felt a little pleasantly tired, as if casting the spell had used up part of my MP or something. *This spell is perfect for sleeping. Fantastic.*

“By the way, you can cast simple Survival spells with just mana and some

mental effort, but you'll have to learn stronger spells through scrolls before you can use them."

"Scrolls...?"

"Uh-huh. You could teach yourself the spells by figuring them out from the ground up with logic, but that's not reasonable for most people. Only researchers really do that. So, normally you'll have to use scrolls to learn magic. Well, I've never used a scroll myself, but... Oh, maybe there are some in the DP Catalog?"

I checked the DP Catalog and saw that in the treasure section there were plenty of scrolls, like the [{Fireball} Scroll (500 DP)] or the [{Earth Barrier} Scroll (700 DP)]. Each spell belonged to an element, and the four main elements were Earth, Water, Wind, and Fire. There were also special elements known as Light, Darkness, and Space-Time. Spells were then classified even further beyond that, with each one either being a Bottom-Rank, Low-Rank, Mid-Rank, High-Rank, Special-Rank, King-Rank, or God-Rank spell. {Fireball}, for instance, was a Low-Rank Fire spell. And in the midst of all that, there was one Mid-Rank Earth spell that caught my eye. [{Create Golem} Scroll (10,000 DP)]

Veeery interesting. I might be able to use this spell to summon a servant that will obey my every command. Well, technically Rokuko is kind of like a servant that will obey my every command, but she's a girl... and she looks super young in her energy-saving form. I want something more like a robot to order around. I definitely want to get this scroll soon, but I dunno if I should get it or the equally expensive [Heavenly Pillow] first...

Day 7

In the end, we didn't do anything for two days after expanding the dungeon. The bandits seemed to have taken some time off too, judging by how about half of them had been hanging out in the dungeon drinking and sleeping for the past two days. I had thought that bandits spent all day every day plundering, but I guess not. Maybe they just don't work when their boss is away for a few days? Either way, I didn't mind. Them hanging around inside the dungeon meant we

got a little more DP each day.

When the boss of the bandits eventually came back, he had seven new thugs with him. I wondered where he got them and how strong they were... but judging from how much DP they were earning us, “thugs” was the right word for them. Each one of them earned us about 10-15 DP a day, so the seven of them combined boosted our daily profits by 70-105 DP. Not to mention, there was a young adventurer with them that they had probably kidnapped on the way back.

Yeah, too bad he’s not a girl, since he’s all tied up. That ball-gag especially would be pretty hot on a gi— My pervy thoughts were interrupted by the bandits suddenly stabbing the adventurer repeatedly with their swords. *Holy crap. These guys are scary.* I watched the dungeon absorb the blood flowing onto the floor in a daze, and soon enough the slaughter was over.

“Oooh! Wow, that earned us a lot of DP. Around 300 DP, just from that one guy.”

“...We can summon fifteen of those goblins you love so much with that.”

Aaah, right. That was a live sacrifice to us, the dungeon. That’s the kind of enthusiasm I like to see. I should reward them somehow...

And so, since they went out of their way to bring back a sacrifice, I decided to reward them with a [Sharp Iron Sword (150 DP)]. *530 DP left, huh? I really wanna save up more than that.*

“Hey, it looks like they wanted us to expand the rooms again.” I checked the dungeon monitor and saw the boss of the bandits looking at the iron sword and grumbling to himself. *Talk about ungrateful. I didn’t have to give you that sword, y’know?*

“Haaah. If they wanted more rooms, they really shoulda said that first. We’re not mind readers.”

“What are you going to do? Give them another room anyway?”

“I don’t want to use that much DP right now... Oh, I’ve got an idea.”

Bandit’s Perspective

I went to town and sold all the stuff I stole. Though, I didn’t actually go into town. I went to the slums built right up close to the wall surrounding the town.

Naturally, things ain’t so bad around here that a bandit like me can get into the actual town... without paying a bribe, that is. Oh, and if yer wonderin’ about the steel helmet that dungeon gave me, I decided not to sell it. Somethin’ good might happen if I treat the first gift it gave me real well.

Anyway. I got seven new lackeys from the slums. Town thugs, bandits like me, runaway slaves... They were all a bunch of lowlifes like that. We stumbled upon a bratty adventurer walking down the road himself, so we knocked him down and brought him back to the base. Heheh. Things really go to shit once you get too far away from town. Rookies shouldn’t be traveling near the mountains alone.

Once we got back, I went out of my way to kill the brat inside of the dungeon so it’ll give us another new room. The seven new guys couldn’t believe it when the corpse started to sink into the ground, heh. Better not tell anyone about this, punks, unless you wanna end up the same way.

“Boss, a treasure chest appeared!”

“Got it... wait, what? A sword?”

The only thing inside the chest was a sword. An iron sword. It’s much better than the sword I’ve been using. But I don’t want a new sword right now. I want a new room. Things’ll be tighter now that we’ve got seven new guys. Though, we managed before with a single room by having six people stay inside while two people went outside to stand guard, so we can manage now with three rooms... but it’ll still be tight. I want a new room as soon as possible.

Another chest appears while I’m in the middle of grumbling about that. “Huh? What’s the deal this time?” I open the chest and see a letter written on the bottom: “If you want me to make another room, dig some of it out yourself”... with three new pickaxes on top of it.

Keima's Perspective

I gave them some pickaxes so they could help dig out the room, but they just got mad.

But why? The less rock that's in the way, the less DP it costs to make a room, so them mining the walls a bit themselves would really help out.

"I dunno, I think it makes sense that they would get mad. I'd get mad too, you know?"

"Yeah, you're right. I guess I knew this would happen."

"You knew this would happen...? Keima, you gave them the pickaxes knowing they'd get mad?"

Weeeell, I was thinking that they'd work harder to bring sacrifices if they got mad at me for not giving them an extra room, but yeah.

Day 9

As always, there was nothing for me to do.

The bandits did eventually start mining the walls themselves, though they kept grumbling while doing so. They started off by throwing the excess rock and stone outside, but halfway through we started to absorb the stuff into the dungeon under the guise of accepting it as an offering. It didn't earn us even a single DP, but the bandits appreciated us helping out enough that they started working faster without complaining.

They really are simple guys. I guess at this rate we'll be able to make a small room in like ten days?

"Hm? It feels like people are coming." I glanced at Rokuko after she murmured that to me. "Bandits?"

"I don't think so. They're probably adventurers. I think the bandits just noticed them too. I guess they're gonna do another surprise attack?"

"Alright... They're almost definitely investigating this cave since those last

adventurers never came back." I didn't expect them so soon, but they presented a good opportunity. I decided to tell Rokuko about the rest of my plan to eliminate the bandits. *She won't try to do anything unnecessary if she knows what's really going on here.*

"Since they came all the way to investigate us, they're stronger than the last adventurers that came here. After all, it'd just be a waste of time if they sent some weaker people that ended up not coming back either." From the bandits' perspective, they couldn't let anyone see this completely changed [Ordinary Cave] and survive to tell the tale.

So, they'll have to kill all the adventurers. No survivors. And if those adventurers never return, another group will come to investigate. And of course, that group will be even stronger than the last one. I don't know how long it'll take, but at some point, the bandits will lose. And there you have it. That's the plan I have for slaughtering every single one of the bandits. Right now, my job is just making sure the bandits don't try to flee their hideout before it gets crushed. Huh? That's not a job? I'm just sleeping without actually doing anything? Hey, c'mon, that's not true at all.

The bandits were hunting for food, and they would offer up some of their prey to us (mainly the internal organs, bones, and other stuff that they couldn't eat themselves. It was all worth a little DP.) In return, I would send them treasure chests with letters on the bottom explaining how best to fight within the cave. Of course, since we would get more delicious DP whenever bandits or adventurers died inside the cave, we benefited the most from those battle plans.

See? I'm doing my part and working hard too. God! I don't want to work...! At least my job was pretty simple. I just had to reward the bandits whenever they offered up stuff to my dungeon.

"Oooh! That's amazing, Keima! I can't believe you thought of a plan that great!"

"Yep. By the way, the true purpose of that goblin room is to be a dummy [Ordinary Cave] when necessary. If worse comes to worst, we can move the Dungeon Core over there and pretend we never knew a thing about the

bandits.”

“Oh wow, really...? I totally thought that you had just forgotten that monsters can only come out of the Dungeon Core when its floor has intruders on it.”

Oh, I did forget about that. That goblin’s just been sitting cross-legged for the past week, so I was planning on letting him outside, but I guess that’s just not possible.

“Oh, the adventurers are almost here.”

“Right. May as well watch what happens.”

Bandit’s Perspective

“Boooss! Some adventurers are coming!”

“Alright, just as planned. We’re gonna take’m down.”

“Just as planned?”

“Yeah. The box that had the sword in it mentioned that adventurers would be coming soon, remember? The dungeon wants us to protect it.”

By the way, the boss of the bandits had studied for a while and learned how to read simple messages. Since the letters from the dungeon were intentionally being written in a simple manner, even he could read them. The boss of the bandits was feeling pretty smug about that, too. He bragged to his subordinates that he had gotten a lot smarter ever since he holed up in this dungeon. He even said that he might turn back into an idiot if he ever leaved it.

“...Alright. We’ll use the new guys. Tell’m I’ll make whoever kills the most my right-hand man.”

“Got it. What about us?”

“If the guys get slaughtered, we’ll finish off the weakened adventurers. That’ll be the end of it if everything works out.” The dungeon really had taught the boss a lot about warfare.

Use the new guys first and get ready to get rid of the weakest ones as soon

possible. That was just one of the lessons he had learned. Having a hideout where you could stash treasure and get shelter from the rain was everything to a bandit. It was status. It'd be dangerous if anyone ever discovered the hideout, but slaughtering everyone who finds it should take care of that... or at least, that was what the letter from the dungeon said, and thus that was what the boss of the bandits believed.

Two corners of the dungeon's first room were blind spots coming from the entrance hallway, making them the perfect spot to launch a surprise attack... though there was so little space, only about eight people could hide effectively. That's where the new guys would be camping out. Every other bandit hid in one of the two new rooms the dungeon had made for them. That way, they could rush out and provide support whenever necessary.

"Huh? I thought this was a one-room dungeon with the core right at the start." Those were the last words ever spoken by one of the three adventurers. New Guy A had swung down his sword at the adventurer who had popped his defenseless head out of the entrance hallway.

"Take thiiis!" His rusted, dull sword hit a weak spot on the adventurer's uncovered neck and snapped that part of his spine with a single blow.

Right, that guy's one of the thugs I picked up at the slums. I remember him being all smug and cocky. I told him to keep quiet until his first attack landed, but I guess that was too much for a thug who's never killed a man before.

But by chance, he had managed to kill one of the adventurers with his first swing. That could only be called the result of pure luck.

"Heh! Heheheh! Now I'm gonna be the boss's right-hand man!"

"Benny?! Tch, bandits! {Slash}!"

"Huh? Gah!"

The adventurer's... The swordsman's counterattack cut halfway through New Guy A's neck. That wound was severe enough that he would need High-Rank magic to survive... which basically meant he was already dead. He had landed a critical hit with a surprise attack on the first adventurer, and now he had been hit with more or less the same thing himself. The swordsman's weapon was a

sharp, well cared for sword... but what mattered more than anything else was his prowess, reflected by the skill he had used. New Guy A collapsed onto the ground.

Nobody made the dumb mistake of watching his corpse fall to the ground, but the adventurers still moved faster than any of the newbie bandits.

“Shit, he’s got a skill! We’ve gotta pile up on him! We’ll win through numbers... nghaaah!” The backmost adventurer launched an arrow that pierced the chest of New Guy B’s cracked leather armor and killed him instantly. He must not have expected to kill the bandit in a single blow, as a second arrow soon stabbed through his head.

He shot fast and he shot hard. His aim was good, too. He might have been using a bow combat skill, but either way, an archer can’t do anything in a close-quarters fight. The fact he stood his ground in the hallway was probably reflective of how little combat experience he had. Or perhaps he just didn’t want to run away and abandon his companion.

It was a brutal battle from that point on. Despite having lost one of their own, the adventurers fought well together. They were definitely stronger than the newbie bandits. That was obvious from the moment the adventurers first used a skill, but even so, they couldn’t win against numbers. The swordsman was surrounded and the archer was defeated after the bandits used a corpse as a shield to get close.

In the end, five of the cocky bandits had died trying to defeat the three adventurers. Out of the three newbies who had killed one of the adventurers, two had died from counter attacks, leaving only one alive. New Guy C, a former mercenary who had luckily managed to survive after killing an adventurer, was made the boss’s right-hand man as promised.

“We’re gonna be getting a lot of new members from now on. He can help me keep everything together. Let’s see... Only the criminal slaves and ex-mercenaries survived. Guess thugs are pretty worthless, huh? Now. That should be enough corpses to get us a new room, yeah? I’m counting on you, my lovely dungeon friend.”

And so, a treasure chest appeared. Inside was a letter saying “Good work! I’ll

add a new room, so please go outside.” As a nice bonus, the chest even had food inside of it. There was even a sweet-smelling kind of bread that the boss had never seen before. It smelled a lot like the incredibly expensive fruit known as “melons.”

...By chance, the boss had smelled a melon once before in his life. That event led to his fall from grace and descent into banditry... but there’s no point in talking about that.

The boss offered the bread to his new right-hand man to test for poison, and it ended up being so delicious that he said, “I’ve never tasted bread this sweet in my life! I swear I’ll serve you for the rest of my life, Boss!” while shoving it into his mouth. His expression was so much more sincere than the one he had when he first joined that the boss couldn’t help but shake his head, grinning.

Keima’s Perspective

The bandits killed the last adventurer. Really, the adventurers had been a lot dumber than I expected. If the first adventurer had put his guard up after noticing something was off about the dungeon, they might have survived the bandits’ surprise attack. Perhaps he just wasn’t taking our dungeon seriously, considering it was an [Ordinary Cave] and nothing more. He might have assumed that even if there was a surprise attack, it would be conducted by mere goblins. Maybe he knew that the roads had been getting more dangerous, and figured that a random cave would have nothing to do with that? ...He might have expected that the newbie adventurers from before had simply gotten lost and set up camp in our cave.

We’ll never know now, but that doesn’t really matter since they’re all dead now. They should’ve taken this place seriously the moment they heard about the last adventurers never coming back, but they didn’t. That’s their fault.

I glanced at the monitor and saw the exact moment that the archer was stabbed through the chest with a sword. *Eugh, I saw something I shouldn’t have again... Am I gonna have nightmares about this stuff?*

“Awww, so much DP! I’m starting to like these bandits a lot more than I used

to. They're not even stepping on the Dungeon Core anymore!"

"They're murderers and thieves, y'know."

Well, whatever. We got 1,900 DP from that battle, which increased our total to 2,951 DP. Some rough mental math lead me to conclude that the five bandits were worth about 1,000 DP together while the three adventurers were worth about 900 DP. *...We're gonna get less DP each day without those bandits hanging around, but I'd say that's a fair trade.*

"...Alright, I'll give them those rooms they want. They've been mining the leftmost wall of the left room, so I'll build two new rooms in that direction. I want a bend, so I'll make the third room to the right of the second new room. We can put the Core there for maximum safety... Oh, right. I'll give'm some food too. I wonder what'll happen if someone from this world eats a melon roll or something."

"Melon roll? What's that? I don't see anything like that in the DP Catalog."

"What're you talking about? It's right there. Though, I did just find it a second ago." I put one [Pastry Set (5 DP)], one [Fancy Bread Set (5 DP)], and one [Dried Meat and Vegetables Set (15 DP)] into a [Treasure Chest (5 DP)] with a letter on the bottom telling the bandits to go outside before sending it all into the dungeon. It took 630 DP to make those rooms, so we had 2,291 DP left over after all of that. *...Looks like we've still got a ways to go until we reach 10,000 DP.*

I checked up on the bandits and saw one of them devouring the melon roll with a blissful smile on his face. It was the guy who had stabbed the archer through the chest. He swore his loyalty to the bandit boss thanks to that bread. Talk about overkill.

"Holy cow, this tastes amazing! This [Melon Roll] is soooo good! Keima, did you used to eat things this tasty all the time?!"

So, after letting Rokuko try out some melon roll because she looked pretty curious about it, she started stuffing her face with it, eyes shining. *Wait, you eat bread? Wait, I mean, you can actually eat stuff? First time I'm seeing that.*

"Wh-What? It's not like I can't eat food or anything."

“...But you don’t need to, right?”

“I don’t, but it’s like... a treat. I’m treating myself. Um... Do you have any more?”

I mean, you know that a single one of these costs 5 DP, right? When it comes with a drink, anyway. You can get six of them at once with a [Pastry Set], so that’ll be the better deal. It’ll be cheaper to buy a drink from a 5 DP barrel, too... Wait a second. Buying in bulk is so cheap I feel like I was getting ripped off before... But I don’t remember seeing this [Pastry Set] in the DP menu before. What’s going on?

“Well, there’s a whole world of bread out there, but we need to save DP right now.”

“There’s more kinds of bread like this?! H-Hey, you don’t have to be so stingy. We have like 2,000 DP right now, don’t we? I-It’ll be okay if we just spend a little... just a little...!”

Oh man, she looks dead serious about this.

“You bought a bunch of useless things like that [Pillow] and [Futon], didn’t you?! Let me spend some on myself too!”

“Hey, you got to buy a goblin, didn’t you?”

“What?! G-Gobsuke has nothing to do with this! And he was just 20 DP! You’re using almost that much every day just to eat, aren’t you?!” *Gobsuke?! You named him?! I never heard about that!*

“Woah now. Don’t forget, I’m splitting half of my food with the goblin. If you include that, he’s already cost us way more than just 20 DP... And he’s not helping us out at all right now, so he’s basically your pet.”

“Th-That’s not true! Gobsuke has a lot of potential, he’ll be a big help to us! Right, Gobsuke?!” Gobsuke tilted his head in surprise, as if wondering why we had suddenly brought him into this. For some reason, despite how hideous his goblin face was with its squashed nose and giant teeth, he looked a lot like a dog. *...I wonder if he’ll eat dog food?*

“Well, anyway. I actually don’t mind if you spend a little on yourself, as long

as you don't go too far. It won't cost us any extra DP if we buy our food and drink in bulk, so that's a bonus." *We'll actually save a ton of DP buying in bulk, but I'll keep quiet about that.*

"Yay! Then hurry up and buy me a pastry set!"

"Why don't you do that yourself? You can use the DP Catalog too, right?"

"Eh? But I've never seen a [Pastry Set] or a [Melon Roll] or anything like those in it... oh wait, I have more options now. Wow, I didn't know I could buy stuff like this here. Oooh, there really are a lot of different kinds of bread! [Rye Bread], [Wheat Bread], [Melon Roll]... so many options!"

Huh? Wait a second...

"Hey, tell me what you're seeing in the Catalog again."

"Eh? Like I said, [Rye Bread], [Wheat Bread], and [Melon Roll]."

"...Just those three?"

"Um? Uh-huh, just those three. Why?"

I went ahead and bought a [Pastry Set], with my individual choices being [Cream Roll], [Jelly Roll], [Steamed Roll], [Red Bean Paste Roll], [Apple Pie], and a [Fried Roll].

"Do you know what these are?"

"...Kinds of bread, right? Wow, I've never seen bread that looks like this before. And why does all the bread you summon always end up covered in this weird, transparent stuff? Can I eat that too?"

"Nope, you can't. That's plastic. You rip it apart to get to the food inside. By the way, this is called a [Jelly Roll]. Try eating it."

"Hmm, a [Jelly Roll]. Let's see... Nom... mmm! So tasty! [Jelly Rolls] taste amazing too! Wow, there's some yellow stuff inside of it. Oooh, so sweet! What is this stuff, it's delicious!"

I handed over the [Cream Roll], having more or less figured out what's going on.

"Rokuko, check out the [Pastry Set] again and see if you have more options

this time.

“Eh? Okay... I do have more options. I can pick a [Jelly Roll] now. Wow, this is all new to me.”

“Alright. The next time you want a [Jelly Roll], buy it yourself. Get it in a set with some [Melon Rolls] if you want.”

“Really?! Ahaha, okay, th-then I’ll get three of each... ahahaha, hahaHAHA!”

“Oh, sure, I’d love to have one of your [Jelly Rolls]. Thanks.”

“AAAAAH?!”

Right after Rokuko summoned her [Pastry Set], I stole one of her [Jelly Rolls]. *...Yep. This is a [Cream Roll]. Any way I look at it, this is a [Cream Roll]. Plus, it’s completely bare without any plastic surrounding it.*

“Sorry, Rokuko. What I gave you was actually a [Cream Roll]. This is a real [Jelly Roll].”

“Eh, really? Wow... So this is an actual [Jelly Roll]. Wooow, this one has red stuff inside of it... and it’s super sweet! I love this one too! Real [Jelly Rolls] are amazing!”

Sorry for tricking you again, but that’s a [Red Bean Paste Roll]. Sounds like it has red bean paste.

“Go ahead and buy another [Pastry Set]. This time, get four [Cream Rolls] and two [Jelly Rolls].”

“What’s going on? Do you really care that much about making me happy? Awww, thanks! You’re so nice today, Keima! Okay, four [Cream Rolls] and two [Red Bean Paste Rolls]!”

“...How’s your option list looking?”

“Eh? Oooh, I have more options again... Okay, I summoned them. Can I go ahead and eat them?”

I looked over what Rokuko had bought. Four [Cream Rolls] and two [Red Bean Paste Rolls]. *...And there we go. It looks like the DP Catalog prioritizes displaying only items that the user of the Menu is familiar with. It’s very possible that it just*

fundamentally won't show items that the user doesn't know about. Since Rokuko's pastries weren't wrapped in plastic, just knowing the name of something must not be enough for it to be put on the Catalog. Does the dungeon need to have absorbed it before? Wait, no, that doesn't make sense. She's absorbed plastic plenty of times... I guess it does have to do with being familiar with the item? ...Either way, it's very likely that none of this applies to things from this world. I've never seen an actual dragon before, but it's on my menu... though I do know that dragons are the classic Dungeon Master monster of choice. I want to dig in to this a little more, but this is getting pretty tedious. I don't want to waste DP, either.

Rokuko was looking at me impatiently as I contemplated the inner workings of the DP Catalog to myself.

"I can eat them now, right? Right?!"

"Yeah, go ahead. ...By the way, those are all the pastries you'll be getting for four days, so don't go through them too fast. And be sure to split them with Gobsuke."

"Whaaat?!" Rokuko froze with half of a [Cream Roll] in her mouth.

Don't worry, I'll split my food with Gobsuke even if you eat all of those pastries yourself. Not that I'm gonna tell you that, though.

Day 11

Two days after he had lost five lackeys, the bandit boss came back from town with some replacements. Nineteen replacements, even. *...There were eight bandits at the start, then the seven newbies, five of which died, so that left ten. Now it's twenty-nine, three times that. Nice.* I wondered where he had gotten them... but then I saw two tied-up adventurers in their midst. *Whoops. Minus those two, it's actually twenty-seven. Isn't that still enough to form a small village or something?*

"Oh wow. Those are all slaves, except the sacrifices."

"You can tell just by looking at them? ...Ah. I see the collars now. Well,

whatever. Two sacrifices... Alright, I'll make a room just for them. I've been wanting to make a jail and see what its deal is for a while now."

A [Jail] was an especially expensive, 300 DP room. I was hoping that it'd have some kind of special effect or something. After adding the extra room, the dungeon looked like (from above) a square with its top right section cut off.

But wait. Bandits can buy slaves in this world?

"Apparently, humans who break the law can end up slaves. They're called 'convict slaves.'"

"But they'll go right back to breaking the law if bandits buy them. What's even the point...?"

Either way, I noticed two of the slaves that stood out from the rest. One was an adult woman and one a young girl. They weren't very dirty, likely thanks to this world's Survival Magic. *...Yeah, those rags are so torn up they're basically naked. That's hot. But wait a second. The slave the boss is carrying definitely isn't even ten years old yet. Why'd he buy a kid with dead-looking eyes like that? Is he gonna raise her as his daughter or something? And hold up, she's got dog ears too. Another fantasy staple has come—a dark-skinned dog girl. She even has black eyes and hair. That's the first time I've seen either of those in this world. Actually, I just noticed that the older woman has wings growing out of her arms. Is she a bird person? Is that what I should call them? Bird people? Nah, they're probably called harpies or something. This world sure has a lot of colorful races... wait, wait. Hold on. HOLD ON.*

THEY'RE! SEX! SLAVES!

We're gonna turn into an adult-only story this late in the game?! Well, sure, I guess this does make sense... There've only been dudes out there up until now, so...

The bandit boss had likely bought those sex slaves to satisfy the lust of his subordinates. And naturally, so he could have some fun himself too.

The bandit boss grabbed on to the older woman and groped her body with hands so dirty I questioned whether he had ever used {Purification} on them. He then noisily slobbered on her mouth in a makeshift kiss before pushing her

onto the bed and... *Ah, yeah, cut. Cut!*

The child slave was watching, too... Well, her eyes were so dark and clouded it was hard to tell if she was really processing anything, but still. *C'mon, at least put her in another room! Now I understand why she looks so dead-eyed, dang! He's even gonna make her clean up after them? Holy crap, what a monster... Oh, right. He's a bandit. He's killed people before. Riiight.*

"Wooow... Wooow, amazing... That's how humans reproduce, right? I've never seen it before... Ah?! Are you after my body too, Keima?!"

"I'm not a lolicon! And hey, stop watching them! Kids shouldn't be looking at that kind of thing!"

"But I'm not a kid. You know that I only look like this because I can save DP in this form, right?!"

"Oh right, I forgot about that. Right, right. Your original body was way more developed, so... Wait, nah. You were still a busty middle schooler at best. That's too young."

"B-But you like my feet, don't you? And look! That tiny slave is watching too."

"Yeah, they're making her walk on her bare feet. That has to hurt. What a waste of nice, shapely feet. Delicious brown skin like hers should be treasured. God, I want to at least give her some socks to wear." *...Preferably knee socks. White knee socks, or dark knee socks. No, wait. I bet socks shaped like puppies would really go well with her dog ears.*

"I feel like you changed the subject there..."

"Don't worry about it. Anyway, time for sleep." *By the way, he later locked up the harpy woman in the jail (which I had built behind the room that the boss is more or less using for himself now).*

Bandit's Perspective

Is there anything good about being a bandit, huh...?

I can't easily get into towns, and all the shops I can buy stuff from overcharge

like motherfuckers. I've tried making my more respectable associates buy my stuff for me, but the merchants always see right through them and keep overcharging. I can't go to a blacksmith, so I've got to get a hold of weapons on my own and keep using them 'til they break. It takes a lot of guts to use a weapon that can break at any time, and to tell the truth, I'm scared shitless of the day my blade breaks in a fight. I have to risk my life just to earn money and get anything. It's riskier being a bandit than it is being a mercenary.

But if I'm strong enough, I can steal anything. I can never know how much I'll earn in a year, but when I hit it big, fuck do I hit it big. Not to mention, I can now go to gatherings of the legendary Dark Guild. I had only ever heard of them when I was a mercenary. It's against the rules to attack carriages marked with the Dark Guild's symbol, but the benefits more than make up for that. I can get my hands on anything I want, as long as I've got the cash. ...The stuff is expensive, though.

They have a tent of women I can buy... It's not a high-class brothel, but a woman is a woman. Bandits can't normally go into town, so naturally, we can't go to brothels. Adventurers are almost all men, and female adventurers attract so much attention it's hard to safely ambush them. So, we bandits have got no choice but to go to the Dark Guild's "brothel."

That's why I went there today. There aren't any good women, but they all cost as much as high-class prostitutes in the town's most expensive brothel. It's shameless. And if you don't have any money, you can't even get the best among those shitty women.

...Thinking it's better to get something than nothing, I buy the cheapest woman they have. They brought out a demihuman with wings for hands. The Dark Guild's cheapest prostitutes aren't even valuable enough to have clothes on them, so she's wearing nothing but a slave collar.

Demihumans like this harpy look different enough from normal people that they're incredibly unpopular as prostitutes. That's why she's so cheap. A lot of demihumans are still mistaken for monsters even now. In fact, they actually are hunted as monsters in other countries. ...Oh yeah. Wasn't there one country that considered all demihumans to be monsters? I can't remember, but it doesn't matter anyway. What matters right now is that the person in front of

me is a woman, wings for hands or not.

Though, she hasn't been trained at all and doesn't know how to please a man properly. It's not hard to see why she's their cheapest prostitute. Having no other choice, I just held her down and fucked her as hard as I could. I paid money for her. She needs to earn it. Though, she's probably not gonna see even a single copper from what I paid for her. No reason for them to pay their slaves.

I leave the brothel feeling refreshed, and soon decide to buy some convict slaves. The Dark Guild deals with every slave they can get their hands on. Slaves close to death are cheap, healthy slaves are expensive.

Would be nice if some of these convict slaves have killed before. All I need are enough thugs to kill adventurers by overwhelming them with numbers, but experienced murderers will still help out in a big way.

I'll need a sex slave for the boys to use, too. Tch... Not sure how I feel about sex slaves being more expensive than convict slaves, but whatever. They're a luxury, makes sense they'd cost more. Female harpies are pretty cheap, so I'll buy one of those.

They lined up all the slaves I could buy in front of me. But hey, wait. The cheapest sex slave here is that harpy I bought at the brothel. I thought I'd just be wasting the money I spent earlier if I bought her now, but I ended up buying her anyway after they gave me a discount based on how much I spent earlier.

They even offered me a child slave as a bonus. She apparently had grown attached to the harpy for whatever reason. She's a demihuman too, with flimsy dog ears. They must not have bathed her for a while, because she smells exactly like an unwashed dog. She does look feminine, but she's too young to work as a sex slave. It wouldn't matter much if she was older, though. She doesn't even respond to me prodding her with my elbow. That's no fun.

They were likely close to just "disposing" of her, judging by the fact she cost about as much as ten slightly moldy loaves of rye bread. She does follow simple orders, though, so I can get some use out of her by making her work as a maid or something. If that doesn't work out, I can just sacrifice her to the dungeon. It's that simple.

I pick up the child slave since she walks so slow and carry her back to the

[Ordinary Cave]. We come across two adventurers on the way and surprise attack them from behind. Perfect. Now we might get a room to put these two slaves into.

"Luck sure is on my side lately, heh." I cackle to myself.

Keima's Perspective

Day 18

One week had passed since the bandits bought those slaves. In a certain sense, the dungeon has been peaceful. No adventurers have come by and no bandits have died. They went out looting twice, and came back with corpses the second time. Four corpses, 600 DP. It must have been too hard to capture them alive.

...Honestly though, is two raiding trips a week really enough to sustain twenty-seven people? I know two of those people aren't fighting, but still. Oh, how am I rewarding them? Don't worry. I'm teaching them that it'll take a long time for me to reward them if they don't kill the people inside the dungeon. I'm not so easy to please. But either way, we're getting tons of DP now that lots of "intruders" are hanging out in the dungeon all the time. Though, I feel like we're getting more DP than we should from just twenty-seven people. One of the slaves they bought must be pretty strong.

Unsurprisingly, the bandits were fucking the harpy every single day, treating her like a sex toy. Yeah... That was the only thing I wasn't too happy about. I knew that was the fate all sex slaves faced, but as a Japanese person, it wasn't so easy for me to get used to.

"...I'm really surprised they haven't gotten tired of doing that yet."

"Yeaaah. It's starting to be a real eyesore."

"I was starting to like them a little, but I guess I just didn't know them very well."

Huh. Rokuko's not happy about a woman being brutalized like that, huh? She's got more humanity than I thought.

"It's like... They're covering my dungeon with dirty juices and stuff. It really ticks me off, somehow."

"Oh, that's what you're upset about. Shouldn't you be getting mad about me using the Master Room as a bathroom, then?"

"Oh, you and Gobsuke are fine, don't worry about it. You two can't help needing to go to the bathroom... and you're both monsters I summoned myself, so." *You're still calling me a monster...? Well, I guess she did summon me.*

"It's kind of like you two are just a part of me. I don't *like* absorbing that stuff, but... like I said, you two can't help it."

"Alright, makes sense to me. But... shouldn't you, like, actually love absorbing goblin poop?"

"Keima? You're misunderstanding something about me. Definitely."

By the way, the boss was using the young dog-eared slave as a dakimakura (a body pillow generally with an anime girl on its cover) at night since she had the soft, smooth skin of a child. Aside from that, though, she was just a general maid. She took care of the bandits' trash and whatnot. They would occasionally punch or kick her for no reason, but she didn't respond. She didn't even groan. She just stared ahead with her dead eyes. The silver lining was that they didn't lock her up in the jail. She hung out beneath the boss's bed when she wasn't doing anything else. *Makes sense. You use dakimakuras when sleeping, and putting things you use while sleeping under your bed is just how things work.*

"Humans are really neat. Is that how your species always raises children?"

"No way. That's just child abuse, plain and simple. I don't know how things work in this world, but I'm absolutely confident that they're just being cruel."

"...Yeaaah. Actually, like, is the harpy woman even still alive?"

"She's pretty exhausted, but since we're still getting DP from her, she's alive." It would be problematic for them if the harpy died, so they've been at the very least making sure she doesn't die. They wouldn't want to lose their only real

woman. But despite that, they were still being really violent with her. It hurt to watch. *I don't have a rape fetish or anything, after all. Consent comes first.* But misgivings or not, I didn't do anything to stop them. I watched these bandits slaughter male adventurers. I would be a hypocrite if I went out of my way to save those two slaves just because they're girls. There was no merit in doing so. I would only be making things harder for myself. I turned off the monitor so I didn't have to watch the harpy being raped and then went to sleep.

Day 19

"Oh wow. There's a ton of people coming..." I opened up the map after hearing Rokuko whisper that. By pulling the map back to look around the general area, I could see information about the outside of the dungeon. It was limited to a range about as far as I could see by just looking out the entrance with my naked eyes, but inside that range, there were plenty of details. There I saw that there was already a platoon of red enemy dots, advancing towards our dungeon with a trained pace. It seemed that my peaceful days were finally over. Or perhaps, peace was finally coming for the first time.

"Thirty people, huh? I guess they're finally here. Not sure if this is too early or what..."

"*They're* finally here? You knew these people would be coming?"

"Yep. This is probably the squad sent to exterminate the bandits. Judging from how organized their marching is, they're pretty well trained. I bet they're knights. ...Yeah, the bandits are finished now. It'd be pretty great if they actually managed to survive somehow, though."

The bandits noticed the knights too right after I finished saying that. I opened up the monitor and started watching them. It really was convenient that I could look into the dungeon from any angle, as if every room had multiple security cameras placed within them. One of the boss's scouts had just gotten back to the dungeon.

"Boss, we're in trouble! Knights are coming!"

“What the?! How’d they find us?! We killed everyone who saw us here!” The boss of the bandits was panicking. He didn’t seem to realize that it was precisely because they had killed everyone who found them that knights had eventually been dispatched to eliminate them.

“But hold on a second... Knights are humans. They ain’t invincible, we can kill them too. How many of them are there?”

“S-Sorry, I ran back here as soon as I saw their armor. There was at least, uuuh, at least five of them!”

“Tch, alright... Guess it doesn’t matter how many of them there are. We’re still gonna ambush’m here in this dungeon.”

“We are?”

“Yeah. We can knock their numbers down with a surprise attack, and either way, we’d be dead if they surrounded us outside.”

“Oooh! Nice plan, boss! Alright! Didja hear that, everybody? We’re gonna ambush’m!”

“YEAH!” “HELL YEAH!” “LET’S DO IT!”

It looked like the bandits were ready to fight, and they were planning to do so in the dungeon. Very convenient. *I’m so glad I’ve been teaching the boss how to use the hallways and doors to ambush people in the dungeon. I’m so glad he’s not smart enough to realize running away is the best option here.*

“So, do you think the bandits can win?”

“Well, it’ll depend on how strong those knights are... But if they’re at least as strong as those three adventurers from before, the bandits are definitely screwed. They’ll all die.”

It wouldn’t be long before I could see the knights directly on the monitor. I decided to watch the bandits get eliminated from start to finish. All this was happening because of me, after all.

The bandits spread out, with eight of them staying in the entrance room, eight hiding in the room halfway to the core room, and nine (including the boss) camping out in the core room itself. Although there was strength in numbers,

they wouldn't be able to ambush the knights if they all stayed in one room, though that would be physically impossible anyway. The knights reached the entrance to the cave right after the bandits finished hiding.

"All soldiers, halt. Hm... Henry, is this the [Ordinary Cave]?"

"Yes. I believe this is where the bandits are hiding out. Please... avenge Beck for me."

"You have my word. Thank you for your assistance. O Life, greet mine wave with a hearty pulse—{Life Search}."

A knight covered head to toe in armor used a skill. Moments later, a clear wave of energy spread out from him in all directions. Judging from its name, it was a skill that could detect nearby life forms. It probably worked like echolocation. But either way, I knew it would be enough to make the bandits' ambush meaningless.

"Hm... It appears that there are indeed eight bandits inside. They're hiding by the entrance, waiting to ambush us."

There certainly were eight bandits waiting in the first room. But there were more elsewhere, obviously... Maybe the {Life Search} wave got blocked off by the closed wooden doors, making it impossible for him to detect the bandits behind them. Or was it just an area of effect that simply didn't reach that far?

"That's how many the report said there would be."

"Stand at the ready, men. Our mission begins now. They might have prisoners... For safety's sake, we'll start with the sleeping drug."

"Yes, sir!"

"Five of you will remain behind in case there are others lying in wait outside. Everyone else, surround the entrance and finish off any bandits that come running out."

"Understood." The knights surrounded the entrance to the cave and started burning some kind of incense.

...Welp. That's pretty cheap. Though I don't blame them for not walking right into a trap.

A few minutes after the incense started burning, the bandits started to panic. They had all noticed the smell of the incense, and one of them had passed out after being unable to resist his sleepiness.

“Ngh, this is... a sleeping drug! C-Crap, we gotta run deeper into the cave!”

“No, we should go and attack them before we get knocked out! There can’t be many of them out there if they’re pulling cheap tricks like this! Let’s go get’m!”

“The smoke won’t get through the doors if we sh—ngh! Wh-What are you doing...?!”

“Hmph. You just stay here, coward. I’ll take care of everything myself!”

New Guy C, who had killed an adventure earlier and became the boss’s right hand man, headed out of the dungeon with five slaves. The only ones left behind were the guy who had fallen asleep and the guy who had recommended that they retreat. New Guy C had punched him in the stomach, causing him to fall to his knees.

The six bandits who went outside, tired from the drug as they were, could barely do anything as the knights surrounding the entrance cut them down. Their chipped, dull blades bounced pathetically off the knights’ armor. All they could do was scream in pain and fear while dying like chumps.

The eighth bandit collapsed to the ground and fell unconscious, but not before hearing his screaming allies and thinking “aaah, I was right...” to himself. Though he didn’t seem to realize that it had been the wrong call to join the bandits in the first place.

The smoke from the incense began to fade, but the knight from before waited until he was sure everyone still inside was asleep before casting {Life Search} again.

“{Life Search}... Hm, it seems that two bandits are still inside.”

“Alright... This hallway is certainly cramped. We’ll go in rows of two. Keep your guard up, men.” The knights began to slowly infiltrate the dungeon. Though... they had technically been “inside” the dungeon ever since they circled the entrance. *Yeah, expanding the dungeon outside a little from the entrance*

was a good call. We woulda missed out on the DP from those six dudes if I hadn't done that.

"...Alright, here's the two bandits. Finish them off."

"Should we really do that?"

"Even if they do have allies on the outside, they won't be coming to save them now. That means our job is to eliminate all the bandits in this hideout. Once we crush the leader, we can leave any possible survivors to adventurers... And just look. There's more rooms inside. The boss of these lowlifes is likely in the room furthest inside... and if he's not, we can assume he's one of these. Best to kill them all now."

"Understood." The two sleeping bandits had their throats slit, earning us DP.

I felt my shirt being pulled and turned to see Rokuko looking at me with a puzzled expression.

"Are you sure I shouldn't be absorbing the corpses? We're kinda losing a lot of DP like this."

"...Don't even think about doing that. We won't be able to trick them if you start absorbing those corpses."

"Trick them?"

"...If they learn that dungeons eat people, or at least, if they learn that a beginner dungeon like ours is powering up by eating corpses, they might view us as dangerous and try to destroy the Core. I do have a backup plan, but..."

"Ngh... We'll die if the Core gets destroyed. Wait... a backup plan? You didn't mention that before."

"...Remember that goblin room I made a while ago?"

"Oh, right! The one that's kinda far away from us! You were calling it a dummy 'Ordinary Cave,' right?"

"Yeah. The maps here aren't so accurate, so there being another cave nearby shouldn't arouse any suspicion... maybe. Hopefully, we'll be able to trick them into thinking that the other cave is the actual 'Ordinary Cave,' and then they'll leave us alone."

“Ohhhh, okay. I get it... Wait, um... What about the Dungeon Core?” In truth, I wanted to place the dummy Core in the other cave and use the castling function, but that wasn’t gonna happen. Oh, by the way, the castling function allowed one to swap the real Dungeon Core with a dummy Core. It was a great tool, but it took 5,000 DP to use; we didn’t have enough saved up to use it. Not to mention, it was necessary to connect the dummy Core with the real Core with a path, which meant it couldn’t even be set up if intruders were in the way.

“...Well, we used hallways and doors to separate the rooms on this floor, so worst-case scenario, we can turn the Core room into an impregnable trap fortress.” It was possible to set traps on a floor with intruders by separating rooms with doors and hallways. Though, of course, you couldn’t set traps in rooms with invaders in them.

“Um, but there’s a bunch of bandits camping out in the Core room.” *...Of course, the bandits count as intruders.*

“Yeaaah... In other words, all we can do right now is act like an innocent dungeon and hope they leave us alone.”

“I get it. So that’s why you don’t want me to absorb the corpses. But how are you going to make sure they leave us alone?”

“...L-Let’s just see what happens for now.” *I don’t want to tell her that there’s actually nothing we can do right now.*

I shifted my focus back to the knights.

“This must be their treasure room. The bed... ngh!”

“...I recognize this smell. They must have a woman with them. But this smell is so intense, I imagine they aren’t using {Purification} to clean up much... or perhaps the smell is so intense it won’t come out no matter how many times they cast it.” The knights had started to investigate the boss’s bedroom. By the way, the dog-eared girl was still underneath the bed. She stared ahead with her dead eyes, not moving an inch. Eventually, the knights advanced to the next room without finding her. That wouldn’t have happened if they had used {Life Search}, but they didn’t for some reason. Maybe it only had a limited number of uses. Or maybe the knights who had been assigned to the search party just couldn’t use it. The boss-type knight that had used {Life Search} outside of the

cave was still by the entrance, giving orders to his subordinates.

Beyond the boss's room was the jail, which was also being used as a storage room. All the loot that could help in battle had been taken to the Core room on the opposite end of the dungeon, so there wasn't anything worthwhile left. They had even taken the harpy herself with them.

"There's nothing good here, huh?"

"Do you think our timing was just bad? There might've been some more valuables here if we got here sooner. There is a lot of food, though. Maybe if we had gotten here later, there'd be m—"

"Hey, don't talk like that. But either way, I'm sure no one will mind if we take some of this beer."

We had taken anything that looked even a little good into the Master Room before the knights got there. That said, it's not like there was anything good before we went through the stuff. Most of it was just moldy bread... The only really useful thing was, er, a Light-enchanted magic item? It worked kind of like a lantern.

The only things left for the knights were food and the shoddiest of the bandits' treasure. Since the jail was a dead end, the knights carried the boxes of food back outside. Once most of them were outside, the knights resumed their investigation. One of them placed his hand on a door and made to open it, but at that moment... A sword had sprouted from the door.

"Gah?!" A bandit had stabbed at the knight through the door itself in a surprise attack. He then kicked down the door and started swinging.

"DIIIIIIEEEEEE!"

"Ngh?! Fall back, Ryan! Hyaaaah!" The wounded knight retreated and the battle began.

"Curses! I told you they would likely be hiding behind the door, and yet you still let your guard down... O Light, soothe the wounded sheep before you—{Healing}!"

"S-Sorry, captain... ngh, nnn!" Magical light enveloped the hurt soldier and

began healing his wounds. The large gash on his chest closed up and stopped bleeding. He was still visibly exhausted, but there was less chance of him dying. *...Healing magic, huh? That's the first time I've seen it.*

And before I knew it, the battle was over.

"Sorry, but Beggs got hurt in the fight as well. Could I ask you to heal him?"

"Bloody hell, don't you know how exhausting it is to cast this spell? ...If I pass out, you'll be the one taking charge in my stead. O Light, soothe the wounded sheep before you—{Healing}."

"There's no use getting frustrated with me. You're the only one here who knows how to cast Restoration Magic. Sheesh... Our lives would be a lot easier if they would just give us more [{Healing} Scrolls]..."

"Restoration Magic scrolls are difficult enough to produce that they simply don't have enough to do anything like that. The Church keeps most of the scrolls to themselves for a reason." *Hm. That's a nifty bit of information. Let's see here... Seems like I can buy a [{Healing} Scroll] for 100,000 DP. They really are rare... I could buy a weak dragon for that much DP, geez. But, uh, dang. With healing magic like that, the bandits are definitely screwed. No way out of this one for them. All I can hope is that they take down as many knights as possible while they're getting slaughtered.*

"Alright. Next room. Be wary of any surprise attacks if you don't want to end up like Ryan. Though... I had heard that this [Ordinary Cave] is an extremely small dungeon. There are far more rooms than I expected here..."

"Captain. There are pickaxes lying on the ground. The bandits might have dug out these rooms themselves."

"Hrm? But dungeon walls will simply regenerate no matter how much you dig into them. Why would they do that?"

"I do not know... But you can see the pickaxe marks on these walls." I glanced at Rokuko for confirmation.

"Uh-huh. Normally, any holes you dig will just close up. Humans are like that too, aren't they?"

“So, you’re saying it’s like wounds healing over time.” Rokuko responded with a nod and a “that’s right.”

“Hm...? I wonder what’s going on here. Though, thinking about it, taking up residence in a dungeon is an extremely rare occurrence in the first place. There might be a connection here.”

“Are you suggesting that the leader of the bandits is the Dungeon Boss?”

“Hahaha! I’ve never heard of a human becoming a Dungeon Boss. Are these bandits led by a dragon?”

“These rooms are too small for any dragon.” The knights steadily advanced farther into the dungeon while talking amongst themselves. Out of all the bandits, only the nine hiding out in the Core room remained. That wasn’t counting the harpy slave, since she would likely be too weak to fight well.

The knights proceeded so cautiously that it took them a lot of time just to clear out of the seven-room dungeon, but eventually they reached the Core room. Though, the knights themselves wouldn’t realize it was the Core room until they opened the door.

I shifted my gaze to the bandits. One of them had been crouching by the door with his ear against it. I caught him right as he stood up to go report to the boss.

“...Looks like they’re here.”

“Alright. Archers, get ready. And be quiet. Shoot them down right after they open the door.”

“Boss, are we gonna be alright?”

“Hmph. They should be pretty worn down by now. All we’ll have to do is finish them off with a final push.” I wondered how they would react if I told them that the knights had healed themselves and weren’t worn down in the least. That’d have to remain a mystery, though. I didn’t want them to try and destroy the Core as a final act of revenge.

The wooden door to the Core room creaked open. The boss signaled for the archers to shoot the moment the door opened wide enough. Clang! Clang! The arrows noisily bounced off all the knights’ armor. Except for one. By pure luck—

good luck for the bandits, bad luck for the knights—one arrow slipped through the eye slit on one of the knights' helmets and pierced his brain. I saw our DP shoot up before my eyes. They had killed him in one shot.

"Louie! Bloody hell, he's dead!"

"Tch...! We only got one of them!"

"Boss!"

"C'mon, boys! Aim for the joints! Our swords'll just bounce off their armor!"

"You'll pay for this, bastards!" A knight charged forward. Seeing that, the boss of the bandits put his sword against the harpy's neck.

"Hey, move another step and I'll slit this girl's neck."

"Ngh, a hostage?! Wait, look! It's a demihuman slave! Don't worry about her, just kill the bandits!" The bandits got some blows in after the knights briefly paused, but they didn't do much damage. The distraction tactic itself was fine, the bandits were just too untrained. If they were better with their blades, they probably would have been able to take down one of the knights there.

"Tch, they figured it out! Fucking hell! C'mon, you bitch, charge at the knights! Make them panic!"

"Ah, aaah!"

"Hmph, making a slave like that attack for you won't change a thing!" The harpy slave tried to obey the boss's order, but her legs were too weak for her to move very well. She was cut down in seconds. Our DP went up. Well... at least she died in a single blow, without any unnecessary suffering.

"Wait a second! Aren't you Melon-Puke Waver?!"

"DON'T CALL ME BY THAT NAME!"

"Uwaaah!"

The boss of the bandits charged forward in a rage. The force of his first blow knocked the armored knight to his knees, and the boss wasted no time to drive his sword into a gap in the knight's armor. He then twisted his sword around as hard as he could inside of the knight's body. Our DP went up again. *I don't*

wanna see what that guy looks like now... And what kinda nickname is Melon-Puke, anyway?

"What?! This is the shameless fellow who puked up a melon while dining with the princess?!"

"You'll pay for killing Louie and Eugene, vomit-face!"

"I only threw up because the melon had gone bad! It wasn't my fault! Why'd she have to fucking put a bounty over my head?! FUUUCK!"

"Not only did you eat too much and throw up as a result, but you unjustly blamed the chef for serving rotten food and killed him! Right in front of the princess, too!"

"SHUT UP! He was just jealous because the princess had fallen in love with me! I'd be the emperor right now if it weren't for him! Fucking damnit!" *Oh, thanks for explaining why he's called Melon-Puke. I more or less guessed from the name, but still. That was a wild story.*

After that, Melon-Puke got so mad he fought far better than I had ever expected. He killed one more knight and wounded several others.

But that was as far as he got. His allies that had been assisting him from the side were gradually cut down, and soon enough he was surrounded. In the blink of an eye, a sword was thrust clean through his stomach.

"Fuuuck...! And things... were just getting started... for me..." Melon-Puke collapsed onto his knees and then fell to the ground. One of the knights grabbed on to his hair and pulled his head up.

"Alright, Melon-Puke. Do you have any more allies anywhere?"

"Tch... Nope, you already killed everyone, fuck... Why'd this happen? I did everything... they said..."

His voice had gotten pretty raspy, but the knight still heard him loud and clear. And so, the final bandit turned into DP just like all the others.

"Was there someone pulling the strings here? They might've gotten away."

"He said this was everyone, but... We can't be sure. Oh. It looks like this room has the Dungeon Core."

“Yeah? Huh... So that’s a Dungeon Core. I’ve never seen one before.”

“This was a pretty shallow dungeon, just like we heard. Only had one floor.”

One of the knights pointed his sword at the Dungeon Core sprouting out of the wall.

“Alriiight. Time to destroy the Core.” Destroy the Core. *Hey, uh, what’d you just say? You’re gonna do what now?* My mouth dried up. I felt a cold shiver run down my spine. I watched through the monitor as the knight lifted up his sword... and then brought it down.

“Gob!”

“Gobsuke?!”

Gobsuke jumped out of the Master Room. Neither I nor Rokuko could stop him. It might have been his natural instincts as a dungeon monster to do everything in his power to stop the Core from being destroyed.

“Woah?! Th-The hell?! Take this!”

“Gob... ngggh...” We watched as Gobsuke popped into the Core Room and was immediately cut down. He was cut clean in half and died just like that.

“Friggin’ goblin, getting in my way... Let’s try that again.”

“Hey! What do you think you’re doing, new guy?! This dungeon is under our protection!” The captain stopped the knight after he rose his sword into the air again.

“This is a low-tier dungeon that the Adventurer’s Guild manages. It only ever produces goblins and is as simple of a dungeon as can be.”

“Oh, that’s right... My apologies, captain.” The knight lowered his sword after being stopped by the captain.

“...Crap. I was so close to destroying a Dungeon Core and becoming a Holy Paladin...”

“I understand how you feel, but our job here is done. And if you could become a Holy Paladin through destroying the Core of a dungeon that doesn’t even have a Dungeon Boss, the capital would be overflowing with Holy Paladins

right now.”

“Tch... Well, that’s true. This Core only managed to summon a single goblin to protect itself. No glory in killing this one...”

“Idiot. You’re getting a pay cut.”

“Whaaat? Come ooon!”

“Well, just think about it. Wouldn’t it just be embarrassing to be knighted as a Holy Paladin for destroying a weak dungeon like this?”

“...Thinking about it, Melon-Puke was more or less the Dungeon Boss. Do you want them to say ‘O Holy Paladin, who conquered the [Ordinary Cave] and defeated Melon-Puke...’ or something like that? You’ll get destroyed, man. People would call you the ‘Melon-Puke Paladin’ or ‘The Holy Paladin of the Ordinary Cave,’ something like that.”

“Aaah, I wouldn’t want that... But still. I can’t believe we lost Louie, Eugene, and Thomas to a bunch of bandits.”

“Melon-Puke was actually a pretty fearsome foe...” Although many of them had died or been wounded, the knights were all relaxed. Their job was done. I suddenly realized I hadn’t been breathing and thus started gasping for air. Whew... I thought I was gonna die. For the first time since I came to this world, someone tried to kill me. I wasn’t just watching someone else die on a screen. I was watching someone try to kill me, personally. *I almost peed myself... Almost! I didn’t actually do it, okay? My pants are clean. Though... That guy said he could become a Paladin if he destroyed the Dungeon Core. I wonder what’s up with that.*

“Uuu, uwaah... G-Gobsukeee...” Rokuko was crouched down on the floor, crying. Goblin or not, we had spent the past few weeks together with Gobsuke. We had tons of memories together... Okay, not really. The only thing we did together was eat meals every now and again. I wonder if Rokuko ever did anything with him while I was asleep.

“At least give back the [Jelly Rolls] I lent you before dyiiiing...” *I guess not. We were united only by food.*

“Gobsuke... We really owe him a lot now. If not for him, the Core probably

woulda been destroyed and we'd be dead right now."

"Uuu, my [Jelly Rolls]..." *Actually... This might just be her way of grieving Gobsuke without looking weak. I opened the menu and bought a set of six [Jelly Rolls] for Rokuko.*

"Here, have some [Jelly Rolls]. Cheer up."

"Eh?! Really?! I'll cheer up, I'll cheer sooo up! So so so up!" Rokuko cheered up so much that I thought light would start shining out of her eyes. *Oh, right. This girl's a monster that sent countless goblins to their deaths to try and protect herself from adventurers.*

"Wait, what is this stuff?! There's something dark and sweet inside of it! Ah, but it's really tasty too."

...Oh yeah. I never told her that I tricked her into thinking that [Red Bean Paste Rolls] were [Jelly Rolls].

* * *

The bandit corpses were piled up in the entrance room. It looked like the knights would be taking their deceased allies back home with them. It was honestly pretty disgusting, but I couldn't look away. I needed to stay focused and look for an opportunity to score some extra DP. *...They're pouring oil on them. I guess the plan is to burn the bodies. In the middle of the cave, though...? Air flows through dungeons no matter how deep they get, so I guess they may just not be aware that suffocating due to lack of oxygen is a thing outside of water. After all, the bandits lit torches in our dungeon like it was nothing.*

"These scum don't even deserve to be offered up to the dungeon."

"Did you cover them all with enough oil? We'll only have more work to do if any of them become ghouls later."

"I did. It's okay to burn everything here except the stuff we're taking back, right?"

"Yes. Even if there are any survivors hiding out somewhere, they won't get very far without any supplies." So he said, but there wasn't anything really worth burning. The beds were about the most valuable thing there. Their plan

was to light the bodies in the entrance room on fire and let the resulting blaze take care of everything else. That was convenient for me. Once the fires rose up, I'd be able to absorb the bodies without any problems.

"Stand back, I'm lighting the fire. Dance, O Flames—{Ignition}."

{Ignition} seemed to be a spell that made small flames flicker from the user's fingertips, like a lighter. Once those flames made contact with a trail of oil, the flame began to spread like an uncoiling snake, and before long the mountain of corpses within the cave was ablaze.

"Oh. Hey, should we do anything about that dog-eared slave?" By the time Rokuko remembered that, flames had already burned down the door to the boss's room and were fast approaching the bed under which the dog-eared girl was hidden. Her dead eyes reflected that she had completely given up. The deceased harpy slave had the same eyes before she died. *Huh. I didn't do anything to protect her from the bandits, but I get the feeling she'll appear in my dreams if I don't save her here. Is it because she's just a kid? I don't want to have nightmares about this... That'll get in the way of me sleeping well. Not like there's any reason not to save her. She could actually be a big asset if I can make her my pawn somehow. At the very least, I could just keep using her as a maid. She'll be anything but useless.*

"...Well, I guess it doesn't matter. She can just turn into DP for us."

"No, wait. We're gonna save her. Can we get her in here somehow?"

"Um, no. Do you want to go outside and try to get her yourself? Everything's on fire out there. She'll be dead before you get there." Rokuko was right. Since there was an intruder (the dog-eared girl) on the floor, we could only enter and exit the Master Room through the Dungeon Core. And outside of the Dungeon Core was a sea of fire. Physically saving her would be beyond impossible.

"Plus, we can't 'withdraw' intruders or anything like that. She's not an item." After hearing Rokuko say that, an idea struck me like lightning.

"No... What're you talking about, Rokuko? She is an item."

"Eh?!" I started to talk as if trying to convince both myself and Rokuko of that.

"Slaves are tools. They belong to people. In other words, they're items.

Honestly, I've never seen her do anything on her own. She only ever obeyed orders. And now her owner, the boss of the bandits, is dead. The owner of that slave... that item is gone. When the owner of an item dies in a dungeon, their items become the dungeon's items. Which means that girl is now an item belonging to us. Right, Rokuko?"

"U-Um... But she's a living being with mana... Items aren't like that..."

"But when you think about it, we can place monsters wherever we want in the dungeon as long as there aren't any intruders on the floor. That means we move living beings in and out of the Core at will. Remember how we withdrew that moldy bread earlier? Well, mold is a living being. We could withdraw a treasure chest even if a mouse was inside of it, right? There's no reason why we couldn't withdraw a living being like a human. We can't because she has mana? That doesn't make sense. Magical items have mana. We withdrew that Light-enchanted magic item, remember? Same deal! We can do this too! WE CAN WITHDRAW HER!"

I glanced between the monitor and the map. The fire had reached the bed and started burning the sheets black. The map still displayed the dog-eared girl as a red dot, signifying her as an invader. *Crap, that still wasn't enough?! I didn't convince Rokuko hard enough!*

"B-But I'm telling you, slaves aren't items!"

"Then she's not even a slave! She's a dakimakura! It's a dakimakura! A pillow in the shape of a super young dog-eared girl! Just look, it can fit under the bed so we guys can hide it when the parents come home!" The only option left for me was to use conditioning on myself. In other words, hypnosis. And hypnosis is basically the same thing as sleeping. *This is my time to shine! That's a dakimakura, that's a dakimakura, that's a dakimakura, that's a dakimakura...*

I imagined it. That girl was a dakimakura. A dakimakura that'd feel amazing to squeeze in bed. It had ears to tease and play with. It was shaped like a human so one could dress it up with clothes and knee socks before playing with it.

Wow... This is going pretty well. Yeah. I can't let a dakimakura that amazing get burned up. It'd be a total waste. Aaah. I want to sleep with that dakimakura. I could spend hours putting different kinds of knee socks on it. It looks pretty nice

and warm, too. I could use it as a makeshift heater when the weather gets colder. Speaking of heaters, the boss of the bandits used Rokuko's Core as a heater for his feet. Hahaha! Oh, I'm getting off subject a little. Y'know, I wonder if that dakimakura is more expensive than a [Heavenly Pillow]. A dark-skinned, dog-eared, little girl pillow must be expensive. That's a high-grade item. To some people, that would be the most [Heavenly Pillow] in the world. Oh... Crap, I just remembered something nasty. Melon-Puke had been using it in the exact same way. Being used is a major sticking point for any dakimakura, but eh, it'll be fine if I clean it thoroughly. A thorough cleaning will make it clean as new. Yep, yep. {Purification} sure is useful. I wonder how well it'll clean a dakimakura. Either way, at least I don't have to worry about taking the cover off and drying it outside where a neighbor might see it. Alriiight. Now I just need to get my hands on that pillow and start cleaning it.

By that point, the dog-eared girl had turned entirely into a dakimakura in my mind. I glanced at the map and saw that instead of a red invader dot, there was a green dot indicating an item.

"Alright, it's a dakimakura. Withdraw!"

To sum it up: I did it.

* * *

"Eeeeh...?! H-How did you withdraw her?! Invaders can't come into the Master Room!"

"Huh? All I did was withdraw a dakimakura. Oh yeah, and be sure to absorb the bandit corpses before they all burn up. But leave half of them behind, just in case the knights come in to check up on them." *Aaah, its hair is a little burnt. What a waste of pretty black hair. Well, hair can grow back, so no big deal. I'll just cut off the burnt parts. A short haircut would look good on it.*

I rubbed the soot off its squishy cheeks. *Oh man, this thing feels really nice.*

"Eh? I think I get it... wait, wait, no I don't. She's an invader! How did she get inside the Core?!"

"What're you talking about? Dakimakuras are items. Why wouldn't we be able to withdraw one?"

“Y-Yeah...? Honestly, I think I’m somehow actually starting to believe that...”

I tried casting {Purification} on the dakimakura. The {Purification} magic formed a bubble-like shape like always and lowered itself through the dakimakura from head to toe, thoroughly cleaning off all the filth that h—

“Aaah?!” ...The dakimakura let out a cute squeal. Whiiich reminded me. *Oh yeah. This is actually the dog-eared slave girl. Not a pillow. Whew. A bit longer like that and I might never have snapped out of my own hypnosis...*

“A-Alright, I’m back to my senses now. See? I told you we could withdraw her.”

“Oh, you’re back to normal? Then explain how you did that!”

“Sure. It’s pretty simple... I could do it because it was possible.” *You thinking you couldn’t do it was just an assumption on your part. Magic is more free and less restrictive than you think... Though doing all that was pretty tiring.*

“You saw it, right? I withdrew a slave. Cause they’re items.”

“Wow... I had no idea you could withdraw slaves, but I guess you can.” *Yeah, it should be smart to make Rokuko think that. I don’t want to have to hypnotize myself again the next time we need to withdraw a slave. But anyway. What should we do with this dog-eared girl? Should I actually start using her as a dakimakura...?*

“By the way, what’s this girl’s name? It’s kind of hard to talk about her without knowing her name.”

“That’s a good point... Er, do you have a name? Or at least, something that people call you?”

“Ah... ah... People called... me and the others, Niku... Master...”

“Alright. You’re Niku, then.” Her response was pretty slow, but she did answer me. Either way, the first thing to do was let her rest. I bought her a futon and some food with DP to start things off. She didn’t move at first, but she ate the food and got into the futon after I ordered her to. I decided to think more about what to do with Niku after the knights left. As long as they were still around, we weren’t safe.

Day 20

The knights didn't really do much after that. They quietly made camp, checked that the corpses had all burned by noon, and then left. *Yeah, I think it's pretty impressive that they managed to cook meat and eat it while corpses were burning like thirty feet away from them. Like honestly. Wow.*

We got a lot of DP thanks to all the dead bandits and how the band of thirty-some knights stayed within the dungeon radius for almost an entire day. We didn't even have any problems absorbing the thoroughly burnt corpses. Suffice to say, we made bank. Adding it all up to what we had before... our DP stock had shot up to 14,504 in one fell swoop.

"Wow... I've never seen this much DP before in my life." Compared to how little DP we were earning before, we had basically gotten rich overnight. But since the bandits were gone, our daily DP gain was less than before. We didn't have to worry about Gobsuke anymore... but in his place, we had the dog-eared slave. We had to feed her too. Three meals a day with food and drink... We'll be losing about 10 DP every day.

But our natural DP gain was only 10 a day. Maybe due to how we had withdrawn her as an item, the slave girl wasn't earning us any DP. Though it was also possible that she just wasn't strong enough to be worth any DP in the first place. Thanks to that, our DP earnings a day totaled to a spectacular zero... Wait, no. We were technically in the negatives since we would need to summon goblins whenever adventurers came just to avoid suspicion. Could I sleep well in a situation like that? No, I couldn't. I was a cautious, cautious man. I couldn't bear to sit and watch as my savings slowly dwindled. So, unable to bear the weight of losing DP, I decided to fundamentally change this [Ordinary Cave].

...Haaah. I don't wanna wooork.

Rokuko's Thoughts

It’s weird. Why’d things turn out like this? All I did was save up 1000 DP and roll the gacha with it, betting everything on a massive turnabout, but all I got was a weak-looking human named Keima. Somehow, he even turned into my Dungeon Master and now I have to obey everything he says!

What the heck happened? I don’t understand any of this. All I wanted to do was murder all those nasty bandits that put their gross feet on my Core. I definitely should’ve just used that DP to summon a mountain of goblins. Aaah, geez! He ordered me to stay quiet while he’s sleeping, so I can’t even say anything. There’s a *lot* I want to talk to you about, buster!

So, I summoned a goblin when he woke up and got yelled at. Not only that, but he didn’t do anything even when there was only one bandit still in the cave! It was the perfect opportunity for revenge! What’s with him?! All I want to do is attack the invaders with goblins just like Number 89 told me to! Number 89 is amazing, you know?! She runs a dungeon in the middle of a capital city! You’re not even fit to lick her feet, Keima! She earns tons and tons of DP too! Anyway, he ordered me not to use DP without permission. It sucks, he’s using all the DP he wants on himself. I could understand food, whatever, but he bought a [Futon] for himself too. Grrr... That’s my DP!

And doesn’t this guy sleep way too much? I’m a Dungeon Core, so I don’t sleep at all. I wonder if sleeping really feels that nice.

Believe it or not, Keima actually used most of our saved up DP to give a gift to the bandits. He even made me write a letter thanking them for killing my goblins even though I don’t feel that way at all.

AAAAH! GEEEEEZ! This guy is definitely sucking up to the bandits so they spare his life later! Or so I thought, but...

“Calm down. That gift just bought us some valuable time. I’ll kill them all soon enough, trust me.”

...That’s what he told me. With a deadly serious expression, too. Though, he said he’s doing it to make the place where he sleeps safer or something? I don’t know what’s going on in this guy’s head. I don’t understand him at all. And then

he went back to sleep again. Explain things properly, geez!

So then, adventurers came while he was sleeping. The bandits fought and beat them. It was the first time in my life that something other than goblins died inside my dungeon. Maybe these bandits aren't so bad after all? But I still won't forgive them for stepping on my Core!

So, I made Keima explain things after he woke up, and apparently that was all part of his plan. He knew that this would happen and steered things in this direction to earn us a bunch of DP. It is true that we earned way more DP from this than how much we used on the bandits. He actually knows what he's doing. Wow.

Or so I thought, but then he used DP on the bandits again. He increased the number of rooms in my dungeon. But summoning a bunch of monsters in a single room is the best strategy! Or at least I thought it was, until Keima explained why it wasn't. Being able to put a lot more goblins in the dungeon is really nice! But he wouldn't let me summon any goblins. I just don't get it.

I complained to him about how much DP he's spending on the bandits, but he told me I was wrong. They can't take the rooms to town and sell them, so they really belong to us. Mmm, that definitely seems right. Keima's surprisingly smart, and it looks like he's better at earning DP than I am.

But he really does sleep a lot... Hmph, hmph.

Oh, Gobsuke. Here, let me cast {Purification}. You knooow, Keima got really clean even though he used {Purification} on himself once. Normally you have to cast {Purification} on yourself a lot, like splashing yourself with water repeatedly. I wonder if he's doing anything special? After that, the bandits went out of their way to bring corpses back to the dungeon, or kidnap adventurers to kill inside of the dungeon. Just like Keima said, our DP is going way up.

Also, [Melon Rolls]. Keima summoned some kind of bread I've never seen before in my life, called [Melon Rolls]. They're so sweet and tasty I can hardly believe it... I guess eating food is actually pretty nice. Especially [Melon Rolls].

They’re amazing. I like [Red Bean Paste Rolls] too, but [Melon Rolls] are the absolute best. Eh?! I have to share them with Gobsuke? O-Okay... but I won’t give him any of my [Melon Rolls], got it?!

When I sensed some adventurers coming and told Keima about them, he told me that he actually had a plan for the goblin room he made a while ago. Keima’s been taking his job as Dungeon Master really seriously. I thought he’s just been sleeping while making me write letters and withdraw things, but... That’s not true. He actually has a lot going on inside his head. You know, I guess in my case I would just summon a bunch of goblins without thinking whenever adventurers came... Mmm. Maybe I should start thinking harder about things?

...And so, before I knew it, all the bandits were completely gone. I thought I was going to die when that knight swung at my Core, but everything ended up okay.

Except... Gobsuke died to save me...

I had just recently started to understand him without words, but now he’s dead. That... That makes me a little sad.

The bandits... Keima had killed them all, just like he said. They turned into a ton of DP for us.

...Keima’s really amazing. I can’t believe he actually managed to kill all the bandits. I definitely couldn’t have done that on my own, with just goblins. No way.

...Maybe Keima could have done it with just goblins, though. After all, he killed all the bandits without using a single monster or trap.

Also, he withdrew a tiny slave into the Master Room for some reason. I don’t really understand why, but the Menu is treating her like an item even though I thought she was an invader. I didn’t know that you could withdraw slaves as an item after their owners died. But I guess it makes sense that I wouldn’t know about that, since no slave owners had ever died in my dungeon before.

...What are we even going to do with this slave? Are we really going to use her

as a dakimakura? No way, nooo way. This is Keima we're talking about. He definitely has a really smart plan with what to do with her.

But her name is "Niku," huh...? That's definitely slang for something. I don't think it means anything nice, but... if Keima says it's okay, I won't worry about it.

I wonder what's going to happen now? My dungeon is a lot different from what it used to be, but... That's okay. I'll leave it all to the Dungeon Master. With Keima handling things, I might grow up to be more like Number 89! Ah, but I need to try hard too. I want to be useful, even if it's just a little!

Chapter 2

Day 21

Alright. Now that things have settled down and there aren't any bandits, let's think about what to do next. The main thing on my mind is that {Create Golem} spell I saw earlier. Magic that can make golems... Yep, that sounds perfect. Things will be easier for me if I can make golems do all the work for me.

"Eeeh?! But all that magic can do is make golems. You should just use that DP to summon golems as monsters instead. They cost 100 DP each, and they're strong enough."

"So basically, this spell will pay for itself after I use it to create one hundred golems. Every golem after the one hundredth is basically free."

"Wow, what?! That's amazing!"

Yeaaah, but to be honest, there's way too many unknown factors to actually know that for sure. How strong will the golems I make be? Can I really summon them for free? Will I even be able to summon 100 of them? The spell may not end up paying for itself, it's impossible to tell right now. To tell the truth, I halfway want it just because I want to try making some golems. I mean, it sounds really fun, right? ...Let's not tell her about all this.

"Alrighty then. I'll have one {Create Golem} scroll, please. Aaand... Sweet, there it is." I used 10,000 DP to buy a [{Create Golem} Scroll] and soon enough a string-tied scroll made of animal skin appeared. I tried not to think about how we had just lost two-thirds of our DP in a single purchase.

Let's try to use this thing. I undid the string and unrolled the scroll. It had {Create Golem} written along the top of it with a magic circle in the middle.

"...How do you use scrolls like this?"

"Just pour your mana into the magic circle." I followed Rokuko's advice and tried pouring my mana into the magic circle. It felt a lot like using the Survival

Magic spell {Purification}, somehow. All I had to do was put my hand on the magic circle and clench it into a fist before I started feeling mana flowing out of my body. It was just a little tiring.

My mana flowed into the magic circle and started running along its lines. *Huh... So this is what it's like to let mana flow into something. How long should I do this, anyway? I guess I should just keep pumping out mana until it works.* My mana flowed progressively faster into the magic circle. Once it reached its limit or something, the magic circle suddenly stopped resisting the flow of my mana, causing it all to burst and rain back onto me. It felt as if the composition of the magic circle was being ingrained within me as my body was showered with mana. Actually, it probably *was* being ingrained within me. Once it finished, I bet I could use {Create Golem}. As for the scroll... The magic circle on it was scorched black, and after all my mana left it, the whole scroll caught fire and turned to ash.

"...Wow, I've never seen someone actually use a scroll before. That was really cool."

"Oh yeah, you mentioned that you've never used a scroll before. I'm impressed you still knew what to do with one."

"Eheh, it's just common knowledge. Though, um... Number 89 is the one who taught me how to do that."

I decided to go ahead and try out {Create Golem} immediately. Two things were necessary to use it: mana, and material to make the golem's body with. Somehow, I just knew that. Knowing instinctively how to use a spell must be one side effect of using a scroll.

It seemed that using the ground itself to make Clay Golems was the most simple thing to do. The golem could have its shape changed by mana. I stood up to leave the Master Room and go dig out some clay, but before I left, I noticed Niku sitting in the corner of the room with her arms around her legs. She had woken up at some point without me noticing. That was where Gobsuke always used to sit. Mmm. Nostalgic.

Right, right. I don't have to go outside myself. If I have a tool available to me, I better use it.

“...Hey, Niku. Go outside and mine some clay for me. Not a lot, just about this much.”

“O-Okay. Understood, Master.”

I ordered Niku to go outside and bring back about a soccer ball’s worth of clay. She tried to go outside just like that, but I stopped her and gave her a [Shovel (5 DP)] first. It felt like she looked a little surprised when I did that. *Man, she really does look dead inside... I’ve never seen an expression that blank in my life.*

After a while, Niku came back with the shovel and clay. The way she was holding up the clump of clay with her tiny body made it look really heavy. Actually, I bet it actually was heavy for a child like her. *Oh yeah. It’s kinda late to say this, but Niku can go in and out of the Master Room on her own without any issues. Maybe because Rokuko thinks it’s normal for that to be possible or something?*

“Sweet, good job. You can rest now.”

“Ah, auuu...” I patted her head and praised her. While I was at it, I cast {Purification} on her since her hands had gotten dirty with clay. She let out a cute “hyafuuu!” cry for some reason. *Does it tickle when I cast {Purification} or something? I should have Rokuko cast it on her later as an experiment. Depending on Niku’s reaction, I might just learn something.*

“Alright, no point waiting around... {Create Golem}!” I sent my mana flowing into the clump of clay. The mana formed circuits within it and morphed the clay into the shape of a person. Perhaps thanks to the scroll, the image of a perfect golem arose in my mind... *Well, it’s actually a lot smaller than I expected, but that’s fine. Probably. Definitely. Maybe. This is fine. Everything will be okay.*

Obeying the instructions that were filling my mind, I kneaded the clay with my hands while pouring more mana into it. It didn’t take long until the clay turned into a (somewhat small) human-shaped golem. I had based its design on the things I had played with at school before being summoned. In other words, it looked like a thirty-centimeters-tall robot. Instead of a servomotor moving its joints, though, there was magic. Its body was made of clay instead of plastic and aluminum. Its movements were controlled by an embedded magic circle instead

of a CPU. It had a magic stone powering it instead of a battery... Wait, we didn't have any magic stones. *Oh well. We can just power it externally... The magic power floating around inside the dungeon's air should be good enough.* After spending about ten more minutes sending mana into it, the thirty-centimeters-tall (mini) Clay Golem was complete.

"Wow! What's that...? A golem...?"

"What's with all the question marks?"

"Well, golems are usually way bigger than an adult human! I'm pretty sure we would need to make a lot more than a hundred of these for the scroll to pay for itself."

"I mean, I don't know what's normal or not, so... Either way, we'll just have to make ten thousand of'm then." I decided to just order the golem around and see what happened. First, I made it start working on expanding the cave. That would help us save more DP. After bringing up the map and ordering the golem to go to the goblin room and start mining inwards through the mountain, the freshly made (mini) Clay Golem left the Master Room without even grabbing the shovel.

"Golems sure are dumb, aren't they? That shovel would make his job so much easier."

"Nope. You don't know what you're talking about, Rokuko. I'm basically stunned here, shocked by the vast potential golems have."

Rokuko must have been thinking something like "Golems can't do anything complicated!", but that was way too narrow of a mindset. If you think about it, "dig into the mountain" is a pretty complicated order on its own. To make a robot in modern Japan do something like that, you'd need to first teach it how to mine a wall in the first place from the ground up. Not only that, but telling them "go here" wouldn't work. You'd have to tell them exactly how many steps to take, and even how to move their legs. They wouldn't stand up on their own if they fell over, and if they hit a wall on the way there, they'd keep walking into the wall forever. But with magic, all I had to do was say "Go here and mine into the wall." Golems were amazing.

I'm seriously moved right now. But using magic was pretty tiring... I think I'll

just go to sleep now. Oh, right. I'll try using Niku as a dakimakura. That's why I saved her, anyway. Kind of. Come heeeere, little girl. Er... Don't worry, I won't do anything perverted to you. Yep! I won't make you wear knee socks or anything yet! That can come after we know each other better.

Day 21

Let's just make one thing clear.

Humans. Are not. Good. Dakimakuras.

I tried using Niku as one, but... Oh, don't worry. I didn't take her clothes off or anything—I seriously just used her as a dakimakura. Anyway, it was nice at first. Her skin was nice and smooth, plus her hair smelled nice. But it didn't take long for a problem to arise.

Her body heated up fast.

She got so, so hot.

Yeah, I'm not gonna be able to handle this outside of winter. I finally understand why people huddle together to stay warm in survival movies and stuff. Though I have heard that kids have especially high body temperatures... And I've also heard that dogs are hotter than humans. In which case, it makes complete sense that a dog-eared little girl would be extremely hot.

Plus, it wasn't until I noticed how heavily she was breathing that I realized she was running out of air beneath the covers. That was pretty dumb of me. Obviously, she would struggle to breathe without access to fresh air. I hurriedly pulled her head out of the covers.

...Which ended up with us lying in bed together, face to face. Her cheeks had flushed from the heat and her mouth was hanging weakly open, which made her lips look really sexy f—*Wait, no! I'm not a lolicon! Seriously, I'm not a lolicon!*

Her breath was tickling me, so I made her turn and face the other way. I didn't do that because she was making my heart beat too fast to sleep. Her breath was ticklish. That was all. But... after turning around, her hair started to tickle

me instead. *Aaaah! Why does this have to be so bad?!*

Having no other choice, I lowered her back down such that our heads were a reasonable distance apart. I pulled the blanket down to about my stomach so she wouldn't start suffocating again. That helped with the heat a little too.

With that, I was finally comfortable enough to sleep. But then another problem arose. A pretty big problem, too.

You see, Niku couldn't move while I was using her as a dakimakura. She'd have to push me off her if she wanted to get up, but as a slave, she couldn't do that. Can you imagine what happened because of that?

SHE! PEED! HERSELF!

Okay, okay. I knew it was my fault. I felt something wet when I woke up and then panicked like crazy after seeing Niku crying in my arms. I stood us up and cast {Purification} on me, her, and the futon while patting her head and telling her that everything would be okay. *Yeah, it was my fault. I'm sorry. Next time you need to go to the bathroom, just push me aside and go. To show how sorry I am, you can eat as much food as you want today. Ask for anything, it's yours. Okay? Here, have a hamburger! They taste super good! So stop crying! I'm sorry, it was my fault!*

* * *

Niku finally calmed down after she finished eating the hamburger.

"Ummm, okay. I would like to begin our first meeting on what to do with Keima, the pervert who loves to make his slave girl pee on him."

"Hey, hold up. That's a pretty biased way of framing things, Madame Judge. It was an accident, Your Honor, I swear." I used my position as Dungeon Master to make Rokuko shut up about how I had accidentally made Niku pee herself. She immediately fell silent, so I decided to start making more golems.

"Niku, bring me some more clay. Just as much as you did yesterday."

"Okay." Niku picked up the shovel from yesterday and left the Master Room, which made me remember something. The (mini) Clay Golem I made yesterday had been working all night.

...Yeah, I should check out how he's doing first.

"Leeet's see here..." I brought up the dungeon monitor from the menu and checked up on the golem I had ordered to dig into the mountain. The (mini) Clay Golem was steadily scratching away at the wall. His spirit was admirable, but he hadn't made any progress at all. The bare rock wall was just too strong for his clay hands to wear down.

That was my mistake. I should have given him a pickaxe or something.

"Mmm, see? He'll just keep on doing what you told him to, no matter what."

"How long can he stay active? I think it has something to do with the magic stone inside of it."

"Eh? Well, obviously, he'll stay active until he runs out of mana. I mean, he's a golem. But dungeons are filled with mana, so he basically should never stop as long as he's inside of one."

Wow, that's crazy. He basically doesn't need any energy to keep moving.

I was losing my mind over how far golems had surpassed my expectations. It was looking like I would be able to just leave everything to the golems and sleep as much as I wanted.

"No way, Keima, no way. You can't count on golems to do anything right. Just look. See what happened because you told that golem to dig into the wall?"

"Huh?" I looked at where Rokuko was pointing on the monitor.

Yep. There's the (mini) Clay Golem, digging away at... the... wait, what? Upon closer inspection, I noticed something odd. The (mini) Clay Golem was indeed scratching away at the wall. But his hands were getting worn down, and despite how broken apart they had already become, he just kept mindlessly pushing them against the wall to keep digging.

"Oh man..."

"See? Golems are just dumb. They only ever do what you tell them to, nothing else. That's why they'll keep trying to dig a hole into something even if nothing's happening."

Yeah, this is something. This is definitely something.

But I wasn't thinking the same thing that Rokuko was. Not at all. I could barely keep myself from grinning ear to ear.

I ordered the (mini) Clay Golem to come back to the Master Room and wait for a bit. It needed repairs, after all.

"I-I'm back... o-oof."

"Welcome back, Niku. Good job. I'm proud of you. Nooow... Let's start experimenting."

After taking the large clump of clay from Niku, I cast {Purification} on her while patting her head. It wasn't much, but there was something I really wanted to try out as soon as possible. If I was right about it, {Create Golem} might just be the greatest spell I ever could have asked for.

Brimming with hope, I started to pour mana into the clump of clay while kneading it with my hands.

* * *

"...And that should do it."

"What... is that...?"

I had made three golem arms, each about as small as a finger. I had then made a tub-shaped golem about the size of my palm with a little rod in the middle of it. After combining the golem with the needle-shaped arms, I had finished making a golem with three tiny arms.

"Seriously, what? That's not a golem, no way. Like, golems just don't look like that."

"It's a [Clock]."

Yup. It was a [Golem Clock]. I had given each of the golem arms different instructions. I told the first arm to rotate completely every sixty seconds, the second arm every sixty minutes, and the last one every twelve hours. In other words, the individual arms became the seconds, minutes, and hours hands of a clock. Together they formed a clock that would keep working as long as it had mana.

...Making sure it stayed accurate would be pretty annoying, though.

By the way, I had realized halfway through that I didn't need to make the golem arms look like actual arms, which is why they ended up being needle-shaped, like the arms of a real clock would be. Everything was made from clay, but I doubted anyone would realize the clock was actually a golem.

"Y-You really made a golem shaped like that...? Wooow, Keima. You don't have any common sense, do you?"

"Seriously? You're the one who summoned me from another world. How would I know what's common sense here?"

Either way, it was way easier to make a customized golem than I had thought it would be. Plus, because the arms didn't have any joints to move or anything, it didn't take much mana at all to work. How simple my orders were probably helped too. It seemed to take about one-tenth of the mana that the (mini) Clay Golem took.

"So, what are you going to do with that anyway? You can just look at the Menu if you want to know what time it is, so..."

Oh yeah. The time of day and such was displayed on the Dungeon Master Menu that I could use.

"...I'll give it to Niku. I only made this an experiment, so yeah. Now I know more about what I can do with golems. This wasn't a waste of time at all." And so, I gave Niku the watch as a present.

...At which point I realized that Niku was still wearing torn-up rags as clothes. *Holy crap.* I immediately bought some [Cheap Clothes (Dress: 8 DP)], [Cheap Shoes (Child-sized: 10 DP)], and [Knee Socks (White: 70 DP)]. While watching Niku change clothes, I realized that she was 'missing something' and quickly bought a set of [Female Child's Underwear (20 DP)].

That was close. All that cost a fair amount of DP, but she could keep wearing all that pretty much forever thanks to {Purification}. It even worked on her underwear no problem, thankfully.

The clothes looked nice enough, but I wanted to dress her up in a much cuter outfit once we could spare the DP. Same for Rokuko. Her DP-saving form is pretty cute itself, but her other form was pretty much my exact type. She

looked super cute and her feet were the definition of pretty. They were truly spectacular. Seriously. I couldn’t stop fantasizing about making her wear all sorts of socks.



...But y'know, I feel like it's kinda arbitrary that the knee socks were so expensive. Like, 70 DP? That's three and a half goblins right there, c'mon. Does it just cost more because it's a luxury item?

I attached a [Leather String (2 DP)] to the [Golem Clock] and hung it off Niku's neck. She stared at it for a long time without saying anything after I said it was hers. I thought that was because she really liked it, but then I realized she probably just didn't understand what it was. *Right, right, she's a slave. There's probably a lot she doesn't know about the world. Starting tomorrow, I'll teach her everything she needs to know. By proxy, through Rokuko. Do your best, Rokuko.*

I mean, seriously, what's Rokuko been doing anyway? She's basically done nothing for the past month. She needs to work a little harder. I'll have her do my work for me... No, wait. No no no. The only future I see with Rokuko as leader is one where our dungeon turns into a goblin paradise and then collapses immediately.

* * *

I repaired the hands of the (mini) Clay Golem, taking the opportunity to turn them into stone shovels. It was actually pretty simple to do that. The stone became pliable like clay after I poured enough mana into it, making it very easy to morph into a shovel-esque shape.

...And here we have the new and improved (mini) Clay Golem, Shovel Edition!

It felt like it took less mana to mold clay than it took to mold stone. In which case, it would probably be better if I made my first human-sized golem out of clay and just gave it a pickaxe. That could come after I spent some more time experimenting with this (mini) Clay Golem, though. Finding what works best with this guy and *then* making big versions of him would be the most efficient route. But it was getting pretty tiring calling him "(mini) Clay Golem" every time I talked about him, and I was already mixing in materials other than clay now, so really that whole title wasn't working anymore.

And so, I decided to give him a name. One that fit his status as an experimental golem would work best.

“Alright. You will now be known as Testle. Your name is Testle. Got it?”

The (mini) Clay Golem, now known as Testle, nodded as if saying “got it.” I then changed his order, making him instead go outside of the cave and gather clay for me. He would probably come back each time he gathered about a soccer ball’s worth of clay. *If I went to sleep right now, there’d probably be a ton of clay waiting for me when I woke up.*

...I knew it wouldn’t ever stop moving inside the dungeon, but how long would it last outside of the dungeon? I decided to test that and watched as Testle moved around for about one solid hour before stopping. I needed to be careful about that. Stopped golems would resume moving if you poured mana into them. It depended on the magic stone inside of them, but normally they could last one hour. I knew that thanks to knowledge from the {Create Golem} scroll.

...But wait, what the heck is a magic stone anyway? I know it functions like a battery, but that’s all I know. Seriously? You’ll give me knowledge that involves magic stones, but won’t tell me what they are?

“Hey, Rokuko. What’re magic stones?”

“Eh? Magics stones are just, ummm... Stones filled with mana. You can usually take them from monsters... Oh, right. Golems usually have magic stones inside of them. Don’t yours?” *Nooope. They don’t.*

I went ahead and had Niku go get the frozen Testle for me. He started moving once he returned to the dungeon area, but he just turned around to get more clay and thus immediately froze again. I had to order him to come back with Niku. Ultimately, I learned that I could order golems from a long distance using the Menu, and that any orders I gave would preserve even after they ran out of mana. All good things to know. Thanks, Testle.

“So, in order to have golems mine clay and stone for me from now on... I’ll need some magic stones to experiment with.”

“Magic stones? Why don’t you try buying some with DP?” Rokuko casually said that to my offhanded remark.

It was like wool being pulled from my eyes. *Holy crap. Is it just me or is DP*

way too useful?

"...Dang, I didn't even think about doing that. I can't believe I needed you to remind me about the DP Catalog... Am I just an idiot? I'm disappointed with myself..."

"What's that supposed to mean?!"

I took a look at the DP Catalog. Magic stones were in the treasure section, in the same category as jewels. There were varying grades of magic stones, with the cheapest kind being 10 DP each and the most expensive being several tens of thousands of DP. But for now, I settled with buying just the cheapest ones to experiment with.

"Oh yeah. Hey, Niku. Can you read and write?"

"...No, I can't. I'm sorry, Master..." Niku lowered her head sadly.

H-Hey, you know I'm not mad, right? You're making me feel bad, somehow.

"That's okay. Rokuko, teach Niku how to read. I'll let you eat a lot of melon rolls if she learns well. Same for you, Niku. You can eat as many hamburgers as you want if you do well. Study hard."

"Eh?! I can eat as many melon rolls as I want?! Okay!"

"C-Can... Can I really?"

Good, good. Hamburgers always made Niku's eyes light up. Thinking about it, Niku had gotten a lot more lively than she was in the past. The dead eyes she had when I saved her were completely gone.

Perfect. No kid should ever have to look like that. But you know, dog girls really do love meat, huh? She'd probably die of happiness if I gave her a beef steak. I should check the DP Catalog to see if it has those. She might thank me by letting me rub her feet.

I would need Niku to do work for me outside of the cave before long, so the sooner she learned to read and write, the better.

Suddenly, it hit me that I had never thought about whether Niku was okay with being my slave... Though she might've needed to be a slave to go in and out of the Master Room, so there was no reason for me to go about rocking

that boat. Plus, slaves were probably restrained by some kind of magic in this world. I doubted it would be easy to just snap my fingers and free her. She does have a collar around her neck, so... *Eh. I'll think about this more later.*

I got back to work making Golems while Rokuko taught Niku how to read and write. Normally it'd be about time for me to go to bed, but there was one thing I prioritized over sleep: preparations for sleeping really well. I was prepared to cut down on my sleeping time for the sake of sleeping better! Yeah, basically, sleep was still the most important thing to me.

I used DP to buy a bunch of magic stones and pickaxes. We still had 3,500 DP left, but that would turn to zero in no time if we wasted too much of it.

I took one of the magic stones and embedded it within Testle. How long would he last outside of the dungeon with one of those? To find that out, I had Testle go outside the dungeon again and start tilling a field. Naturally, I had turned his arms into hoes beforehand to help him out. There shouldn't be any problem with leaving him out there on his own. No adventurers would be coming anytime soon.

With that out of the way, I started to make a human-sized golem. It would be smart to try making at least one of the normal golems that {Create Golem} was designed to make.

...

.....

Ah. I didn't have enough clay. But that wouldn't be a problem if I just removed some clay from his core and made him lighter overall. That would use less resources and make a better golem. Two birds with one stone.

And finishing the new golem was a 10 DP magic stone, the cheapest one available. With all that done... I had made a golem that could actually move pretty speedily. His movements were a lot smoother than Testle's. Maybe because I had used less clay overall? Rokuko looked really surprised after seeing how smoothly the golem was moving, but I ignored her and had him start mining into the mountain with a pickaxe. All I had to say was "Use this to mine deeper into the cave." Easy.

Aaah, I want to use the stone he mines to make a one hundred percent Stone Golem. I should've withdrawn all the stone those bandits mined instead of turning it into DP.

Day 22

Testle, with the 10 DP magic stone inside of him, kept working for a solid day straight with no problem. He didn't even seem close to stopping. How long is he gonna last?

Plus, the Clay Golem I had given a pickaxe to had advanced five meters through the wall. He had made a five-meter-long passage big enough for a large adult to pass through. *Yep, these golems are gonna be perfect workers for me.* I ordered the big golem to come back to the Master Room so I could reinforce his worn-down joints with stone before making him get back to digging. He was getting me lots of stone and clay to use, while simultaneously expanding the dungeon. Perfect.

So, I decided to go ahead and make a Stone Golem. In the form of Power Armor.

"Hey, Keima. What... What is that?"

"Golem Armor."

"Why is Niku inside of a golem?"

"Uh, cause I'm having her test it out for me. Niku, try moving around a little bit."

"O-Okay!"

This time, I had Niku put on a Power Armor-shaped golem after ordering it to assist Niku whenever she moved. The golem walked when Niku started to walk, and it looked like there wasn't much weight to its step. That was good. The golem probably wouldn't be able to keep up with any speedy movements, but thankfully it didn't shake Niku around so much that she would get hurt or even die just from being inside of it.

“It’s a little hard to walk it in, but that’s all.”

“Sweet. Try punching this wall.”

“Hold on, Keima. What even is that? It looks like a slab of stone.”

“What? It’s just a wall.” To be more precise, it was a Wall Golem that I had made out of stone as well. Since I had ordered it not to move (or rather, since I hadn’t given it any orders at all), it was basically an actual wall. The simplicity of its design helped me save a lot of mana. I could probably upgrade it by making it more similar to a brick wall.

“Here I go...! Hyaaah!” Smash! The stone wall completely shattered. Rokuko looked really surprised.

Even Niku, who had thrown the punch, was blinking in surprise. It shouldn’t have hurt her since her hand was covered in stone, but uh... I sure hope it didn’t hurt her. That was the most important part of this experiment. If it didn’t hurt, I’d start using it myself.

“Alright, it’s nice and strong. I’ll be able to fight pretty well with this thing. Niku, are your arms and legs okay? Be sure to tell me if you get hurt, so I can help you out.”

“I-I’m okay.”

“Good, good. It’ll be able to move outside the dungeon with a magic stone inside of it, so either way, it’ll be useful for manual labor and stuff. Now I just need to figure out if I should make it smaller to fit underneath my clothes, or keep it like that, full-sized body armor... That shouldn’t get in the way of me visiting populated towns, hopefully.” *I should base the armor’s design on what those knights were wearing.* My train of thought was interrupted by Rokuko, who was tilting her head in confusion.

“Um? Keima, you’re going to a town?”

“I won’t be able to do much just staying inside here forever, and now that the knights have eliminated all the bandits for us, the road to town should be pretty safe. There’s a lot of things I wanna learn about, which means I need to do a lot of information gathering. I’ll have to go to town eventually.” *Like how apparently you can become a Holy Paladin by destroying a Dungeon Core. If*

that's true, people might come by here looking to destroy our Core. I needed to figure out what the people of this world thought about dungeons. Not to mention... that god had mentioned he'd 'repay' me if I destroyed any dungeon Cores. Does that have something to do with Holy Paladins?

"...Oh. Are Dungeon Masters stuck inside their dungeon or something?"

"No, don't worry, there's no rules like that. Um... It's just, I thought you weren't planning on ever leaving the Master Room."

Ah. Right. I haven't left the Master Room even a single time after being summoned to this world.

"That's because there were bandits out there. How could I go outside? They'd have killed me."

"Aaah... That's true. I can't blame you for that."

I thought back to when the bandits were still around. They were seriously tough to beat. I thought I was screwed when I saw them surrounding the Dungeon Core. Though... Uh, it kinda felt like it didn't actually take much to get rid of them. Oh well. They had all turned into DP. No point thinking about them anymore, no point at all. Yeah.

Day 25

And so, three days had passed. I had made modified versions of Testle and then modified those modified versions, learning more about golems the entire time. Since I ended up getting a solid grasp on how to make basic golems... well, I'm not sure how "basic" you could call the tiny golems, clock golems, etc., but anyway... I decided to start trying to make golems out of things other than basic solids like wood and stone, starting off with fire and water. The results were very fruitful. Though the Fire Golem I made burned to pieces and vanished in seconds after I completed it. That one was a failure. I tried making a Wood Golem and then setting it on fire, instead of using fire directly, but that naturally just led to the golem burning apart. Ash Golems weren't really worth anything, so that was a failure too. Though... I could throw a burning Wood Golem at an

intruder as a kind of scare tactic.

On the other hand, golems made from water—Aqua Golems—were surprisingly normal. Or at least, they looked normal. They looked like a plain golem on the outside, but your hand would go right inside of them if you tried touching them. It felt like that could be useful somehow, but no ideas came to mind. You could raise some fish inside of them, I guess? At least I knew where to get a nifty aquarium if I ever needed one. Or so I thought, moments before the Aqua Golem broke apart and poured onto the ground. Uh... I guess shaking my hand around inside of it was doing damage somehow. I would really need to think hard about how to use one of them. All that resulted in my masterpiece, the Golem Blade. It was a sword-shaped golem, made from an [Iron Ingot] I bought for 30 DP. I had shaped the metal into the shape of a Japanese katana, and the result was a pretty nice-looking sword. That surprised me, since I had only used a single metal in it. I could make the blade vibrate by pouring mana into it, which would allow it to cut through even a thick tree like a buzzing chainsaw. It wasn't exactly a vibroblade, but it was basically a Magic Blade. I could even make the blade shoot outwards as a surprise gimmick.

Though my real masterpiece was the Movement-Assisting Wearable Cloth Golem. In the end, golems in the shape of Power Armor just stood out too much and were hard to move quickly due to their weight. I abandoned that idea and just made a golem out of clothing instead. I even made gloves that would help support my wrists and improve my grip strength. *Way to go, magic. You really can do anything.*

The Wearable Cloth Golem's main order was to assist the wearer's movements, but it could more or less fight for me as well. When paired with the Golem Blade, I could fight on the level of a trained soldier despite having never wielded a weapon in my life before thanks to its help. By the way, I had taught the golem what exactly to do through video footage of those knights, bandits, and adventurers fighting. *This Dungeon Menu is amazing. I can't believe it saved backup footage of everything I saw through the dungeon monitor. That's high-tech. High-brow technology.*

Well, I won't be able to keep up with it once it starts moving on its own, so it'll probably hurt my muscles a lot if I have to use it. I hope muscle pain will be the

most of my problems... but yeah, now I definitely won't be a sitting duck out there. I used the leftover iron to fortify the Wearable Cloth Golem, so it should have had some nice defensive power too. Worst-case scenario, I could order it to "run back to the dungeon." It'd get me back to safety even if I lost consciousness in the process. I cared a lot about staying alive. Even if I lost all my limbs, the only thing I needed to sleep was my life itself.

"And there you have it. My ultimate armor and weapon. What do you think?"

"...I think you have brain problems!" As usual, Rokuko didn't hesitate at all before insulting me. Sheesh. And it should've been obvious how great the golems were, too.

Oh, wait. Maybe she was just that upset about how I only had enough materials to make two sets of the golems, one for me and one for Niku. *Sorry, Rokuko. You're the Dungeon Core, so you'll have to stay home for this one. Wait... Can you even go outside? You are the Dungeon Core, right?*

"Hey, wait a second! I never said I wanted a matching outfit or anything!"

"Okay, okay. Anyway. Be sure to summon like five goblins or something if any adventurers come. We'll probably be fine for a while, but still."

I put on the Wearable Cloth Golem and sheathed my Golem Blade. Niku did the same, except her Golem Blade was small like a knife. Just to be safe, I ordered it not to attack me. It would still be as strong as a normal knife, but there was no helping that.

Anyway. Now I'm ready to go to a town with people in it.

Day 27

Niku learned to read and write pretty fast, so I rewarded her with a hamburger. Rokuko was already munching happily on the melon roll I had given her. So heartwarming...

To put it in Japanese terms, Niku had learned the local language's equivalent to *hiragana*. But that was more than enough for her to read and write most things, apparently.

“U-Um... By the way, Master... Would you please register your mana on my collar?”

“Huh?” It was rare for Niku to talk on her own like that. I didn’t know what she was talking about at first, but apparently the submission collar Niku was wearing had a mana registration system.

“I’ve heard that every person in the world has a unique wavelength to their mana.”

“Oh, huh. Like fingerprints? That’s pretty interesting.” Dealing with something like that sounded like a pain... but if I didn’t do it, someone might steal Niku, and I’d have no excuse then. Plus, if Niku got stolen, I’d have a problem much more tedious than a collar’s registration system to deal with. She could go in and out of the [Ordinary Cave’s] Master Room, after all.

I asked whether or not I was basically stealing her from the boss of the bandits, but apparently the collar resets itself after its present owner dies. One of Niku’s fellow slaves in the slums had temporarily gotten free after their master died. Whoever finds a free slave like that gets to claim them as their own. The slave Niku knew had apparently been caught by someone else and then sold to the slum’s slave market.

“...You can’t take off the collar yourself?”

“I can’t. It would kill me.” A submission collar was a relatively cheap item used primarily to choke its wearer, but when someone became a slave, they would be forced to make a contract through magic where they would die if the submission collar was ever removed. Basically, Contract Magic would kill the slaves if they tried taking their collars off. *Holy crap! Contract Magic is terrifying!*

Not only that, but the collar would tighten on its own if the slave ever defied its master or tried to harm them. *I don’t know how exactly it works, but sheesh, that’s way too strict.* The master of the slave could also tighten the collar whenever they pleased just by thinking about it. Some people would summon their slaves by tightening the collar a little, even. To top things off, it was pretty expensive to remove the collar safely... *Yep, this thing is a real pain!*

“Alright, I’ll definitely register my mana then. I wanna avoid as many

problems as possible here.”

“Okay. Please pour your mana into the plate on my collar... Um, after you do that, please check whether it worked by squeezing the collar.”

I placed my fingers on the plate and poured mana into it. Yeah... It definitely felt like my mana connected to some password-channel-system thing. Registration complete? I wasn’t too happy about it, but I envisioned Niku’s collar squeezing as a test to see if it worked. And then...

“Ngh! Ah...!”

“Woah! C-Cancel, cancel! Stop choking her!” I saw the collar squeeze tightly. It was visibly digging into her neck. *That’s not light squeezing at all! Holy crap! Stop! What kind of monster would do this to someone just to call them over?!*

“A-Are you okay?”

“Nnn... Cough... Y-Yes, thank... you...” Niku, teary-eyed from having her oxygen supply cut off, replied to me with flushed cheeks while coughing.

I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.

“Eheh. Now I’m your slave for real, Master.” Niku smiled brightly.

What?! This is the first time I’ve ever seen her smile. Why now...?

Day 28

“Alright, Rokuko? Only summon five goblins if any adventurers come. *Only* five. No more than that. When you buy melon rolls, get them from the [Pastry Set]. You can have two a day.”

“W-We’ll see. You be careful too, Keima. Okay?” And so, I left the cave with Rokuko staying behind to keep watch.

.....

It hit me that I was leaving the Master Room for the first time. I had been letting Niku take care of getting clay and recovering Testle and all that good stuff. I could just use the monitor whenever I wanted to look outside.

...What if the outside air is poisonous to people from my world or something? Like, what if the planet's mana is actually super deadly to me...

"...Aren't we going?"

"Y-Yeah, we're going. Right now. Riiiight now."

"Hurry up and go already."

"Don't push me, alright? No matter what. Don't push me."

"Eh? Push you? Okay." *Hold on! What's going on here, automatic translator?! GAAAH!*

...Rokuko pushed me on the back, forcing me out of the Master Room. I ended up in the dungeon's Core Room, completely fine. "...A-Alright, sweet. Nothing bad happened at all. Whew, I really worked myself up over nothing. I mean, how could mana be poisonous to me? I've been casting spells almost constantly. Yeah."

"Are you okay, Master?"

"Oh, yeah. I'm fine. Totally fine, feeling great."

"Let's go, then. Um... Why are we just standing at the cave's entrance?"

Y'know, come to think of it, I'm the Dungeon Master. Should I really be leaving the dungeon willy-nilly like this? I dunno. I think I should be more cautious about this and take things really slowly...

"Hyah."

"Why are you pushing me?! Don't push me!"

"Eh? You want me to push you? Okay, I will."

"WHY?! Why aren't you doing your job right, Mr. Automatic Translator?! Ah...!"

Y-You've stolen my first time (going outside)...! M-My precious first time...!

..... *Yeah, nothing bad is happening. Why would anything bad happen, anyway? I'm being silly.*

I took another cautious step outside, but moved so slowly that Niku started to

pull on my clothes.

“Master?”

“Ah, right. Sorry. Let’s get this show on the road!” And so, I took my first step towards the forest...!

“...Should I push you?”

“Uh... Yes, please...”

* * *

We hadn’t encountered any major problems so far, but it still frustrated me that I had to leave safety to go outside where my very life was at risk. I grumbled about it to myself while running along the mountain road with Niku.

Why did I have to go outside? For safety, of course. It was impossible for me to tell whether I was safe or not without any information. I had so little information that my desire to do research outweighed the possibly temporary safety I had at the dungeon. Hence, I needed to go to a human settlement.

Aaaah. I really don’t want to work.

Naturally, I was capable of running down the mountain road despite never exercising thanks to my Wearable Golem. I had ordered it to “Run all the way to Tsia Village,” and so it was. But it was still really tiring somehow, so I needed to stop several times to take breaks. *How is Niku keeping up so easily...? My muscles are gonna hurt like hell tomorrow, sheesh.*

I had brought a bunch of food and water just in case we didn’t make it to town in a single day, but after our first break I let Niku carry it all for me. Hey, don’t look at me like that. She had said, “It’s a slave’s responsibility to carry her master’s things, so please let me,” and I just couldn’t bring myself to turn her down. But either way, she could easily run while carrying all the food and water. I barely managed to do that even with my Wearable Golem helping out. *Dog girls sure are tough...*

It took us half a day to reach the city. Thankfully, we didn’t encounter anything particularly dangerous on the way there. At worst, the magic stone inside my Wearable Golem ran out of juice and I had refill it with my mana.

Yeah... I should've been less cheap and bought an actually good magic stone. *I'll swap this one out for a better stone after I get back.*

And so, we were there. Tsia City at last. Aside from the food and water, we had also brought a fair amount of cash from the dungeon. It was the money we had withdrawn into the Master Room after the knights came to eliminate the bandits.

The city was surrounded by a brick wall about five meters tall, and the entrance gate was protected by a tough-looking guard. *Wait a second, woah. This is a pretty big city... How many people are living here?* I glanced at my map out of curiosity and saw that there were gates on the north, east, south, and west sides of the wall. We were on the west side.

"Halt! What business do you have in Tsia City?" The cautious-looking gatekeeper ordered us to halt once we got close enough to the gate. Not wanting to cause any unnecessary problems, we stopped.

"Aaah, sorry. We're from the country, so we don't really know how this works. Do we need something to get inside?"

"...Answer the question. What business do you have in Tsia City?"

"Well, we left the place we were living in to come here and become adventurers if possible."

"I see. Your companion must be a slave, given that collar. Does she belong to you?"

"Yes, she does. I found her by chance."

"Why did you come here now?"

"Didn't some knights come by recently on a mission to exterminate bandits? I thought the roads and such would be safer than ever right now. And it looks like I was right, since we didn't have any problems getting here. Peaceful times sure are nice. Oh... Is it somehow a bad time for Tsia City right now? Sorry, I don't really know much about that kind of thing." I kept rambling on and on so as to not give the guard an opportunity to poke any holes in my story.

Though, of course, I hadn't lied once. Before coming here, I noticed that there

was a [Lie Detecting Magic Item (50,000 DP)] in the DP Catalog and decided to avoid lying at all just for safety's sake. DP-wise, it cost half as much as a [{Healing} Scroll (100,000 DP)]. It wouldn't be surprising at all if the Church handed them out more freely at important positions. I needed to watch what I said, just in case.

The [Ordinary Cave] was far enough away from town to basically be in the country, and I had indeed decided to become an adventurer to help with my information gathering. It was pure chance that Niku ended up in my dungeon, and I did come here thanks to how the knights had recently eliminated the danger around the roads and such (i.e. my dungeon).

"Oh, I see. My apologies for questioning you. It's just that... indeed, we have a very distinguished visitor right now. One related to the knights you were just talking about."

"Really? You must be really busy, my sympathies. Can we go inside the city now, or do we need something to do that?"

"Do you have any form of personal identification? If not, you'll need to pay five silver coins and one copper coin. Your slave doesn't need to pay five silver coins because she's with you, her master, and slave collars are a form of personal identification."

...I checked the wallet I had brought with me. Inside was seven silver coins, ten noticeably big copper coins, and thirty smallish copper coins. *Sweet. I have enough.*

There were gold, silver, and copper coins in the DP Catalog's treasure section. Ten of a certain coin was equivalent to a single one of a larger version of that coin, and ten of those large coins were equivalent to one coin of a rarer metal. For example, ten copper coins were worth one large copper coin, and ten large copper coins were worth one silver coin. I didn't know if there was any coin more valuable than a gold coin, though.

"Oh, and the silver coins are a form of insurance. The guild will give you a form of identification after you become an adventurer. If you show that to me, I can return your coins. Though... Someone from the country like you likely won't have enough money to pay for both this and your registration at the guild. It

costs three silver coins for one person to become an adventurer, after all. You'll only have to pay three coppers as insurance if a guard follows you to the guild until you get your identification. Though I'll warn you now, two of those coppers will stay with us as payment for the extra work. I'm free right now, so we can go right away if you wish."

So basically, I've got two options. "Spend two coppers" or "Find my way to the Adventurer's Guild on my own, register there, come back, show my ID to get my money back, and then go back to the guild." Eh... Yeah, sounds tedious. I should just ask for his help.

"That sounds great. You don't mind?"

"Not at all. I'll show you to the guild. Hey, you over there. Watch the gate for me. I'm showing these travelers to the guild."

I gave him four copper coins. Thankfully, that meant I still had plenty of cash left.

The guards swapped places and I went with the first one towards the Adventurer's Guild. Two coppers to have him guide me there was pretty cheap. Probably. *Er... How much is two coppers worth, anyway?*

We advanced down the main street of the city and soon enough delicious scents wafted into my nostrils. There must have been a lot of people making kebabs, as the tasty smell of meat was thick in the air. I wondered what kind of meat was used to make kebabs in this world. They probably ended up huge. And looking at a sign near one of the stands, they cost about five copper coins each. *Mmm, I guess that means one copper coin is worth about 100 yen? I'll try to think about it like that.*

"Hey. I understand how you feel, but would you mind waiting for that until you get your identification? I am working right now." The guard hurried me on after I wasted too much time staring at one of the kebab stands.

This guard really is a good guy, huh? I'll spare his life if he ever comes to my dungeon.

After walking for a bit, we reached a fairly large building. A sign with a drawing of swords, potions, and scrolls on it was hanging on the door. That

must have been the signpost for the Adventurer's Guild.

I went inside and saw that it was filled with people who looked like adventurers, partying hard and drinking a ton of beer. I was surprised to see all of them drinking so hard at noon. Maybe they had worked all night and were on the verge of going home? I followed the guard to the counter and soon enough the receptionist handed over the registration forms. Surprisingly enough, it was wood-based paper, not sheep-skin parchment or anything like that. I was impressed. The form looked handwritten. This world might not have developed printing technology yet.

"Can you write your name? If not, I can write it for you at the cost of one copper."

"No need. Niku, it's your time to shine."

"Yes, Master!" I asked Niku to write my name for me. The only language I could write in was Japanese. I couldn't comprehend this world's language whatsoever. The automatic translator would take any text I looked at and turn it into Japanese in my brain. But the Japanese I wrote didn't turn into characters people of this world could read. *It's such a pain. I'm so glad I saved Niku.*

Suddenly, I realized that the guard and the receptionist were looking Niku and me over with furrowed brows. Was it that rare for a child slave to be literate?

"I'm surprised... She's such a small child, and yet..."

"Well, I needed her to be useful somehow."

"I-I see."

For some reason, the receptionist was giving me a kind of disgusted look. Should I not have taught Niku to read or something? And... it might be a bit late for me to say this, but I looked pretty different from most of the people in the city. I thought it'd be fine since Niku had black hair too, but the bandits and everyone else here all looked like Europeans. I tried wearing normal-looking (golem) clothes, but that might have not been enough. Either way, though, my face had nothing to do with my guild registration.

"Um... Are you really going to register that slave child as well?"

“Is there a problem with that? Can slaves not be registered? Is there an age limit? Is she writing the wrong things?”

“No, there isn’t any problem with the paperwork or anything of that sort.”

Niku finished writing my name and we quickly finished the rest of the registration. We paid six silver coins to cover the registration fee... leaving us with only one silver coin, ten large copper coins, and thirty normal copper coins. We lost a lot of cash all at once.

After a short wait, we were given our Adventurer’s Guild cards.

“Now that you have personal identification, I will return to my post.”

“Oh, okay. Thanks for all your help.”

“Any time. It’s my job. Next time you come to the city, it’ll cost one copper to get inside.”

The guard went back to his post after checking our guild cards. With that settled, I decided to start gathering information by checking out what quests the guild was offering.

“Now, I need to explain guild ranks.”

“Oh, okay.” Scratch that, things weren’t settled yet. I still had a lecture to listen to.

Gatekeeper’s Perspective

I am a gatekeeper. Though it feels like bragging to say so myself, I’m quite adept at my job and I can spot anyone suspicious from a mile away. And here I see two travelers walking towards the gate I’m guarding, looking as suspicious as anyone I’ve ever seen. One is a black-haired man and the other is a small girl with similarly black hair.

It’s rare for me to see black hair around these parts... are they siblings? But either way... is that man making the girl carry everything for him? I see he has a sword, but...

I thought they were siblings from a glance, but upon closer inspection I realized that the girl is both a slave and a canine beastkin. I see now. That why he's making her carry everything.

But still. Slave or not, making a small girl carry everything is a bit much. Is he discriminatory towards beastkin? No, if that were the case, she wouldn't be so well-dressed. They're certainly an odd pair. That's enough of this, though. I have work to do.

"Halt! What business do you have in Tsia City?" The two of them obediently stop after I shout at them.

"Aaah, sorry. We're from the country, so we don't really know how this works. Do we need something to get inside?"

Looks like they don't intend to fight their way inside or anything like that. I stealthily activate my lie-detecting magic tool. Gatekeepers tend to have one of these, as they allow us to determine whether or not those we're speaking to are lying to get inside. A veteran gatekeeper such as myself knows who to be suspicious of without a tool like this, but I've been ordered to use it every time without fail thanks to how a royal visitor is currently in town. I'm not one to disobey a direct order.

"...Answer the question. What business do you have in Tsia City?"

"Well, we left the place we were living in to come here and become adventurers if possible." Hm, that wasn't a lie. Unemployed youths tend to be attracted by tales of those similar to them becoming adventurers and obtaining untold riches. If only they knew that reality isn't so kind.

"I see. Your companion must be a slave, given that collar. Does she belong to you?"

"Yes, she does. I found her by chance." That too wasn't a lie. A slave without a master legally becomes the property of whoever finds them and registers with their collar, so I have no issue with that. There were some bandits camping out around here recently, so she likely belonged to them or something of the sort. Perhaps she is dressed so well because this man isn't treating her like a slave...?

"Why did you come here now?"

“Didn’t some knights come by recently on a mission to exterminate bandits? I thought the roads and such would be safer than ever right now. And it looks like I was right, since we didn’t have any problems getting here. Peaceful times sure are nice. Oh... Is it somehow a bad time for Tsia City right now? Sorry, I don’t really know much about that kind of thing.” Hm, once again, he hasn’t lied. He doesn’t know much about this city. It’s expected for most travelers to have something to hide, so it’s acceptable for them to lie a few times, but this man hasn’t lied a single time. He must be a very honest person.

“Oh, I see. My apologies for questioning you. It’s just that... indeed, we have a very distinguished visitor right now. One related to the knights you were just talking about.”

“Really? You must be really busy, my sympathies. Can we go inside the city now, or do we need something to do that?”

Right. I need to do the rest of my job as gatekeeper. I shift into business mode, having already decided to let them in. The man seemed to be a little worried about the contents of his wallet after I brought up money, so I mentioned that I could guide them through town if necessary. Guiding visitors through town until they acquire a form of personal identification is just another part of my job.

I just noticed it, but this beastkin slave seems a lot different from most slaves I see. She’s following this man happily, of her own will. She is actively trying to carry his luggage on her own. He must treat her very well.

She smiles happily after he pats her head. Hm... I understand them a little better now. They seem to be good people.

So, I permit them to enter the city and subsequently guide them to the Adventurer’s Guild. I found it amusing when they both started staring at the kebab stands on the way there. Tsia City will likely become their base of operations after they register as adventurers here. In which case, we’ll likely meet again. I might give them a kebab on the house if the opportunity arises.

We arrive at the Adventurer’s Guild and quickly head to the counter. I was planning on writing for him if need be, but his slave is literate enough to write. And, surprisingly enough, he called her “niku.” The thing is, aah... Niku means,

erm—if my memory serves me right—niku is slang for “sex slave.” It can also be used to refer to a meat-shield or a throwaway decoy of sorts, but when thinking about how well-dressed she is, it becomes immediately obvious how the term is being used here. The slang isn’t very friendly, either. It’s fairly derogatory. Though... How he treats his slave has nothing to do with me. Either way, I’m stunned he made her register as an adventurer under the name of “Niku.” Now, this beastkin girl will be known as “Niku” even if she is one day freed from slavery. You can change the name on record, but normally that doesn’t happen and adventurers die with the name they first chose. Changing a name costs more than registering one, after all.

I also wonder why he went out of his way to use his small amount of money to register her under that name... He must be a true monster. It may have been a mistake to let him into the city so soon. He does seem to be treating her well, but who knows what malice is disguised in his actions. I want to ask the guild receptionist if it’s truly acceptable to go through with this, but paperwork won’t care about the meaning of a name. She would just tell them to hurry and finish up, surely.

All that said, however... The slave herself does seem happy. It might not be right for me to butt into this. Slaves kept for that purpose tend to be treated better than regular slaves, so perhaps I should instead feel relieved that things aren’t worse for her. Wait. I just heard the receptionist mutter “But she’s such a cute little girl... Ngh, I have to save her” under her breath...

Er, right. This has nothing to do with me. They have their guild now, my job here is done! Yes, yes. This Keima fellow is on his own now. Nothing that happens from now on has anything to do with me.

Thus, I decided to leave and go back to the gate. There’s work to do and no time to be dallying around here. I’m a veteran gatekeeper, after all! Ha ha ha!

Keima’s Perspective

The guild had a weird, backwards process where I paid first, then got my card, then got interviewed, and **then** got an explanation about everything. Is that

them basically saying “don’t even bother comin’ here if you ain’t got the cash, scum” or something? Harsh.

“...No, I only prioritized getting you your card so the gatekeeper could get back to work. I’ll take your card back if you fail the interview, and the guild will take responsibility by kicking you out of town through any means necessary.”

“Holy crap, that’s scary.”

“Ah, and be aware that your money will not be returned.”

“Holy crap, that’s even more scary. Why are you guys so stingy?!”

“The interview has already started, by the way.”

“Ah ha ha, I was only joking, my dear. Ruffians who fail the interview deserve a punishment as grave as that, I understand that completely and absolutely.”

“I am glad to hear that.” *Whew, that was way too close. I don’t even wanna think about how much of a pain in the butt it’d be if we got booted out of town.*

So, after giving half-assed answers to several questions, I passed the test. They were really simple questions, like “where were you born?” and stuff like that. I just said “I don’t know exactly where” to avoid a direct lie. Niku just had to say that her memories were fuzzy so she wasn’t sure.

After that, we received an explanation about the guild. According to the receptionist, the highest rank in the guild was S, with the ranks below it ranging from A to G. Given our lack of adventuring experience, we were started off as G-Ranks. Ranking up relied on points gained from completing quests, as well as further interviews from the guild. Not to mention tests sometimes.

Anyway. Quests were posted on the bulletin board. We just had to find one marked for our rank and take it to the counter. We could also pay for one of the guild employees to read the quests out loud, but since Niku could read, that didn’t matter to us.

Also, the Adventurer’s Guild wouldn’t help us at all if we committed any crimes. In fact, they might even put a bounty on our heads after they nullify our guild card.

“Alright. Thanks for the explanation. By the way, is there anything I should be

cautious of while I’m here in town?”

“Hm... It would likely be best if you avoid the slums by the southern gate.” *Slums, huh? Not surprised to hear there’s slums around here. I’m guessing that’s where the bandits bought their stuff. Slaves included.*

* * *

A cliché event where we met a new party member never happened. All those adventurers from before? Yeah, they had all either left or passed out, drunk. That saved us some trouble. *Alright, let’s see what kind of quests they have here.*

I was mainly interested in any quests about dungeons or our [Ordinary Cave]. *Oh, here’s one.* “Investigate the [Ordinary Cave] dungeon. Reward: One silver coin. Rank: F or above. Two or more people required... Wait, F-Rank or above?” *Crap, we can’t take this quest as G-Ranks. We need to boost our rank up. That might take some time... oh, no. No...! I’m already bored. This is a pain in the butt. I just want to sleep...*

“Niku, are there any G-Rank quests here we could take? Preferably some easy ones.”

“Ummm..... Ah. What about this one?”



The quest Niku found was as follows: “Clean a bathroom. Reward: Eight coppers. Rank: Any. One or more people required.” *Ah, yeah, makes sense. You’d think a beginner quest would be like, herb collecting, but we don’t know anything about herbs. But wait... Shouldn’t {Purification} take care of this?* Curious, I asked the receptionist about it.

“This quest was sent to us because the mess was too intense for the client to clean himself with just {Purification}. Are you interested?”

“I’ll need a second to think.” *How friggin’ dirty is that gonna be...?* I started to worry a little, but Niku hesitantly called out to me.

“Your {Purification} will be enough, Master. It cleans me a lot more than a normal one.”

“What? Really?”

“Yours feels amazing, Master. It makes me feel all floaty. I know it can clean any mess. If it can’t, I’ll clean the bathroom myself. I’m good at cleaning.”

Huh. I had no idea my magic was especially strong or anything. I know visualization is important with magic. Maybe something’s going on there. But either way, Niku can back me up if it doesn’t work. Let’s give it a shot.

“Er, I would like to take this quest.”

“...Very well. The guild accepts your services. The client is the blacksmith located in the west industrial district. Take care not to get lost. Here is the quest slip you should show to the client. Be certain to receive his signature after completing the job.”

Our services were accepted, so we immediately started the quest. We could check on either a real map or on the Menu map, so there wasn’t much chance of us getting lost. Under normal circumstances, other people couldn’t see me using the Menu without my permission, but I decided it would probably be best not to use it in public too much. I’d look suspicious if I started staring into space for too long.

I told my Wearable Golem where to go and after a bit it suddenly stopped. We had arrived. The combined powers of a map and my Wearable Golem were

unstoppable.

I decided to show the quest slip to the client and settle things as fast as possible. The client was a surly-looking, somewhat aged man who did in fact look like a craftsman.

“Excuse me, I’m from the Adventurer’s Guild. I’m here to clean your toilet.”

“...A slave-owner, huh? You tellin’ me that your slave’s gonna clean for you? She looks pretty damn small...”

“I’ll take a look at it first. We took this quest together, after all.”

“...Alright. It’s over here.” I peeked into the toilet and was immediately hit with the distinctive smells of fecal matter and urine. Not gonna lie. I nearly threw up.

“Throw up if you want, but clean your own puke up too. I hired you to clean, not to make it more dirty.”

“...R-Right.”

“Tell me when you’re done.” The client left without sticking around at all. Convenient.

“...Wait. Isn’t this smell bothering you, Niku?”

“I’m used to it.” *Where the heck did you used to live?* I shook my head and tried casting {Purification}. “{Purification}.” Bubbles spread out and covered the entire bathroom. The filth covering the bathroom’s walls, floors, and toilet got absorbed into the bubbles, which then disappeared. Left behind was a completely clean bathroom, smelling slightly of citrus and lavender. It was as if I had scrubbed the place clean myself. *Wow... I thought the toilet was just brown, but it’s actually white porcelain. Not to mention, it looks just like the kind we have back at home. Weird.*

“That was amazing, Master.”

“Yep. That’s how you do it.” *But man... We’re already done. I wouldn’t mind using this as an opportunity to get a little famous, but standing out too much would be bad for business. I’ll just kill some time with a nap.*

“Alright. Niku, I want you to pretend to clean the bathroom for a bit. I’m going

out to gather some info. If anybody drops by, say you're busy cleaning and they can't come in. Yeah... Keep doing that for about an hour. Does your golem watch have enough mana in it to last that long? Oh, and also, don't let anyone see you checking the watch."

"U-Understood... One hour, okay."

"If nobody checks up on you, keep going until I come back. If somebody does come and it's been over an hour, get them to sign the quest slip and hold on to it."

"U-Understood."

I left Niku in the bathroom and stealthily made my way outside. Clean or not, I had no intention of taking a nap inside someone's bathroom.

I walked all the way to the shopping district in search of a good place to nap. It wasn't that far away from the industrial district and it looked a lot like this city's "main street" of sorts. It even had stands lining the road. *Ah, right... There were some kebab stands around here. Should I buy one for Niku?* It'd be smart of me to do at least a little information gathering, since that was the excuse I used to get away. Right. Hopefully I could find some information on the best spots for taking a nice afternoon nap.

I was caught off guard by just how many stores there were. *This one sells nothing but bread... and yep, it all looks hard as crap.* I thought back to how that bandit had practically cried over that one melon roll. It looked like that hard bread cost two coppers for three pieces. *Yeah, I would cry too.*

By the way, I could use the Menu even though I wasn't in the dungeon. It would be neat if I could use DP to buy things here to make quests easier, but... I could only look at the catalog, not buy anything. Too bad. I guess that meant that DP was connected to the dungeon somehow? Either way, it might be fun to compare the store price of random things to their DP cost.

"...Wait. I'm looking for a place to nap, right." I had forgotten my actual goal and started information gathering for real by accident. Although that made me disappointed in myself, it was undeniable that a fantasy city was the perfect environment to tickle a man's heart. But as fascinating as the city was, there were so many buildings I was struggling to find a place to sleep. *At this rate, it'd*

be faster for me to give up searching on my own and just ask someone else. I started looking for a store that would probably have answers for me.

...Hey, there's a greengrocer. I bet their stuff is cheap as well. I'll buy some fruit or something and use the opportunity to squeeze some information out of the storekeeper. Looks like he's selling fruits that look like apples... actually, wait, these are just apples. They're smaller than the ones I'm used to, but this world apparently has watermelons. These are probably apples too. I pointed to the probably-apples and called out to the storekeeper.

"Hey, how much are these?"

"Those are two for three coppers."

"Alright, cool. I'll have two... oh, and don't worry about bagging them up. I'll eat one here."

"Roger that. Eat'm wherever you want, but step aside a little. Don't want you getting in the way of any other customers."

I handed over three copper coins, took two apples, and bit into one after stepping aside. *Oof... so sour!* "Woah... These are... pretty sour, huh?"

"You think so? The apples were just as good this year as they are every year."

"Oh, I'm not trying to complain or anything like that. I've just never had an apple from around these parts before. No need to glare at me, I won't ask for my money back. It's cool that the apples around here normally taste like this."

"I see. My bad. Are you a traveler?"

"An adventurer. I just reached this city today. Oooh... There's some sweetness in the sourness. Tastes good."

"You can tell, huh?" The shopkeeper had glared at me after I mentioned the apples tasting sour, but he soon lowered his guard. He was a nice guy. In truth, the sourness was a little overpowering, but it didn't taste so bad if I just kept in mind that the sourness was normal.

"Yep. I've heard that sour apples go pretty well with sugar. Apparently they're good for making candy with."

"Heh. You sure know a lot. But sugar is pretty valuable around here, and

apples are sweet enough on their own."

Oh? Some pretty sweet info just fell right into my lap. Hm... I should try making sugar in the dungeon. Adventurers might flock towards our sugar like ants. And even if they don't, it might be smart to just make and sell sugar on its own. If it really is valuable, I might be able to get a nice flow of DP just from offering sugar up to the dungeon. I'll have to make a mental note about this for later. I'll try it out if I don't forget.

"Oh yeah. By the way, do you know where a good place to take a nap would be?"

"Hahaha! Now there's a question I didn't expect to hear! Heh, but anyway, why don't you try the park in the middle of the town?"

"Oh, there's a park here? Parks are great for napping."

"Yep, but make sure nobody nicks your wallet while you're sleeping. If you've got money you don't mind losing, use it to buy some of my fruit!"

"Good point, I'll be careful. Er, also... Got any interesting news you wouldn't mind sharing?"

"Eh? Y'know, you're a funny guy, so I'll tell you what I know. You know how some knights have been hanging around Tsia lately?"

Yep, I know.

"I heard one of those knights say something interesting. 'If only I had destroyed that Dungeon Core, I'd be a Holy Paladin right now.' I've also heard a lot of rumors that destroying Dungeon Cores can make you stronger somehow."

Oh really now...

"That's some pretty good info, thanks. I'll buy something here again next time I'm around."

"Thank ye!" I waved and left the greengrocer, having scored a lot of sweet information.

By the way, it cost 5 DP to buy ten apples through the DP Catalog. Though that might not be the best comparison, since those apples would probably be the less sour ones from my world. Well... I could choose hard bread in the bread

set, so maybe I could buy sour apples in some kind of apple set.

But more importantly... There were rumors going around that you could get stronger by destroying Dungeon Cores. *I might need to dash back to the dungeon as soon as possible. I'm worried about that investigation quest back at the guild, too. What to do... Well, either way, I need a good nap before I can think about these things.*

...

.....

There was a nice shaded bench at the park, so after quickly investigating the comfiest way to lie on top of it, I fell right asleep. For two hours.

...Oh crap, I slept way too much. I hope Niku's not pissed at me. After making sure all my valuables were safe, I rushed back to the blacksmith where I had left Niku. *Oh, wait, right. I said I was information gathering. Let's see what I learned today... The apples here are sour, sugar is valuable, the park here is perfect for naps, and that there's a rumor going around that you can get stronger by destroying Dungeon Cores. Perfect. That's enough information for my excuse to hold up. Thanks, Mister Greengrocer. I owe you one.*

I arrived at the blacksmith, but since Niku wasn't waiting for me outside, I snuck into the bathroom. And there she was.

"How did it go, Master?"

"Great. I learned lots of stuff. How about yourself?"

"Someone came once while I was cleaning, so I turned them away. They came back later, but since an hour had passed, I told them I was done. They signed the slip. Here."

Oh, right... I didn't tell her where to wait for me. Sorry... Yeah, sorry.

"You could've waited for me outside, y'know."

"I-I'm sorry. Are you going to punish me?" Niku lowered her eyes sadly and fidgeted a little. *D-Don't worry, it's my fault for not telling you. I won't punish you, okay?*

I rubbed Niku's head as gently as I could. Her soft hair felt really nice. Her dog

ears were pretty soft, too.

“Auuu...” Niku was surprised at first, but she soon got embarrassed after I kept rubbing her head. Eventually, she got so emotional from my head-rubbing that she clung to my right arm. *What a cute little girl. Seriously. She’s too cute.*

After thanking her as best I could, I left the bathroom with Niku.

“...All done?” The client called out to us almost immediately.

“Huh? Oh, yeah. I finished what I was doing.”

“Alright... Hey, girl. If this guy ever dies, come to me. I’ll treat you well.”

“Don’t wanna.” Niku immediately shot the guy down before I could even process what was up with the serious expression on his face. *Uh... Why ya glarin’ at me, Mister Client?* Something must have happened between him and Niku while I was sleeping. Something that made him grow really attached to her.

“...Alright. But you never know what can happen to you when you’re an adventurer. Just remember, I’m here for you.”

“Let’s go, Master.”

“R-Right.” Niku was completely ignoring him. Seriously, what happened? But either way, the guy had a point. You can never know what’ll happen in life. Especially for me. As a Dungeon Master, every day was a fight for survival.

“Hey, Niku. If something does happen to me, you might actually want to come here. You should remember his offer, just in case.” Niku jolted after hearing me say that.

“...A-Are... Are you going... to abandon me...?” She looked like a dog whose family had left it home alone as they went on vacation. Thankfully, she cheered up after I rustled her hair again and said I would never abandon her, no matter what.

By the time we reached the Adventurer’s Guild, the sun had already started to set.

“Congratulations on completing the quest. Here is your payment of eight coppers.” The receptionist stacked eight coppers on the counter. The fruits of

our labor. Although it ended quickly, I had still worked for this money. *I hope I can find a way to get money for free without doing anything... I just want to sleep in a safe, comfy place...*

"There is also an additional one copper as a special payment for the girl. The client instructed me to give it directly to her. Here you are."

"Nice. Isn't that great, Niku?"

"Y-Yes." Niku reached out over the counter and took the copper coin. She was so short that the receptionist had to bend really far forward.

"...Here, Master." And then, right after taking the coin, Niku offered it up to me. *...Er, I think she should hold on to that.*

"Keep it, Niku. You can use it on whatever you want."

"H-Here." She kept holding the coin out to me. We were starting to hold up the line in front of the counter. Having no other choice, I decided to take the coin and spend it on a treat for her later.

"Alright. Thanks."

"Nnn...♪" I took the coin and rubbed her head. She looked really happy. She was even wagging her dog tail.

H-Hey, don't glare at me like that, lady. We'll get out of the way in just a second. Ah... But first.

"I'm planning to stay at an inn here tonight. Do you have any recommendations?"

"You can get a bed at the slums for only four coppers, though I can't guarantee your safety... Ah, you can entrust that young girl to me while you sleep there if you wish. I will do it for free."

"Er, thanks, but I'll pass." *Didn't you tell me to avoid the slums earlier? Though I guess that's the only place I could afford with earnings this weak. I'll give her some more details.*

"I'd like an inn where I can sleep really well for forty coppers or less a night. Good food is a nice bonus. Any ideas?"

“I believe you will like the Sleepy Songbird Inn. It normally costs thirty-five coppers a night to sleep there, and it comes with one meal.”

That sounded perfect, so after checking the map, we went straight there. An adventurer making eight coppers a day normally wouldn’t be able to stay there, but thirty-five coppers was nothing to a Dungeon Master like me. Though, to be honest, I was actually tight on cash at the moment. *All I did today was register at the guild and do a single quest. I should try to earn more money tomorrow. If I’m gonna have to work, I want to at least be financially stable as a result.*

It took half a day of running full speed to get to town from the dungeon, so it wouldn’t be easy to go back and forth between them every day. I would guess it’d take a full day of walking to make it if we didn’t run. In other words, we’ll have to stay at an inn at least once every time we come to town. I would really like to earn enough cash to pay for that.

Soon enough, we reached the Sleepy Songbird Inn. It was a large, nice-looking inn made out of wood. *Thank you for your recommendation, lovely receptionist.* I opened the door and saw a lady who looked like an innkeeper sitting by a desk.

“Excuse me, I was recommended this inn by the Adventurer’s Guild. Do you have an open room, for about thirty-five coppers?”

“Hm? Yes, we do. You’re from the guild, then. Are you an adventurer? It is thirty-five copper for bread and board here, but... oh? That girl is a slave, I see. What will you do with her? It’ll cost five more coppers for her to sleep in the barn.”

“I’d like us to sleep in the same room if possible. Does that cost extra?”

“...No, it doesn’t. How will you feed her? A meal for her would cost two coppers.”

“That’s fine. I’d like to stay the night here.” *Hell yeah, slaves don’t cost any extra. Lucky us.*

“One night, then. Ah, should I bring the food to your room?”

“Please do.”

“Very well. Ah, and by the way, I would appreciate it if you would cast {Purification} on your sheets before leaving.” We didn’t have enough coppers for that, so we paid one silver coin instead. Our change was sixty-three coppers: six large coppers and three normal-sized ones. She didn’t even call them “large coppers,” she just gave them to me with the implicit understanding that they were worth ten coppers. I dug that. It’s less work to just call them coppers without worrying about the “large” bit.

“And here is your key. Your room is number seven, first floor.”

I took the key and headed towards our room. I used the key to open the door with “7” on it (written in this world’s numeral system) and was greeted with as ordinary of a room as you could imagine. The window was made out of a wood panel rather than glass. I could slide it to the side to open it. Did this world even have glass? I was pretty sure they stored medicine in glass bottles, so they probably had glass.

There was a Light-enchanted tool for if we needed any light. The tool would shine like a light bulb if you put a magic stone into it and flipped the switch. Apparently, that was this inn’s main attraction. You could either bring your own magic stone or buy one at the inn counter. You could still make it work without a magic stone by manually pouring mana into it... though you would need to keep the mana flow going nigh-constantly.

By the way, I just recently learned that magic stones disappear after they run out of mana. They last longer if you regularly refill their mana reserves.

The most important thing of all, however, was the bed... and unfortunately, it was basically just a wood box with sheets thrown over it. Needless to say, it was hard. Like seriously. It was flat as a board. The several layers of sheets made it almost like a futon, which put it a solid level above the park bench, but still. *Hmm... Thinking about it now, that [Futon] I bought for 50 DP is actually pretty high-tier. I bet it’s better than most beds in this world.*

Also, there was only one bed. Now it made sense why Niku sharing a room with me didn’t cost any extra. One bed was all it took if we slept together.

...I didn’t mean that in a sexual way, alright?

“Am I going to sleep on the floor?”

“No, we can sleep in the bed together. It’s cold enough for that to be a good idea.” I decided to sleep right after eating. To be honest, my muscles had been hurting pretty bad for a while. *I might not even be able to move tomorrow without making my Wearable Golem do everything for me...* I cast {Purification} on Niku and me while thinking to myself and waiting for the food.

“Oh, right. I need to split the money we made today.” I took out five coppers and handed them to Niku. That was half the profits, plus the extra copper she had been given.

“I-I, I can’t take this much! I-I didn’t even do anything...”

“You found the quest and told me I could take care of it with my {Purification}, didn’t you? That’s more than enough. Don’t worry about it.”

“B-But...”

“Those meat kebabs cost about five coppers, didn’t they... Aaah, I really want to eat a meat kebab with you, Niku...”

“...O-Okay, I’ll take it.” Naturally, I didn’t actually intend to make her pay for her kebab.

Maybe due to us talking about kebabs, I heard a stomach growl. Not mine. Niku’s. *Oh yeah... She hasn’t eaten anything since we got here. Now I feel a little guilty for eating that apple earlier.*

The innkeeper soon brought us our food. My meal was two pieces of hard bread and a bowl of vegetable soup, whereas Niku only got the pieces of bread. *Interesting. So that’s the kind of thing slaves eat.* I split my soup with Niku before using my half to force the hard bread down my throat. The vegetable soup itself was actually pretty good. Yep. It didn’t have a strong flavor or anything, but I could taste the vegetables and it was nice.

Day 29

We left the inn after morning came. My body felt stiff, but thankfully the muscle pain wasn’t so bad. And this time, Niku managed to fulfill her role as my dakimakura without peeing herself. *Using the bathroom before bed is very*

important. Yep. Though naturally I had to stop her when she tried stripping off her clothes before getting into bed with me. That was going a bit too far.

I remembered at the last moment that the innkeeper had requested that I use {Purification} on the sheets before leaving, and so I did. I had gotten really used to {Purification}. Though... I misjudged its strength and accidentally cleaned the entire room too. *W-Well, not like she's gonna get mad at me for that. I saved her some time and effort.*

"Got everything, Niku?"

"Yes, everything."

"Sweet. Let's go drop by the food stands for some breakfast."

"O-Okay!"

I returned our key to the Sleepy Songbird Inn's innkeeper and left. Sleeping there had been very fruitful. Now I knew more about inn fares and what kind of stuff people would expect for a certain price.

I wonder if Rokuko's holding up alright at the dungeon all by herself. She's, uh... probably fine. She managed on her own before I got here, after all. I'm kinda getting homesick for the dungeon's Master Room. Or more precisely, the futon there. I'll go back there as soon as I learn a bit more about some things...

* * *

We headed straight for the Adventurer's Guild while eating ham sandwiches we had bought for breakfast. There was already a sizable amount of adventurers at the guild despite how early it was. They were all crowded around the billboard, picking and choosing which quests to take. *Yeaaah... I don't wanna deal with this.*

"Master." Niku was looking at me with her eyes shining, as if to say "leave this to me!" *Honestly, I don't feel so good about sending a tiny child like her into a big crowd like that, but...*

"Alright! Bring back any quests that look good!"

"Okay!" Niku happily plunged into the throng of adventurers. Her small body was engulfed by the crowd and disappeared in seconds.

After a small while, she came running back with two slips of paper wedged between her lips. I rubbed her head and scratched her chin to thank Niku, causing her to wiggle happily. *Yep, she's basically a puppy. Thank you so much.*

I took a look at the quests she brought back. "Ten Deliveries. Reward: Ten Coppers. Rank: G and above. One or more people required," and "Hunt Rabbits. Reward: At most, ten coppers per rabbit. Rank: G and above. One or more people required. Notes: Minimum of three rabbits, maximum of ten. Must be hunted the day of." *Right. I can use the map and my Wearable Golem to manage these deliveries, and hunting rabbits shouldn't be an issue. These are perfect.* I took the slips and headed straight for the counter.

"Will delivery quests not be too much for you two? You've only just arrived in town. I cannot recommend it." *Uh... you again?* The same receptionist as yesterday was behind the counter.

"We won't have any problems as long as you tell us exactly where we need to go."

"You do know that I won't be able to physically guide you there myself, yes?" *Lady, I'll be fine as long as you tell me where to go.* The receptionist furrowed her brows even further after looking at the second slip I had with me.

"And you're going to take a hunting quest as well? Rabbits may not be monsters, but I think that would still be a little reckless."

"Reckless?"

"Yes. Unless you are quite confident in your hunting skills, taking this quest would be reckless. The rabbits you hunt will be used to make meat kebabs. I believe that the stand owner will refuse to buy any meat from a rabbit that's been chopped up with a dull blade and with no assistance from a skill."

I get it. This quest is basically a trap that a ton of newbies fall into. But I have a Magic (Golem) Blade on my side, plus my Wearable Golem's assistance. I'll manage.

"...I believe I mentioned this when making your guild card, but failure to complete a request results in a fine and a punishment. Do you still wish to go through with this?"

“Yep, absolutely.” *Sorry, I wasn’t really listening when you talked about the fine and stuff.* Either way, I held out my guild card so she could register my quest application.

“...Application registered. Be careful. Oh, and regarding the delivery quest, please go behind the Guild Building. The staff member in charge of delivery quests will tell you more about the deliveries there.”

“Thanks.” The receptionist was kind of a prickly person at times, but she did her job and she always gave relevant, helpful advice. *She’s pretty good at her job. I’m glad she’s always so upfront about things.*

“Alright. Let’s go, Niku.”

“Yes, Master.”

I left the counter with Niku, heading around the back to get started with the delivery quest.

* * *

Niku and I quickly finished the delivery quest by splitting the deliveries between us. Though... I couldn’t move well due to muscle pain, and by the time I finished three of the deliveries, Niku had already finished the other seven. Although she got a lot of help from the Wearable Golem navigating for her, it was obvious how skilled she was. The way her tail wagged proudly as I rubbed her head was cute and healed my soul.

It only took us part of the morning to finish the deliveries. We still had plenty of time to go rabbit hunting. *Wait, where can we even find rabbits? Crap. I have no idea.* I decided to just go to the client and try asking him.

The client was indeed running a kebab stand. The nice smell of fatty meats being cooked wafted through the air. Saliva built up within my mouth, forcing me to gulp loudly.

“You’re the adventurers who took the rabbit quest? Alright. Where’s the meat? I don’t see you two holding any.”

“Oh, uh, we were just about to go get it.”

“Huh. Well, I’m gonna be using the meat next week, so take all the time you

need today. I'll be cooking meat here until the evening. So, what do you need with me?" Right after he said that, the cute sound of a stomach grumbling filled the air. Of course, it wasn't me. It was Niku. *Oh yeah. We haven't had lunch yet.*

"...We'd like two kebabs, please. And I'd also appreciate it if you told us where we could hunt some rabbits."

"Coming right up. That'll be five coppers each... so yeah, ten coppers total. As for the rabbits, you can find them outside of the town. You can find a lot of them out of the west gate, right up to the forest surrounding Tsia Mountain, but not fully inside of it. Oh, and don't worry about dissecting them. I'll take care of that."

"Nice, thanks. We'll go get started." I took the kebabs and handed one to Niku. She tried to hand me her five coppers to pay, but I didn't take them.

"I spent this money to get information, so don't worry about it. Plus, it's a master's duty to feed his slaves. Let's eat."

"Um... What should I do with these, then?" Niku was looking at the five coppers in her hand, troubled.

"If you ever feel like you want something, you can use those to buy it. And if those five coppers aren't enough, you just gotta save up some more."

"Um... O-Okay." Niku put the coppers into the small bag she was using as a makeshift purse. We then bit into our kebabs. *Well... It's not bad. It's definitely not bad, but it kind of stinks a little, and it doesn't taste as good as a hamburger, which makes it less satisfying than it could have been.* Or at least, that's what Niku was probably thinking, judging from the expression on her face.

* * *

I showed my guild quest slip to the guard at the gate and got outside without needing to pay anything. We found one rabbit on our way to the forest. It was bouncing around the grassy plains much like you would expect a rabbit to do. Honestly... it was super cute. White fur, red eyes, tiny... Yeah, it was cute. Cute and fluffy. A cute ball of fluff frolicking amidst the grass.

But moments later, Niku had decapitated it with a single slice. Her Golem

Blade (Knife) easily sliced through its neck thanks to its vibration capabilities. It was pretty gruesome.

"Here's the meat."

"Th-Thanks. Good job. I'm proud of you." *This kid's got no mercy.* I picked up the rabbit's corpse by the feet as blood pumped out of its neck and held it upside-down for a bit. Once most of its blood had drained, I threw it into a leather bag we had brought. I threw in the head too because why not.

If Niku weren't here, my heart might have shattered and left me unable to complete the quest on my own. Somehow... killing rabbits made me feel more guilty than watching adventurers die in my dungeon. Though, I ended up killing a rabbit after that myself. The meat I ate every day always came from an animal somebody had killed. The burden of murder rested on my shoulders as well. Which meant that I had no excuse for not killing any rabbits here, unless I wanted to be a hypocrite.

Thanks to my Golem Blade and Wearable Golem, I managed to bag a rabbit. Some of its blood got on me, but all it took was a single {Purification} to get it off me. *Wait... Come to think of it, Niku didn't even get a single drop of blood on her. I'm impressed. She's earned my respect.*

Eventually, we bagged the ten rabbits and took them back to the client. *Who killed how many? I got two and Niku got eight, what about it? Niku decapitated the rabbits as soon as she saw them, I can't compete with that.* I asked her to let me help out, so she caught one and held it down for me with both hands so I could kill it instead of her. I managed to get one without her help... but I relied pretty heavily on my Wearable Golem helping out. *Maybe Niku can take care of all the adventuring for me...*

We handed over the rabbit-filled bag. The client grinned after seeing what was inside.

"Well, well... Looks can be deceiving, huh? Didn't expect you to be this skilled with a blade." *Sorry, the girl did basically everything, not me. All I did was hold upside-down the rabbits that the great Niku hunted and throw them in the bag after they ran out of blood. Niku was the only one who went into the forest. I just stood around waiting for her.*

But regardless of who caught them, the client was very impressed with the rabbits. It helped that their pelts were still usable thanks to how we drained their blood. All the rabbits, except one, earned the maximum payment of ten coppers, resulting in a net gain of ninety-seven coppers... though as a bonus for how solid they were overall, he paid us a whole silver coin instead. *Huh? Which was the one worth seven coppers? Yeah, yeah. You know it was the one I caught on my own. My bad for slicing its torso in half.*

And so, we returned to the guild with our quest slips. The sun was just starting to go down, indicating that it was slightly past noon. There were fewer people inside than yesterday, maybe due to most adventurers working until the afternoon. The same receptionist as always was behind the counter. There were a few other receptionists too, but thinking it best to deal with someone we had experience with, I brought the slips to her.

"...So, how were they? Too much for you, just like I said?" Yep, it sure was the same receptionist as always. I decided to just roll with her sharp tongue as a sign of the concern and affection she had for us now that we've known each other for two days.

"Nope, we finished them both. Here you go."

"Wow... You certainly did finish them. And you received high praise for your performance on both." The receptionist was looking at the slips with surprise. *Heh, and ninety percent of that praise is for my little girl here. Hell yeah.*

"In that case, congratulations. You can now rank up. Do you wish to rank up?"

"Wha?!" Rank up... In other words, we'd be leaving G-Rank and going up to F-Rank.

"There are two requirements for ranking up to F-Rank: Complete ten or more quests, and have one of those quests be a hunting or extermination quest. Additionally, if a quest is completed with high praise for the client, it counts as two quests. And furthermore... this Rabbit Hunting quest has three as a minimum number of rabbits, so it counts as one quest per three rabbits. In conclusion, you completed five quests with high praise, and thus fulfilled the requirements for ranking up. Do you wish to rank up?"

"Ah. Yes."

“Then please give me your guild card. Please sit down and wait for a moment.”

After Niku and I handed our guild cards to her, the receptionist disappeared into the deepest room in the guild. *Uh... I hope ranking up in two days isn’t something that’s gonna make people notice us. I said yes without thinking too much about it, but I may have just made a big mistake. Actually, wait. We need to be F-Rank to accept the quest about investigating the [Ordinary Cave], so it all works out. I can ask all the questions I want about the [Ordinary Cave] without looking suspicious if I can take that quest.* After we sat and waited for a little bit, the receptionist came back.

“...Mr. Keima. The guildmaster wishes to speak to you. Please follow me.”

Wait, what? I have to meet with the guildmaster? I don’t wanna stand out or anything, and I definitely don’t want the guildmaster to find out anything about me... but I can’t turn them down. Guess I’ve gotta go. Niku and I followed the receptionist to the guildmaster’s room. The door was large, impressive, and had a golden plate in the middle with “Guildmaster” written on it. The receptionist knocked on it, and soon a gravelly voice greeted her.

“Come on in.”

“Please excuse me.”

We followed the receptionist in and saw a muscular old dude sitting behind a desk. He had the dark tanned skin of an adventurer, a white beard that conveyed his wealth of experience, and sharp eyes reminiscent of a large predator’s.

“My name’s Jino. I’m the guildmaster here. Cilia’s told me all about you two.” *I guess the receptionist’s name is Cilia. That’s the first time I’ve heard it.*

The guildmaster looked closely at Niku and spoke in a deliberate tone.

“...Girl. What do you think about this guy?”

“He’s my master.” Niku responded instantly.

“.....Alright.” For whatever reason, the guildmaster nodded slowly and patted Niku’s head. In contrast to his dignified appearance from before, he was

now smiling like a friendly old man. After a bit, he turned to look at the receptionist.

“They seem good to me. Hey, Cilia. Go ahead and rank’m up.”

“Yes, sir. Understood.” We were chased out of the guildmaster’s room right after that, as if he had nothing else to say to us. *What was the deal with that? And was there any point in me going with her? Please.*

Niku and I went back to the lobby. After a moment of waiting, the receptionist brought us our guild cards.

“You now have F-Rank guild cards. Please look them over.” We took the cards from her and saw that they indeed had F-Rank written on them. Her duty done, the receptionist returned behind the counter.

And now... We can investigate the [Ordinary Cave]. I immediately started hunting for the “Investigate the [Ordinary Cave]” quest. *Wait... What? I can’t find it. Am I just missing it?* I looked to Niku, but she just shook her head.

“It’s not... here...”

“Yep. Which means someone took it, I guess...” *Oh crap, what do I do? When did it get taken? This morning? At noon? Maybe last night? If they just took it, we could catch up to them on the road there. We might end up fighting, though. Would... Would we be able to win that fight?*

“...Master?” I glanced at Niku. *Speaking of which, does Niku really understand that I’m a Dungeon Master? Like, does she get what that implies? I don’t think I’ve ever talked to her about it. But... okay. I need to calm down. Rokuko can handle herself. She’ll do what I told her to for sure. If what I know about this world is right, that’ll be enough. The only problem is... What if what I know and what the guild knows is different? I need to find that out right away, which means now’s not the time to be sleeping. Haaaaah...*

I headed towards the counter. Behind it was Cilia, the same receptionist as always. *Sorry for coming right back.*

“I’d like to ask you some questions about dungeons, if that’s okay.”

“Many adventurers will soon be returning, but I can answer your questions

until then. But what do you want to know? The dungeons around here are all D-Rank or above, so they should have little to do with you." In other words, because the [Ordinary Cave] was the subject of an F-Rank quest, it wasn't a normal dungeon.

"Er, I remember seeing a quest about exploring some dungeon named [Ordinary Cave]. I couldn't find it just now, but it was an F-Rank quest, which makes me curious about it."

"...Ah, yes. That quest is primarily for rookies. It's a quest based on investigating a harmless, newly born dungeon. Those are quite rare. We post the quest about once every two weeks." *Newly born? I'll have to ask Rokuko to see if that's a fact or just a false rumor.*

"...By the way, what kind of person took the quest?"

"That information is confidential." *Yeah, figures.* I'd have appreciated it if she told me, but I'd basically lose all trust in her if she gave away information like that willy-nilly.

"More importantly, I have two quests marked specifically for your young slave. They're both toilet cleaning. What will you do? They're G-Rank quests if you wish to take them."

"...Let me think about it." *Toilet cleaning, huh? I guess our first client liked our work so much he advertised us around town. But now's definitely not the time for us to be wasting time with that.*

"While I'm here, might I ask what kind of places dungeons are?"

"...Dungeons are places where treasure, monsters, and traps appear. It's often said that if you wish to get rich quick, dungeons are your best bet. Though I presume you already knew that much."

"N-Naturally. Of course. How could I not?" *Yeah, I had no idea. Thank you for teaching me what's common sense in this world.*

"Then, are you aware of what a Dungeon Boss or a Dungeon Core is?" *Dungeon Boss? Not Dungeon Core? Now that she mentions it, I do remember one of the knights talking about a Dungeon Boss or something.*

"...Er, Cores are like, the hearts of dungeons. Right?"

"Yes, that's right. A dungeon will collapse as soon as its Core is destroyed. The Dungeon Boss is a being that awaits at the bottom of a dungeon, protecting its Core. Some theorize that the Dungeon Core and the Dungeon Boss are one at heart. Historically, there are legends of the Demon King's castle collapsing after the Demon King himself was defeated. It's quite a popular theory that the Demon King was both the Dungeon Core and Dungeon Boss of his castle dungeon. Though I personally believe that the Demon King was just a sore loser who, at the last moment, tried to destroy those who defeated him by any means possible."

A Demon King Dungeon Core, huh? I guess it was just someone like Rokuko going way too far. I tried imagining Rokuko as a Demon Queen. She stepped on her long cape and fell over. *Yeah, Rokuko doesn't fit that role at all.* The dungeon collapsing after the Dungeon Core gets destroyed probably had to do with the Core holding up the walls on its own. Though... There were so many dungeon terms I was starting to lose track of what was common knowledge and what wasn't.

"...I heard there was a rumor that you can grow stronger by destroying Dungeon Cores. Is that true? He who dares wins, or something like that?"

"That is rumored, but whether or not it's true is still unknown. And, I might add, destroying guild-managed dungeons is punishable by death under imperial law. I would advise you to not try experimenting." *Seriously? Seems like our dungeon's protected by imperial law. It might be a good idea for me to calm down a little.*

"By the way, if you wish to know more about dungeons, I suggest that you buy a dungeonology book. Although books are expensive, there is no better way to learn what you wish to know." *Now that's the kind of info I wanted. Dungeonology, huh? That's a funny name, but I'm glad I learned about it. I definitely want one of those books.*

"Though, even a copy of 'Intro to Dungeonology' will cost you a full gold piece."

"Th-That's pretty expensive."

“You think so? All books are that expensive, in my experience.” *Really...? Well, I don’t have any gold pieces right now. And if a single copper is about one hundred yen, doesn’t that make one gold coin about 1,000,000 yen?! Books are friggin’ expensive! Maybe I’ll be able to afford it if I go back to the dungeon and buy a lot of expensive-looking things with DP? Sweet, one more reason to go back to the dungeon.* The receptionist glanced behind me. I followed her gaze and saw that several adventurers had just returned.

“Will that be all for today? People are returning now.”

“Yeah, sorry. Thanks for the help.”

“Do not mention it. Giving advice to adventurers is part of my job... now, if you’ll excuse me.” The receptionist turned and started helping out someone else. It’d be rude of me to keep bothering her, so I took Niku and left the counter.

* * *

Either way, I doubted the [Ordinary Cave’s] Core was in any danger of being destroyed. Though there was a decent chance some dungeonology scholars or whatever would investigate it due to how rapidly it increased in size.

Either way, DP-wise, it’d be cheaper for us to stay here since we didn’t need to buy food or anything. One path available to me was to become an adventurer and use Tsia City as my base of operation. But to put it simply, I couldn’t live without my [Futon]. I could squeeze in a nap on the park bench or on the blanket-covered boxes in the Sleepy Songbird Inn, but I sure didn’t enjoy it very much. I had gotten more than enough information. It’d be a solid idea to go back to the [Ordinary Cave] temporarily and come back with valuable stuff. I really wanted to get my hands on that dungeonology book.

Though it might be a while before I can get my hands on enough for one gold coin’s worth of stuff. Wait... Wait a second. Can I maybe buy that book with DP? I checked the DP Catalog and yep, there it was. *Maybe it’s showing up now because someone told me about it. Let’s see here... [Intro to Dungeonology (100DP)]... Wait, what?! 100DP?! The heck is with that? I can buy a book worth one gold piece, worth one million yen, for 100DP?! I’m pretty sure [Five Copper Coins] costs 5DP. What in the world is going on here?* Either way, it looked like it

would be a good idea to go back to the dungeon and buy [Intro to Dungeonology].

“Niku, we’re going back to the dungeon.”

“Yes, Master.” Niku nodded.

It was already evening. If we didn’t hurry, the gate might close on us. I took Niku and rushed for the west gate. Once we reached it, we saw the gatekeeper that guided us to the guild standing guard.

“Oh? And what brings you two here this late? It’s about time for me to shut the gate.”

“We have some business near the mountain. If nothing happens, we should be back in about two days.”

“...Shouldn’t you have more baggage? You don’t seem very prepared for a trip like that.” *Oh crap, he’s right. We’re barely carrying anything. I figured we wouldn’t need much since our base is at the mountain, but normal adventurers won’t have anything like that. But I’d feel pretty silly packing up hardcore every time I go back to the dungeon...*

“It shouldn’t be a long trip, and if worse comes to worst we can live off the land for a bit. It’ll be easier for us to move without a lot of baggage weighing us down.”

“Alright. Makes sense to me.”

I thought my excuse had been pretty flimsy, but the guard accepted it without any problems. Adventurers being good survivalists was probably just common sense. *Hmmm. Maybe I should start leaving from the south gate. I was advised to avoid the slums, but I can just say I’m buying an inn in the slums to save money. Nobody will doubt that. I can avoid lying by just rephrasing that as “I’m sleeping outside the city” or something vague like that.*

“So, what’s your business by the mountain anyway? Got a quest to gather some herbs?”

“Nope, no quest. I’ll pay the gate fee.”

“Alright. Just so you know... The mountain can be dangerous at night. Be nice

and careful, y'hear?"

"Absolutely. Thank you." I paid the gate guard two coppers after showing him my guild card and then left the city without any problems. *Now. Time to get back as soon as possible.* I ordered my Wearable Golem to run as fast as possible the moment the gatekeeper was out of sight.

Rokuko's Perspective

The dungeon is quiet and nothing's going on. I can't sense anyone coming anywhere near me.

"...I'm so bored," I mumble to myself. Bored... Mhm. That's right. I'm bored.

I've spent sooo much time with Keima and his dog girl slave lately that I feel kinda lonely now that they're gone. Weird. I've spent my whole life by myself, but I've never felt this lonely before. I summoned Keima when bandits conquered my dungeon and he got rid of them for me. He picked up a random slave girl, and then started making weird golems. Mhm. My life's changed a lot ever since Keima became my Dungeon Master. Thinking about it, my dungeon's a lot bigger than it used to be. Plus, I have way, way more DP than I ever had before.

I bite into my [Melon Bread]. Even this treat is something I owe to him. And... uh-huh. It tastes delicious. It's delicious, but it's missing something. Something important. I try to figure out what's missing, and quickly realize what it is.

Keima. Keima's missing. [Melon Bread] tastes so much better when Keima's around. Even when he's sleeping, his presence changes so much.

...Mmm. I wonder if Keima's coming back soon. He's been gone for a while. He said he'd come right back, but it's been over a whole day since he left. I wonder if something happened. Ngggh... I can tell he's still alive since we're connected as Dungeon and Master, but that's all I know.

I plop down onto Keima's futon and roll around. Ah... Sniff, sniff. Nnn, it smells like Keima. Oh well. I don't dislike that. I dig deeper into the futon and realize it actually is pretty comfortable. Now I understand why Keima wants to

stay inside of it all the time.

...Nnn, aaah. I stretch a little in the futon and decide to go to sleep. As a Dungeon Core, I don't need sleep or anything, but I've been wondering how sleep feels for a while now. Keima always looks really happy when he's sleeping. I'm the only one here right now, but it won't matter if I take a nap. It's not like anyone's coming here anyway.

...But speak of the devil. I can sense someone coming towards my dungeon. It's not Keima. I could easily tell if it was Keima. Who is that?! Don't they know they're getting in the way of me sleeping?! Ah... I guess this is how Keima feels whenever he tells me not to bother him when he's sleeping.

Hmph, but well, this is okay. I'll just take care of them and get back in bed as soon as I can.

Chapter 3

“Huh. So this is the [Ordinary Cave], huh?” A male adventurer stepped into the mostly empty cave. The rest of his party followed after him a few steps later. In total, there were three of them, all F-Rank adventurers who had come after taking this investigation quest together.

“Hey now, be careful. This is a dungeon. Who knows what kind of traps are in here.”

“Don’t worry so much. Even the guild said there’s nothing here, remember? The only thing we’ll find is the Dungeon Core.”

“You have a point, but...” The leader ignored his passive friend’s warning and kept walking into the dungeon.

There were hallways to the left and right of them. But otherwise, they couldn’t see anything important. The only thing out of the ordinary was how the wooden doors looked a little burnt.

“Looks like there aren’t any bandits left.”

“Obviously. Knights wouldn’t slip up like that. But I did hear that there were like twenty bandits here. Yeah. Twenty.”

“Damn... Whoever came here before us sure was unlucky.”

“Yep. I’m pretty sure they all died. Oh... Looks like this is a dead end. Wanna try the other hallway?”

“Yeah, seems like there’s still some more rooms. Let’s try it.” The adventurers advanced deeper into the dungeon without any issues. That was to be expected. There were no traps or monsters in this dungeon. Excluding the five or so goblins that would come out of the Dungeon Core, that is.

The quest the adventurers were on was an easy job where they got a whole silver coin for just reporting how many goblins came out of the Core. It was, more or less, a goblin extermination quest. But even an F-Rank adventurer

could easily take down five goblins on their own. A party of three could handle ten goblins no sweat.

And so, they finally reached the deepest room in the dungeon. Five goblins immediately sprang out of Core, but they posed no thread to the adventurers who knew that they would be coming. Two, three swings of a sword and they were gone. How were there fewer swings than goblins? Simple. They killed multiple goblins per swing.

“One, two, three... and five. Alright.”

“Quest complete. Hm? What’s up?”

One of the adventurers was staring at the Dungeon Core.

“Hey. I’ve got an idea.”

“Yeah?”

“Let’s try breaking this Dungeon Core.”

“What?! The hell are you talking about, man? The guild ordered us not to do that!”

“But think about it. I’ve heard destroying a Dungeon Core nets you enough power that a knight could become a Holy Paladin just like that. If we destroy it, we’d probably become strong enough to end up as A-Rank adventurers.”

“A-Rank...” The adventurer swallowed hard. A-Rank. Those adventurers who reached A-Rank were considered to be the best of the best, living examples of success for others to strive towards. Many people became adventurers in search of wealth, but most ended up as F-Rank or E-Rank adventurers at best. It was fairly common for adventurers to take up second jobs.

Only once an adventurer reached D-Rank would he be able to live off adventuring on its own. C-Rank adventurers were veterans. B-Rank adventurers were strong enough to earn the respect of all those veterans, and it became common to earn a whole gold piece minimum per quest. An A-Rank adventurer would be so successful as to be famous around the world. And on top of all those ranks was the inhuman S-Rank. It was said that a single S-Rank adventurer could change the fate of the world, but naturally, that wasn’t relevant to these

three adventurers.

“But think about it. If we lie and say the dungeon’s fine, then the next people who take the quest will end up reporting that the Core is gone. We’ll be caught and executed.”

“Then all we have to do is say *we* couldn’t find the Core. That way, whoever came here before us will look suspicious instead. Which is perfect, because ‘whoever came before us’ is actually the bandits and the knights. The guild won’t be able to do anything since the bandits are all gone and the knights aren’t adventurers.”

“...Man, you’re a genius!” In reality, their lie would be found out immediately with a lie-detecting tool, but unfortunately none of the three adventurers knew such things existed.

With that argument settled, all that awaited was action. The adventurers drew their swords and started whaling on the Dungeon Core. Their blades bounced off a few times, but they were causing real damage. The Core itself did nothing entirely, as if it had been given an order to “not do anything,” and soon enough... a heavy blow made it shatter like a crystal ball.

Day 30

“What?!”

I jumped awake, drenched in a cold sweat.

That... That was a bad dream.

A nightmare where the Dungeon Core got destroyed.

Thanks to the dumb ideas of a stupid adventurer, the Core to my dungeon got destroyed.

Whew. Setting up camp early wasn’t worth it if it meant having nightmares like that.

Niku and I hadn’t brought much with us, so after eating the last of our food and water, we had slept on the cold hard ground (with our Wearable Golems

ordered to attack anyone who tried to ambush us in our sleep).

Ideally we would have reached the [Ordinary Cave] before needing to sleep, but not even running at full speed got us there before the sun set.

Our Wearable Golems could have kept going on track even in pitch darkness, but branches we couldn't see would have kept slapping our faces nonstop, so we just gave up.

Speaking of which, how do our Wearable Golems even see anything? Can they even see in the first place? Putting that aside, I had a lot of thoughts about that nightmare. It was very plausible that people who became adventurers out of greed would try to destroy our dungeon's Core out of that same greed. Thinking about it now, the investigation quest didn't even matter. At any point, someone could visit the [Ordinary Cave] on their own time and destroy the Core before vanishing to another town. It would be nigh impossible to catch them.

...Yep. In other words, Rokuko has just been lucky up until now. There was no guarantee whatsoever that a random passerby wouldn't sneak into the [Ordinary Cave] and destroy its Core at any moment. The nightmare I had could become reality at any point, as long as the [Ordinary Cave] existed. *And actually, since someone took the investigation quest before me, it might actually be happening right now.*

"Nnn... Papa... squeeze me... more..." I glanced to my side and saw that Niku was hugging me tightly despite being asleep. I didn't want to wake her up from whatever nice dream she was having, but I had no choice. It may have been early in the morning, but we could see again. That was enough. I cast {Purification} on my sweaty body, woke up Niku, and resumed our dash to the [Ordinary Cave]. *Ngh...! My muscles hurt so friggin' much!*

It was already close to noon when we reached the [Ordinary Cave]. It took longer than expected, but we had finally gotten home. Though... the first thing we saw after exiting the forest and looking towards the cave was something neither of us ever expected.

There was Rokuko, sitting on a white chair next to a white table, gracefully drinking tea. She was even in the form I first saw her in, rather than her DP-

saving form. And in front of her was a lady I've never seen before, looking gently at Rokuko with her long white hair trailing behind her back. She radiated a classy aura that likely reflected some kind of noble status. Beside her stood a blonde... guy? Uh, wait, no. Beside her stood a cross-dressing blonde girl wearing the black clothes of a butler while holding an umbrella over the first girl.

"And then, and then..."

"Fufu. What happened after that?"

Rokuko gracefully tilted her cup to drink the tea. The refined lady used that opportunity to talk to her, smiling gently.

Basically, the entrance to our cave had turned into the royal garden of a palace. *What the heck is Rokuko doing? Who is that girl? Why are they drinking tea like nothing's wrong at all?* I froze in place, and soon enough made eye contact with the broadly smiling Rokuko.

"Oh, Keima! Welcome back! That didn't take long at all!"

"...What're you doing?"

"Eh? Can't you tell? I'm having a tea party like the refined lady I am." Rokuko (not in her loli form) puffed out her sizable chest with pride. *That's not what I meant. I want to know **why** you're doing that.*

"Number 89 came over to spend time with me!"

"Oh wow, Number 89, huh? Wait... Number 89? She's a Dungeon Core?!" I looked more closely at the white-haired girl sitting next to her. She looked like much more of a refined lady than Rokuko.

"Well, hello there... May I call you Keima?" The lady elegantly waved her hand. To be honest, she was exactly my type. Like, exactly, holy shit. But for some reason, a chill ran down my spine.

"I was just talking to Number 89 about what happened recently. I told her about you too, Keima."

"Alright, Rokuko. C'mhere for a second. Ma'am, please excuse us." I pulled Rokuko away and started whispering to her.

“...How much have you told her?”

“Ummm, I just got to the part where the bandits were all about to die. Oh, and I gave her a [Melon Roll] too! She really loved it!” Rokuko let out a girlish squeal of happiness, clearly pleased that her older sister enjoyed her gift. So I thumped her on the side of the head.

“Ow! Why’d you do that?!” Rokuko barked at me like an angry dog. *Heh, scratch that. Big tits or not, she’s still more like an angry puppy.*

“Listen up. Stop telling her things she doesn’t need to know. She might be our enemy. And no matter what, don’t tell her anything about my golems.”

“Ngh, okay... But Number 89 definitely isn’t our enemy.”

“...Who taught you the absolutely incredible battle strategy of summoning nothing but goblins?”

“...Number 89.”

“Who told you to use DP only to summon monsters without ever expanding your dungeon past one room?”

“.....Number 89.”

“So? Are you *really* sure she *definitely* isn’t our enemy?”

“B-But... ngh...” *Alright. So, basically, here’s how it is.* Dungeon Core Number 89 wasn’t letting Rokuko grow as a dungeon. While, simultaneously, her own dungeon was shooting up through the rankings. There was some connection there, and it was very possible that she’d be getting in our way from now on. Rather, she would probably eliminate us the second she could if we ever get in *her* way.

“Mmm, Number 695. Will your secret discussion be over soon? I would like to join you two.”

“O-OKAY! W-We’re coming right over, Number 89!” And yet, Rokuko still looked happy after Dungeon Core Number 89 called out to her. Yeah... If I hadn’t used my Absolute Authority over her as Dungeon Master, she would’ve spilled the beans instantly. Though it was still possible that she let some secrets leak. Whether or not I have Absolute Authority over her, my order wouldn’t

mean much if she was letting things slip unconsciously.

“So, what happened to the bandits after that?”

“U-Um...” Rokuko glanced at me. She must not have known whether or not it was okay for her to talk. So, I answered for her.

“...As you can tell, they were massacred.”

“The band of knights took care of them, then? Yes, that’s perfect. But I must wonder how much DP they were worth. Judging from the reports, you two must have earned at least ten thousand.”

“The reports...? What do you mean by that? Sorry, I don’t know too much about you.”

“Ah, I imagine not. You were summoned here from another world, after all.” *Guess Rokuko already told her about my summoning and all that. Makes sense. That happened pretty early.*

“...Allow me to introduce myself.” Dungeon Core Number 89 straightened her back and, with a hand on her chest, introduced herself with a clear voice.

“I am Dungeon Core Number 89. A... prior master of mine called me Haku. I know that humans prefer such names over numerical designations, so please feel free to call me Haku as well. I manage the [Ivory Labyrinth] located within the Laverio Empire’s capital city. Dungeon Core Number 695 is my little sister, as you know. It is a pleasure to meet you.” Dungeon Core Number 89 smiled gracefully at me. *Haku’s a lot shorter than Dungeon Core whatever whatever, so I’ll roll with that.* I responded to Haku’s greeting in turn, taking care to speak with enough gravity and weight that she wouldn’t look down on me.

“...Indeed, it is nice to meet you as well. My name is Keima Masuda. Please call me Keima. I have been working as the Dungeon Master of your little sister’s dungeon, the [Ordinary Cave]. I pray that we can work well together.”

“Oh my, you are quite the polite one. I am impressed.” Hearing Haku say that made Rokuko panic a little.

“Sh-Should I introduce myself too?! I-I’m Dungeon Core Number 695, and...!” *Uh, we both know who you are, so...*

“Oh, right. We gotta get ready. Some adventurers are coming.”

“My, my. Are you perhaps worried about that because of this?” Haku took the [Ordinary Cave] investigation quest slip out from her cleavage.

“That’s...” *Why was she keeping it there...? I mean, uh, why does she have that?* Haku quickly answered my question.

“Despite my true identity, I am also an A-Rank adventurer, a position I exploited to get my hands on this. The knights from my country gave their report on the [Ordinary Cave] and I couldn’t help but come see things for myself.”

“...I thought you needed at least two people to take that quest.”

“In what world would two F-Ranks be superior to a single A-Rank? But either way... Chloe, my succubus friend here, is also an A-Rank adventurer. We took the quest together as a pair.” Chloe bowed after being introduced. That butler outfit wasn’t just for show. *So she is a cross-dressing beauty, huh? I guess not all monsters are mindless beasts. But isn’t that chest a little... sad, for a succubus? I’d be way more convinced if someone told me Haku was a succubus. But either way, a pure-hearted and chaste succubus feels a lot more realistic than a pure-hearted and chaste porn star. In this fantasy world, at least.*

“So do not worry, Keima. You’ll be fine for at least half a month now.” Haku smiled, as if saying the situation was entirely under her control. She was right. No invaders would be coming for our dungeon anytime soon. Excluding the two in front of me.

“By the way, Keima. May I ask you a question?”

“Sure. What’s up?” The smile vanished from Haku’s face.

“...Are you a Soldier of God?” I felt a chill run down my spine. *A Soldier of God... No idea what that means. Some god talked to me while I was being summoned here, but I didn’t become his soldier or anything.*

“I did meet someone who claimed to be a god, but I don’t remember him talking about anything like that.”

“I see.” As if satisfied by my answer, Haku resumed smiling. I could almost feel

the atmosphere warming back up.

“Forgive me, but I used magic to determine whether or not you were lying. You seem to be telling the truth, thankfully. I was worried about you ever since Number 695 told me that she had summoned you from another world.” *When did she cast that magic? And that kind of magic even exists? Makes sense I guess, since there’s a magic tool that does the same thing. But either way, I have something more important to ask about.* “...Sorry, but what exactly is a Soldier of God?”

“They are people who, after being summoned here from another word, destroy dungeons at the behest of God—a god, in any case. I defeated one of them before, and they told me that dungeons must be destroyed as they interfere with the flow of mana. They are known as ‘Heroes’ in this world.” *Oh, whoops. I might be a Soldier of God. Not really planning on doing anything like that, though.*

“Now then. I would like to have a conversation alone with you, Keima. Do you mind? Ah, you can wait here with Chloe, Number 695.”

“O-Okay!”

“Understood, my lady. Come with me, Princess.” I followed Haku as she distanced herself from Rokuko and Chloe. Of course, Niku stayed behind too. *Yeah... This is pretty dangerous. I didn’t notice until she stood up, but Haku has absolutely incredible feet. Crap. I can’t stop staring at her feet, even though I know I’m in danger here!* Her Vietnamese style áo dài dress hugged her body perfectly, showing off all her curves. I could see the outline of her feet through the thin cloth of her skirt each time she took a step. *I want to look under her skirt. I want to take off her shoes and get a good look at her bare feet.*

“Now then...” Haku turned to look at me after we had walked a fair distance. The fact that she looked beautiful just turning around really helped me understand why Rokuko looked up to her so much. And then, without a missing a beat, she said... “Would you please relinquish your position as Dungeon Master?”

“I’m afraid I can’t do that!” *The beds in this world suck way too much. They’re like, unforgivably bad. I couldn’t live with them. I’m not gonna quit being a*

Dungeon Master, it's the only way for me to get [Futons] and even better beds.

"Sincerely though, what have you been doing to my cute little Number 695? How dare you defile her as you have. If you won't quit being a Dungeon Master, then please at least relinquish your Absolute Authority over her and then kill yourself immediately." *Isn't that basically just me quitting being a Dungeon Master?*

"...I'm not really sure what you're talking about. I mean, I wouldn't mind giving up my Absolute Authority, but suicide is a bit much."

"Oh my. I like your cooperative attitude. But will you *truly* give up your authority?" *I mean, yeah. I think the Absolute Authority system is pretty messed up in the first place, so I was thinking about getting rid of it somehow. Like, in my dream, I told Rokuko to "Just send out five goblins. Don't do anything else," and that ended up killing her. She couldn't do anything to protect herself even in the face of death. I'd like to help Rokuko become independent enough to at least be able to defend herself.*

"I imagine you've already ordered Number 695 to do lewd things with you, yes? And then you ordered her to forget all those inconvenient memories... Ngh! You're just doing whatever you want with her! You humans are all the same!"

"Hold on a second! I didn't do anything like that!"

"Hmph, I wonder about that. Your species treat we Dungeon Cores like toys, giving us orders like 'Slowly fall in love with me over time' and 'Marry me!' I didn't even realize what was going on until he died... I can't trust you humans at all. I thought I taught that to Number 695, but she still...!" *Oh, huh. I guess that's what happened to her. She... She might not have meant to actually say that out loud.*

"...I don't have any interest in non-consensual stuff, so yeah, I'll give it up no problem."

"Very well. I will have you remove it while I watch... Wait. Wait just a moment. In other words, you are interested in her as long as it doesn't involve your Absolute Authority? Just what do you intend to do to Number 695?!"

“You’ve got a pretty strong imagination, huh?!” She was just making up false accusations as she went along.

“Well, whatever. There’s just one thing I want to make sure of here. Haku. Are you Rokuko’s enemy?”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about. In what world would I ever be Number 695’s enemy?” *So we’re gonna be playing that game, huh?*

“...Why did you teach those battle strategies to Rokuko?”

“*Those* battle strategies? I’m afraid that I taught her so many things, I don’t know precisely what you’re referring to.”

I decided to take things step by step and ask one specific question at a time to ensure I knew what was going on.

“Okay, first of all. Why did you teach her to summon goblins specifically?”

“Goblins are the most efficient monster for a dungeon as small as hers to summon. Even if she were to summon a strong monster, she wouldn’t be able to maintain it for long. Smaller monsters don’t require much food, either.” *Makes sense. Goblins are pretty efficient.*

“Why did you teach her to summon monsters all at once using as much DP as possible?”

“There is undeniable strength in numbers. A strong foe can be beaten by many weak allies. Additionally, there is not a single Dungeon Core alive who would prioritize DP over survival in a dangerous situation.” *That’s true. There’s no point in saving your resources for later if there won’t be a later.*

“Why did you teach her that building rooms was a waste of DP and that monsters should be prioritized?”

“Rooms can’t defeat invaders, can they? Victory can only be obtained by summoning monsters to defeat invaders.” *She’s right. No matter how many rooms you have, you need some kind of offensive strategy to ultimately win.*

“In that case, why didn’t you teach her about using traps?”

“Most of them can only be used a single time, which isn’t very cost effective... And to make matters worse, you can place very few traps in a small dungeon.

Traps that can be used many times are quite expensive.” *Makes sense... Alright. I think that’s enough questions.* All her advice makes perfect sense from the perspective of this specific dungeon. But remove one condition and all the advice would be completely worthless.

“Okay. I understand where you’re coming from. Now what I want to know is... How did you make people view her as a safe, harmless dungeon?” Yep. The condition was that Rokuko had to be a dungeon managed by humans. In any other situation, invaders would destroy the Dungeon Core as soon as they defeated the goblins. After all, the [Ordinary Cave] had in fact been just an ordinary cave with a core lying defenseless in its only room.

“Oh my, you’ve figured it out, have you? Well, the answer is simple enough. I personally created both the Laverio Empire and the Adventurer’s Guild. Rokuko was established as a safe dungeon because I willed it.” I had more or less noticed that already. It didn’t take me long to realize that she was a big fish in this sea. *Ah, and by that I mean both among humans and among other Dungeon Cores.*

“Oh my, you don’t seem very surprised.”

“I mean, you mentioned receiving a report from the knights earlier. You had no intention of hiding your true identity, did you?”

“Well, no. I didn’t.” Haku smiled and laughed a little, visibly pleased.

“So, why did you try to ensure that the [Ordinary Cave] would stay weak and small forever?”

“Because Number 695 is cuter that way... and I want to protect her. That’s why I panicked quite a bit when I heard that she had been occupied by bandits.”

“...You want to protect her? Why?”

“Well, she is my cute little sister, you know. I yearn for her safety so much that at first I thought about placing a guard by her entrance to prevent anyone from invading her in the first place. But that would just attract unwanted attention from the Soldiers of God, who would proceed to hunt her. That’s why I instead focused on making her as invisible and forgettable as possible. So? Is that satisfactory enough of an explanation for you?” *Am I satisfied, huh? More*

or less, but there's still a few things I want to know.

"...Why are you hunting other Dungeon Cores?" One of the knights had said that one needed to destroy a Dungeon Core to become a Holy Paladin. Which, of course, had to be a system that Haku set in place herself. She was protecting Rokuko while actively attacking other Dungeon Cores, and I wanted to know why. *Wait... I wonder if she knows that her little system there nearly got Rokuko killed when the knights were here.*

"That has nothing to do with Number 695. If I didn't hunt other cores... the Soldiers of God would hunt me in turn." She was doing it for her own sake. That was very easy to understand.

"Makes sense to me."

"Very well. Is there anything else you want to know? I'll answer any questions you have, while we're here."

"...That's pretty nice of you. Any particular reason behind this streak of kindness?"

"Yes, well... Consider it a reward from me. I heard from Number 695 that you made certain every single one of the dirty bandits that stepped on her died. You made sure not a single one of them survived. This is my thanks for that. If even a single one had gotten away, I would have needed to waste my time hunting them down." *Alright. May as well use this opportunity to ask about Holy Paladins.*

"By the way, did you know that one of the knights that came here tried to destroy Rokuko's Core?"

"I heard! I gave special treatment to the Seventeenth Knight Platoon, and yet their report mentioned one of them trying to swing their sword at Number 695! Can you believe it?! My goodness, I will never understand how you humans can be so simple-minded as to not understand how lovely and cute and perfect Number 695's Core is! Naturally, I'm having them all executed. All of them! Of course, I can't mention Number 695 in the official charges, so I'm planning to forge evidence indicting them all of treason against the state. The true treason would be punishing them with just a pay drop despite how grave the crime of attempting to destroy Number 695 is! That makes their executions lawful and

just. Ah, I suppose that they are currently returning to the capital with no idea of what awaits them." *Ah. This woman's messed up in the head. And she's so stupidly powerful she can easily destroy people's lives if she wants to. What kinda politics involves executing an entire platoon of knights?! That's just scary!*

"Oh my, do you think I went too far?"

"Not at all. Oh, by the way, the knights left early out of laziness. They said adventurers would take care of any stragglers for them. Was that in the report too?"

"Hmm, it seems I have another crime to charge them with." I kept my cool and played along with her. I'd be in danger myself if I disagreed with her too much. But either way, I felt like I knew her a little better after all that. I was pretty confident she wouldn't end up becoming Rokuko's enemy. Everything she did was for Rokuko's sake, after all. We should be safe as long as Rokuko doesn't try to hurt Haku for whatever reason.

"By the way, I heard them mention something about becoming a Holy Paladin."

"Holy Paladin? Aaah, that's just some title I made up. There's no real point to destroying Dungeon Cores unless you're a Soldier of God. They earn God's favor by contributing to the restoration of the mana flow." *Ah, yeah, that sounds like what he asked me to do. I'll uh... I'll keep quiet about that. Don't kill me please. I'm not planning on destroying any Dungeon Cores.*

"Okay. You don't seem to be a useless man who just sleeps all day, so it might be wise for me to recognize you as Number 695's Dungeon Master for now. Mmm... I'll spare your life at the very least, as thanks for doing so well in saving her from the bandits." *Sweet, I'm gonna survive this. I feel like she's looking down on me pretty hard, but... Whatever. As long as she's not my enemy. I mean, her feet are super pretty. There's not a single bad person in the world with pretty feet... Actually, sorry, that's not true at all. There's a lot of villains that like to step on people with their sexy feet. Right.*

"Very well. Let us have a Dungeon Battle. I'll recognize you as her Master if you can defeat me." *Hahaha! There's another word I don't know! And my 'tedious' radar is beeping like crazy. Please no.* I took a deep breath. *Calm down.*

Calm down.

"What is a Dungeon Battle?"

"It's... a competition. Yes, a competition where dungeons attempt to invade each other. There are many rules, but let's start with the basics. The most fundamental rules are that the dungeons connect their entrances with Space-Time Magic and proceed to send an army of monsters into each other. Whoever reaches the other's Core first wins. Simple, isn't it?"

Putting aside the Space-Time Magic stuff, the rules certainly were simple. Though accepting her challenge was completely out of the question. How could our "The [Ordinary Cave]: A safe and beginner-friendly dungeon perfect for up and coming adventurers! (Field trips to see the Dungeon Core are available)" ever hope to beat her "The [Ivory Labyrinth]: A legendary dungeon located deep within the ancient Laverio Empire's capital city!"...? Haku was on a completely different level than us. At best, we had less than half of a percent chance of winning.

"Ah, and of course, I will go easy on you. My dungeon is extremely difficult and hasn't been conquered once over the centuries that it has existed, to say nothing of the several large Branch Dungeons I have split off from it. How could I not give myself a handicap?" Of course, Haku had noticed how imbalanced her suggestion was, and so she added some additional rules.

"First of all, I will loan you one hundred thousand DP to use. I will then make a new Branch Dungeon the same size as your [Ordinary Cave], and then develop it using one hundred thousand DP as well. You will win if you can touch the Dummy Core within it. What do you think?"

"...You'll loan me DP? You can do that?"

"Of course. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that Dungeon Battles were created for the sake of dueling for DP... Ah, and by the way, you can keep the DP if you win. I'll even reward your victory with an extra hundred thousand."
Huh. These conditions seem pretty biased in our favor...

"I couldn't give Number 695 this much DP under most other circumstances, could I? She would go crazy with it."

That reasoning made sense to me. But there was more to her than met the eye. She was definitely planning something. If I couldn't figure out what that was, I'd be done for... and I still hadn't heard what would happen if I lost.

"...And if you win, Haku?"

"Fufufu. I'll have you repay the DP I lent you... with your body. Aah, and I don't mean that in a sexual way. You'll just have to work in my dungeon as an adventurer. I'll set you free once you've earned one hundred thousand DP and offered it up to me. You have my word that I will take care of Number 695 myself until you've repaid your debt. These conditions are unreasonably favorable to you, so I'm sure you'll accept my challenge. You will, won't you?"

She was right. The conditions were in our favor. We'd get a hundred thousand DP right off the bat and we could use it to grow our dungeon in any way that we pleased. But think about it from my perspective. A single goblin was worth 20 DP, but actually defeating them in the dungeon would only earn back 2 DP. Assuming that logic held true for all monsters, I would need to beat fifty thousand goblins to earn a hundred thousand DP. At best, I would need to beat ten low-ranked dragons. Just how long would that even take...? *Wait, hold on! Would killing monsters even count as "offering up" DP? Monsters cost DP to summon, wouldn't killing them just make my debt even worse? Holy crap. Thinking about it now, even just aiming for items wouldn't do me any good. Any item I could find in the dungeon would be one Haku used DP to place herself. I'd be finished if she just didn't accept that. After all, Dungeon Masters and Dungeon Cores are the only things that can actually earn DP.*

"...Earning a hundred thousand DP as an adventurer sounds pretty difficult."

"Oh my, that wasn't my intention. In that case, I'll be satisfied with DP earned from battles as well."

"Are you suggesting that I work as a monster and as a player killer? In the legendary [Ivory Labyrinth], where veteran adventurers from all over the world gather?"

"Fufu. I do have some Branch Dungeons made to be suitable for beginners, you know." Haku giggled in blatant amusement. *Yeah, I can't let my guard down around this person... I mean, uh, around this Dungeon Core.*

“Very well. I will accept any DP you expend in any of my dungeons to be part of your repayment. How do you feel about that?”

“I think that’s much more fair... But what do you get from it?” Under those rules, if I (for example) found and used a [{Healing} Scroll (100,000 DP)] on myself, I would immediately have paid back my debt in full.”

“DP does return to the mana stream after adventurers expend it, but that’s merely a side benefit. The main benefit of you working my dungeons is that I get an excuse to take Rokuko to the capital and take care of her there personally while leaving guards to protect her dungeon. Under normal circumstances, she would never accept such a thing.” *Makes sense. She has a lot to gain if it comes to keeping Rokuko safe.*

“...You will accept this challenge. I do need to see whether you’re a skilled enough Dungeon Master to truly protect Number 695, after all.” *I guess turning her down was never in the cards for me.*

* * *

“And that’s what we discussed, Number 695. We’ll be having a Dungeon Battle.”

“Eh?! What’s a Dungeon Battle, Number 89?” *Wait, what?! Seriously?! You don’t know that either?!* Haku and I explained the term to Rokuko.

“Wow, that sounds like fun.”

“Though, it is a competition, so we’ll be fighting with DP on the line. I’ll lend you your share of DP this time.”

“Eh?! You can share DP with me?!” *How do you know so little about anything, Rokuko?! I mean, I also didn’t know about these things before, but that’s totally different. And I wonder how DP is shared, anyway...*

“It’s, um, it’s only natural that you didn’t know that, Number 695. You never had the opportunity to learn. The truth is, u-um... DP is exchanged by... kissing! It’s true! We have to give each other a nice, long kiss! Mwah!”

“Really? Is that true, Chloe?”

“No. If my memories are correct, a simple handshake would do well enough.”

I consulted the butler for confirmation and got a quick, firm answer.

"...This is the first time Number 695 has ever exchanged DP before, and I'm giving her an entire hundred thousand. It's important that we kiss so that none leaks out and is wasted by mistake. It's easy to make mistakes when you're doing something for the first time. Is it not wise for us to use the safest method here...?" *That excuse is so obviously fake it hurts...*

"A-A hundred thousand?! I can't take that much!"

"I'm just lending it to you. And you'll need around that much to prepare for our battle. After all, this is a competition where we fight with DP as our everything. It would be boring for us both if you didn't have any DP, wouldn't it? This is just a simple handicap for me."

"N-Ngh..."

"We'll have to give it all back to her if we lose, so it really is just a loan. Go ahead and take it. And be sure to do exactly as Haku says when it comes to taking the DP from her."

"...Mmm, okay. Thank you very much, Number 89. I'll gladly accept your DP."

I realized halfway through saying "Go ahead and take it" that my statements would probably be interpreted as orders that Rokuko had to obey due to my Absolute Authority. So, I added on that last bit about the DP exchanging to earn some brownie points. *Ah, Haku's stealthily giving me a thumbs up. I guess a thumbs up means the same thing in this world too?*

"What should I do to take the DP from you, Number 89?"

"Close your eyes, open your mouth juuust a little, and stick out your tongue. Mmm, yes, just like that. Leave the rest to me. I'll eat you u—I'll give you the DP now." *...She was just about to say "I'll eat you up," right?*

Haku locked her mouth against Rokuko's, making sure that their tongues touched as much as possible. She embraced Rokuko's trembling body and pulled her closer with her left hand while using her right hand to lock her head in place. Rokuko looked nervous due to never having done something like that before, but she kept her eyes shut and entrusted her body to Haku. She was blushing bright red and would occasionally twitch as if some sensitive spot on

her body was being touched.

Haku had been going really slowly and taking her time, but apparently that was all just the beginning. She embraced Rokuko's head with both hands and moved her mouth, causing something (likely DP) to flow into her little sister's mouth. Rokuko pulled her head back in surprise, allowing me to briefly see a shining light between their tongues, but Haku soon pulled her head back.

And so, that continued for about ten more minutes. When their mouths finally separated, a string of saliva bridged the gap between their tongues before breaking apart.



“Phaah...! Gaaah, haaah...”

“Nfuu...”

Their expressions were entirely different. Rokuko was breathing heavily with her eyes shut, whereas Haku was smiling in satisfaction while licking her lips. The only thing they shared was their flushed cheeks and dreamy floatiness.

“...A small amount leaked out, but I gave more than that as a bonus.”

“Haah, haah... Th-Thank you, sho mush... Number 89.... Hauuu...”

“Ufufu. Was your first DP exchange too much for you? That’s fine. I’ll keep holding on to you for as long as necessary, so rest well.” Haku once again stealthily gave me a thumbs up behind her back. *Yeah. That definitely means “Good job” in this world too.*

I checked our DP while Rokuko rested her body against Haku’s. ...114,032 DP. The exchange certainly seemed to have gone well. *I think we had 3,500 DP before this, so... Dang. The DP I worked my ass off to get with blood, sweat, and tears is equivalent to just a minor “bonus” in Haku’s eyes. Just how much DP does she earn a day? Seriously.*

“Aaah, by the way, Keima. Do not even think about losing intentionally by not preparing for the battle. I won’t accept the DP I just loaned you as a way to repay your debt. It has to be new DP.” *Oh snap, there goes that plan. Darn. I coulda earned ten thousand DP for nothing, too.*

“By the way, this is a gift from me.”

Haku gave me a copy of [Intro to Dungeonology]. I took a look at the author and saw that it had been written by Haku Laverio. *Ah. Makes sense that a Dungeon Core would write a book about dungeons. This is probably the best source of information I could ask for.*

“Humans believe many things that aren’t quite true, so you should read this and be careful. Most of these are things I’ve thought up myself... One thing that’s particularly popular amongst we Cores is this section.” Haku pointed her pale, white finger to a section in the book named “Safe Zones.” I glanced over it and saw that Safe Zones were described as, reasonably enough, “safe places

where monsters cannot enter."

"This is just an act on our part. We set up magic tools that appear to serve some kind of function and then order our monsters to never go into the area. That causes humans to let their guard down, thinking the area is completely safe." *I get it. That's pretty smart.* You could earn DP from the adventurers resting within your dungeon, but the best thing of all was that Safe Zones weren't safe at all. The adventurers would all have their guard completely down without any eye witnesses... You could easily kill them all without leaving any evidence behind. Of course, since nobody would know that the adventurers had gone into the Safe Zone, everyone would just think they died normally in the dungeon. In a world as lacking in sources of information as this one, a book written by someone famous from the imperial capital would be about as reliable as you could get. *Haku's basically manipulating them like the mass media manipulated people back on Earth.*

"If you sooometimes order a monster to enter the Safe Zone, the adventurers all start panicking about a 'new species' of monster. Isn't it funny that all it takes for humans to be tricked is a change in fur color? Sometimes I dress up as a fortune teller and tell them which 'species' can go into the Safe Zones. They always practically cry in happiness while thanking me. Isn't that just comical?" *Wow. Making a problem and then selling the solution to that problem. Haku sure is something.*

But tricking people into thinking Safe Zones existed was convenient for me. Humans being ignorant of how dungeons worked was nothing but a positive for me. I gladly accepted the book. By the way, dungeonlogy books above the intro level apparently focused on more specific information. For example, books about how to conquer certain famous dungeons... Though those weren't as common.

"You have a lot to learn and much to prepare, so we can begin the battle in three days. Do your best, okay?"

"Do you have enough time to go back to the capital?"

"I walked here since my adventurer identity is weakened to match what humans would expect from me, but I do know {Teleport}. Oh, and by the way,

{Teleport} scrolls cost 50,000,000 DP. The only problem is that actually using the spell takes up so much mana there normally needs to be a team of magicians working together to make it work. It's not really something humans can use on their own."

"...I thought we were going to connect our dungeons using Space-Time Magic."

"That is actually a natural ability of dungeons, much like the menu. I dedicated several of my scientists to research it, but all they could figure out was that it was done through some form of Space-Time Magic. All their research only resulted in us learning something that was obvious from the start. Isn't that odd?" *In my opinion, Space-Time Magic is "odd" enough on its own, but okay.*

"Well then, see you in three days. I'm looking forward to our battle. Mmm... In the depth of my mind are memories of distant lands once traveled, forming a mental path from here to there. Fly through space, fly through time. There becomes here and here becomes there. Fuse, conjoin, connect... {Teleport}!" Haku chanted in a sing-song voice, causing both her and Chloe to float up... before a bright flash of intense light exploded around them. When the light faded, they had left nothing behind but a soft wind that brushed against our cheeks.

* * *

Rokuko remained in a daze for some time after Haku left, but she came back to normal eventually. She checked out the DP almost immediately and, after seeing the 110,000 DP, passed out with her eyes rolling in the back of her head. I went ahead and woke her up. She didn't have to know that I glanced at her bare feet a few times before doing so. *Hm... I wonder if she's gonna abandon her loli form now that we have tons of DP.*

"So, do you think we can win?"

"For sure. The rules were designed to give us a chance... Though she has a pretty huge advantage over us." Rokuko looked surprised after hearing me say that. She seemingly didn't understand how Haku had an advantage.

"Really? I know that Number 89 is really amazing, but she gave us a whole

extra 10,000 DP to use, didn't she?"

"...She didn't mention resources she already had in the conditions at all. It'd be totally legal for her to bring out a dragon she had already placed in one of her dungeons, since that technically wouldn't be her using DP. She probably won't go that far, but I wouldn't be surprised at all if her monsters come swinging with magically enchanted weapons or something like that." Rokuko sighed and shook her head.

"Haaah... Keima, I don't know how you always find crazy loopholes like that. It's like... impressive, but maybe not in a good way."

"Hey, that older sister you love so much made those rules with that loophole in mind. She intends to exploit it. That's what's really impressive here."

"I wouldn't expect anything less from Number 89!"

"Yep. She's basically a monster, and I *do* mean that in a good way." She probably wouldn't take advantage of the loophole too much against Rokuko, but I doubted she'd show mercy to anyone else. And since I was her main opponent this time... *Yeah, I guess I'm gonna have to go all out here. Aaah... I just want to sleep... I'm tired of all this. I want to abandon everything and just sleep. But if I lose this fight, my sleeping time is gonna get cut down hardcore. I won't even get a [Futon] to sleep on. No thanks.*

"Alright then. Rokuko, Niku. It's time to work." What were the first things I bought with my newfound 110,000 DP? Shovels and pickaxes, of course.

Day 31

The first thing to do was expand the dungeon. Dig holes. Lots of big, deep holes. Digging holes both made it cheaper to expand the dungeon and got me materials to make golems with. So naturally, my main role in the operation was making more golems as the dungeon got mined out. I let Rokuko and Niku give the mining golems more detailed instructions while I focused entirely on making new golems.

The only problem was that my natural mana regeneration couldn't keep up

with how fast I was making golems, so I was drinking [Mana Potions (150 DP)] pretty much constantly. *Ngh, so bitter...* My body must have been absorbing the potions as soon as I drank them, as the liquid didn't build up in my stomach. I could drink as much of them as I wanted, no problem. *I should just buy a barrel of this stuff. A barrel... of mana potions. Oh, looks like "mana potion" was added as an option under the "barrel of liquid" item path. Seriously? It only costs 1000 DP, too. That's an absolute steal. Maybe the glass on the normal mana potions is expensive? It does look like it's made of crystal glass.*

Soon, I selected the [Add A Floor (5000 DP)] option from the menu. I added one basement floor and one upper floor. It was convenient that I could add both upper and lower floors from the cave. I wanted to make a dungeon that forced you to go up and down floors to reach the true bottom, so I told Rokuko and Niku what instructions to give to the golems to make that happen. *Dig, dig even deeper! Bring me clay, stone, whatever! I want anything I can make golems with!*

"So, um, are we really going to dig out the basement floor? That seems like a lot of work... Why don't we just get rid of all the clay and stuff with DP?"

"'Cause that'd be a waste. I want that clay for golem-making."

I intended to make the basement floor and second floor (in other words, the "second" and "third" floors) of our dungeon labyrinthine in nature. Which meant adding a bunch of complex, interweaving hallways. By the way, it'd take 10,000 DP to make a new floor on its own, but digging out the hallways beforehand made it only 5,000 DP. Plus, manual digging would net me tons of materials to make golems with.

"Rokuko, you're the only one other than me who can use the map to give detailed instructions to the golems. I'm counting on you."

"Ngh... O-Okay, sure." *Oh wait, did I use my Absolute Authority just now by accident?*

"Rokuko. Only consider my orders to have Absolute Authority if I end them with 'And that's an order' or something to that effect. You can use your own judgment for anything else. And just so you know, I'm planning on giving up my Absolute Authority after this Dungeon Battle is over."

I had decided to get rid of my Absolute Authority after the battle was over since I needed it now to make sure she didn't mess up my more detailed instructions.

"Eh? Oh, okay. Are... Are you fine with that?"

"Hey, we're partners in body and soul. I'd like us to treat each other as equals."

"Partners... Y-Yeah, that's right! Dungeon Cores and Masters are spiritually connected and stuff!"

"Yep. And that's why I'm counting on you right now... But not ordering you around."

"Leave it to me! I'll do my best!" Rokuko smiled brightly and resumed giving the golems digging instructions.

I had Niku working as well. She was digging a ton of pitfalls near the entrance to the dungeon. The real trick was that one of those pitfalls actually led to a tunnel which would end with a single [Dummy Core (5,000 DP)]. *It's pretty standard stuff for a pitfall to end with a hidden tunnel. Though the only thing at the end will be a Dummy Core.* Thanks to the castling function, I could instantly swap the real Dungeon Core with any Dummy Core. In other words, the more Dummy Cores I placed, the more opportunities I had to keep the real Core safe. The castling function wasn't as useful in this situation since Haku would win if she touched even a Dummy Core, but still. I could just hide them right before she got to them. The number of Dummy Cores she hadn't almost found would basically be how much HP our dungeon had left.

"I will dig out a lot of pitfalls. I'll put flooring on the bottom too."

"That's the spirit. I want you to put spikes on that flooring after you're done, so be careful not to fall in yourself. I'll be putting covers over the pitfalls once they're all dug out."

"Roger!"

By the way, the covers would be reaaally thin and flat golems. Golems were great even outside of doing physical labor. Though I was probably the only one who's ever gone out of their way to make flat plate golems. Just goes to show

how much I cared about saving DP. *Oh, it might be fun to put wall-shaped golems in the labyrinth and have them move around so the correct path shifts around. That would make things pretty tricky. I'll talk to Rokuko about this later.*

In any case, I decided to make the area after the labyrinth a puzzle area. Thus, I bought a [Durable Switch-Activated Door (1,000 DP)]. I hid the switch within a golem and made it such that the door would open only after you solved a puzzle. By the way, it'd be super rude to make the switch impossible to reach, so... Hah, just kidding. The door would weaken and turn into a destructible object if the switch was unreachable or anything like that. That had something to do with the powers of the dungeon not working... or something. On the flip side, if the switch was reachable, the door became incredibly durable thanks to the dungeon's power.

The main thing was that it had to be "simple" to open the door. The puzzle, in turn, had to be one that anyone could solve using some common sense. But those rules were exclusive to the door. Although I was hiding the switch within a golem, the puzzle itself was extremely simple: flip the switch, open the door. Thanks to that, I was getting an extremely durable door for cheap. The main flaw with that plan was that it'd all fall apart if the golem with the switch got destroyed, but I decided to hope that any invaders would see the door and assume there was an actual puzzle they had to solve.

...Though, it might be smart to do the opposite and make a puzzle that looks easy, but is actually super tough. If they get the puzzle wrong, I could use a floor-styled golem as a makeshift trapdoor to drop them to a lower floor. *Alrighty. I've got lots of traps to set.* I'll mix up plenty of premade DP Catalog traps and my own handmade traps. I really want to make a bunch of weird traps nobody else has seen before. *Let's just hope I can think up of some good ones. Aaaah... I'm not gonna be getting much sleep at this rate. The second this battle's over, I'm gonna jump in bed and sleep for days...*

Day 33

And so, three days had passed since the Dungeon Battle had been declared. It

was time for war.

"...Wh-Whew, we finished just in time..."

"Um, there are actually a few things we didn't do in time. This is why I said we should've just used DP to take care of everything..."

"We needed that DP to summon monsters, though. You know that." My preparations had been very inclusive. We were ready both defensively *and* offensively. The focus of our strategy would just be racing straight towards the enemy's Dungeon Core... Whew. We had used a ton of DP. Despite all my efforts to cut down on costs, we had still ended up using close to 80,000 DP. But not a single one of those points had been wasted. *I'm getting nostalgic for when I cared a lot about saving up like 200 DP...*

"Wait a second, Keima. What's with that pillow?"

"Huh? This one? It's a [Heavenly Pillow (10,000 DP)]. What about it?" *Yep. 1/8th of the DP we had spent was on this baby. Hey, it wasn't a waste of DP or anything. This pillow is absolutely vital for helping me work efficiently and sleep effectively. This [Heavenly Pillow] was a necessary expense.*

"More importantly. Nice look, Rokuko. You really put your all into dressing up today, huh?"

"Heheh, of course! Honestly, I'm surprised you noticed!" *How could I not? I mean, she's in her Princess Knight mode. And, er... Just so you know, Rokuko, you're not gonna be fighting. I really hope that sword on your hip is just for show.*

"But really, that's no fair! I want something too, Keima. We still have a lot of DP left, don't we?"

"I mean, I left that DP as an emergency stock in case something happens. What, do you want me to summon 10,000 DP worth of goblins for you?"

"Why goblins?! I don't like them that much!"

"Alright, alright. If we win this, I'll let you have 10,000 DP to do whatever you want with. You can use it on gacha, goblins, a dragon, goblins, or even goblins!"

"Seriously, why goblins?!"

Either way, our dungeon had been completely revamped. No longer was it just an [Ordinary Cave] with nothing but rocks and dirt inside of it; our little cave had turned into a real, admirable dungeon. *I can't think of a new name for it, though... Eh, whatever. Someone will name it something eventually.*

"Hey, Niku. You did some good work too."

"...Thank you..." I rubbed Niku's head as she leaned heavily against me. Despite her exhaustion, I saw her dog tail wagging energetically. In some ways, I felt that we had all worked a bit too hard for this. I myself had worked so hard that I couldn't even remember how many golems I had made over the past three days. It was at least two hundred.

...I even made standard old Clay Golems. Yep. Rokuko, that rude little girl, even said "Eh?! You can make normal ones too?" after seeing what I was doing. I mean, c'mon. The more mobile golems I made were basically just normal golems too. I just mixed in stone with the clay and all that. Mainly because it was annoying to separate them. They look like normal Clay Golems on the outside, so it all works out, right?

Haku's Perspective

"How are the preparations proceeding, Chloe?"

"Without issue, my lady."

The [Ivory Proving Grounds] was a Branch Dungeon of the capital's [Ivory Labyrinth]. It had suddenly appeared a short distance away from the capital itself. Of course, it was in truth a dungeon that Dungeon Core Number 89... that Haku had prepared for her Dungeon Battle with Rokuko. It had been named by Haku herself. She planned to register the dungeon under that name to the Adventurer's Guild.

It was a dungeon with five floors in total, dug out using 50,000 DP. Minotaurs wandered its halls and traps were placed everywhere, with loaded crossbows hidden and spears prepared to fly out of holes in the floors and walls. There were even lizardmen placed about. And among those monsters, many of them

held Enchanted Weapons which would cost 10,000 DP each. ...That's right. Multiple monsters.

"By the way, Chloe. I feel as if many weapons are missing from my armory. Do you know anything about this?"

"I would guess that the Seventeenth Knight Platoon stole from it before leaving. Yet another crime they have committed against us."

"I see. There's no helping that, then. I feel as if I've seen the axe that minotaur over there is holding before, but it must be something else entirely."

"Indeed, that axe is actually quite common."

"...Oh my, it seems that lizardmen have gotten into our dungeon."

"There was a lizardman nest around this area to begin with."

"But that has nothing to do with us, does it?"

"Indeed it does not. We are not responsible for native creatures inhabiting our dungeon on their own."

...Their dungeon had been prepared using more than 100,000 DP, and their conversation revealed how that was done. Of course, they hadn't broken the rule about not using more than the set amount of DP. What they were doing was completely legal. As for the Seventh Knight Platoon, whose members now faced even more false charges... Let us pray for them.

The [Ivory Proving Grounds], despite being a freshly made dungeon, was already difficult enough to pose immense danger for beginning adventurers. Even a party of C-Rank adventurers would struggle to conquer it. If you included the army of monsters waiting by the entrance for war to begin, the dungeon's difficulty would increase even further, all the way to B-Rank. The attacking force alone was fifteen minotaurs (3000 DP), fifty lizardmen (150 DP), and one hundred goblins (20 DP). All of those monsters were favored by Haku for how balanced their strength was with their DP cost. Perhaps out of the goodness of her heart, or perhaps to avoid suspicion, none of the monsters in the attacking force wielded Enchanted Weapons.

"Now then, shall we begin? I'm going to contact them, Chloe."

“Understood, my lady.” Haku opened up the Menu and sent a transmission to the [Ordinary Cave]. Yet again, such a thing would normally require extensive preparation and resources.

“Can you hear me, Number 695?”

“Sister! Yes, I can hear you! I’m so happy I get to see you again!” An adorable voice came out from the menu, causing Haku to smile. This time, Rokuko was wearing a cute set of dress armor. She looked so cute in it that Haku wanted to seek her out on the battlefield to capture her. Haku found herself lovingly absorbed in Rokuko’s angelic, cute smile that was dripping with clear enthusiasm for her first Dungeon Battle. This little cutie would surely start to cry with tears and snot dirtying her beautiful face if Haku were to mercilessly attack her as planned. ...Hot. Very hot. *But I must take care to not go too far and make her hate me,* thought Haku.

“Fufu. I hope I’m not rushing you, but are you ready to begin?”

“Uh-huh!”

“Very well. Dungeon Battle, start!” Haku’s words marked the beginning of battle. The moment she finished speaking, a gate appeared near the entrance to her dungeon. It was large enough for a platoon of knights to pass through easily, and on the other side awaited the [Ordinary Cave’s] golems. “I see, I see... Golems certainly are a good choice for an army’s vanguard. Clay Golems in particular are cheap and therefore easy to gather in large groups.” Not only that, but since golems could move for essentially no cost thanks to free mana from the dungeon, they had the least upkeep necessary out of any monster. However, despite being offensively and defensively powerful, they were slow.

“Please attack with the lizardmen.”

“Lizardmen, attack!”

Both armies charged towards the gate. Haku, determining that the golems would simply crush her goblins, prioritized attacking them with her lizardmen. The goblins would mainly work as scouts to help with conquering the dungeon itself. Losing them early on the battlefield would be a tactical failure.

The lizardmen leaped through the gate and swung their blades at the golems.

Many of them were hit directly and collapsed onto the ground, bodies broken, but the majority of them won with speed and damaged the golems effectively... but nonetheless, many golems slipped past them and invaded the [Ivory Proving Grounds].

"The enemy has invaded our dungeon!" A lamia was looking at the map and reporting the movements of the enemy army. She was one of Haku's most trusted retainers. Haku had brought her five retainers, including Chloe, into her Master Room to assist with the Dungeon Battle. The one who had just ordered the lizardmen to charge was a *living armor* who was in charge of offensively maneuvering her armies.

It's a bit late to be doing this now, but the [Ivory Proving Grounds'] military leadership was as follows: Amelia, a lamia in charge of defense. Dolce, a wraith in charge of managing intelligence such as troop casualty statistics. Sally, a living armor in charge of combat and battles. Misha, a werecat in charge of offensive reconnaissance. And finally, Chloe the succubus, who supported Haku in any way necessary. Haku herself served as a unified leader that gave orders to each retainer and took care of the general decision-making.

"There are... around two hundred invaders?!" The retainers all shook in fear after hearing Dolce's report.

"No way! We didn't let that many get through! I can't even see that many monsters...!"

"No, look closer! The invaders aren't golems... They're gray rats!"

"What?! Gray rats?! Those aren't even monsters!" Even Haku's voice rose in confusion and fear. It seemed that the golems had all been carrying large boxes on their backs filled to the brim with ordinary rats. Of course, since each rat was being displayed on the map as an enemy, they had all been summoned and placed under the Dungeon Core's control. Rats or not, they were the enemy, and if even a single one touched the [Ivory Proving Grounds'] Dummy Core... Haku would lose. Even the golems who hadn't passed through the gate had boxes, and soon their tops burst open as a throng of rats raced out. They charged like a pulsating wave of gray water, weaving through the lizardmen's legs and into the [Ivory Proving Grounds].

“Exterminate them at once!”

“I can’t! They’re too small, the minotaurs can’t handle them!”

“Order half of the goblins to focus on exterminating the rats! We’re in danger here!”

“They’ve conquered the first floor! The enemy is now invading the second floor! I-I count... around five hundred invaders!”

“What about the traps?!”

“They aren’t working, the rats are just too small! Even if an arrow lands, it’s like throwing a fireball into a lake!”

“Contact all lizardmen in the dungeon! Tell them to exterminate the rats! EXTERMINATE THE RATS!” The retainers had immediately fallen into a loud panic. Haku, on the other hand, soon regained her calm.

“He certainly has a good head on his shoulders, doesn’t he? I had no idea gray rats were so suitable for an advance force...”

“Indeed... It may only be a matter of time until our dungeon is completely conquered. Forgive me, the first floor of our dungeon was conquered in a matter of moments.”

“I don’t blame you, Chloe. None of us expected a strategy like this. I might have to take some notes and use rats in another battle myself. When caught off guard like this, they are exceptionally difficult to counter... But I have an idea. Amelia, place several flamethrower traps along the hallways of the third floor. That should buy us some time.”

“Th-Thank you very much!” Traps could still be placed on any floors without invaders on them. Flamethrowers were fairly expensive, but they were the best thing for killing rats. Either way, though, Haku wasn’t worried. The rats certainly were effective as scouts for conquering the dungeon, but they couldn’t succeed on their own. Reason being, she had placed a Boss Room before the Core Room. The rats needed to beat the boss of her dungeon, a Red Minotaur, in order to reach the Core, and that wasn’t likely to happen.

“It seems we’ve finished off the golems. Proceeding to invade their dungeon.”

“By all means. We must find Number 695 before they reach our Core, after all.”

Keima’s Perspective

“Oh wow, look at them go.” I murmured to myself in awe as I watched the map steadily getting filled out before my eyes.

“Um, the map’s filling out like, super fast... That means our armies are conquering the dungeon like crazy, right? We’re beating Haku?”

“You bet. But just ’cause we’re winning now doesn’t mean the battle’s over.”

Naturally, you don’t just get a map of the enemy’s dungeon at the start of a Dungeon Battle. That makes total sense. It’s a little hard to get lost in a labyrinth you have a comprehensive map for. And the Dungeon Core would be on it, too. A finished map would make a Dungeon Battle ridiculously boring. That said, those being invaded can still look at their map and see where all the enemies are.

“Master, the golem... vanguard, has been completely destroyed. All fifty of them are gone.”

“Alright. Just as planned.”

By the way, that golem vanguard had been composed almost entirely of Clay Golems I made with {Create Golem}. Only a few of them at the front had actually been summoned, which saved us a lot of DP. I had made the others out of the clay we got from expanding the dungeon. *Talk about recycling. Aren’t I eco-friendly?*

But the most important thing was how much DP it saved, for sure. I put magic stones into them just in case Haku got suspicious, but even so, those only cost a tenth of what golems did. I could even reuse the destroyed golems’ bodies by absorbing them back into the dungeon, assuming they died within it. Same went for the magic stones.

“The rat surprise attack, a ton of traps including the pitfalls Niku dug out, and finally, the complex second and third floor labyrinths that Rokuko built... I

wonder how Haku's gonna hold up?" I observed the battlefield while rubbing Niku's head.

Haku's Perspective

"There are pitfalls right at the start?!"

"Order the goblins to go first! We'll find the pitfalls by seeing where they fall!"

Back at the [Ivory Proving Grounds'] camp, the retainer handling offensive reconnaissance was hurriedly dealing with the traps before her. Right from the start, she had to deal with pitfalls. Several of their troops were swallowed up by them in an instant. Normally, she would just launch bodies at the pitfalls until they were filled up with corpses, but they were invading an enemy dungeon. The monsters just got absorbed the moment they died. That wasn't a major problem, though. She could just avoid the pitfalls after determining where they were located.

"Okay, I've marked all the pitfalls down! Invasion start!"

"Ah! Wait, a minotaur just fell! Ngh, the spears at the bottom killed him instantly!"

"But why?! I just saw a goblin walk right there and he was fine!" Unfortunately, the [Ordinary Cave] even had pitfalls that ignored goblins and only activated for minotaurs and lizardmen.

"Pitfalls that choose specific targets?! I'm certain those cost a lot of DP... He must be trying to finish the battle right at the beginning."

"Aaah! Another minotaur, gone! We only have eleven left! And we're down to thirty lizardmen, too! Come on, Misha! Do your job right!"

"I'm telling you, the goblins walked all over those places!" Another minotaur fell. Their numbers were dwindling. Somewhere, a pitfall's covering collapsed after a lizardman and two goblins all stepped on it at once. Haku didn't let that slip her by.

"...I see now. I believe the pitfall covers are collapsing based on weight. That's

why the goblins haven't been falling."

"Ah, yes. That explains what's happening, and such a covering could be mass-produced for little DP. That man... certainly is clever."

"There should be empty air beneath the pitfall covers. It will take some time, but please advance slowly while hitting the floor and listening for any changes."

"Understood! Goblins, do it!" *My goodness. Clever indeed. I can't think of a better way to buy time than this. But now that we know how it works, we have nothing to fear.* The goblins advanced through the dungeon, hitting the floor and sometimes breaking the pitfall covers.

"We've conquered the enemy dungeon's first floor! We have... an unfortunate amount of wounded due to surprise attacks on the way here. Many of our goblins died on the way."

"I was quite impressed with the trap that launches a sword through a door after you try to open it."

"I'll have to think about using that trap myself. Now... how are things on our dungeon's side?"

"The enemy troops have reached the third floor and... our flamethrowers are holding many of the rats back!" The flamethrower traps were indeed just flamethrowers that spat out fire. This time, Haku had chosen flamethrowers that turned on and off in a set pattern. If she set them to fire constantly, they would soon jam up and become completely useless. Having them pause temporarily on a regular basis was necessary.

"...The lizardmen we went out of our way to get aren't proving to be very helpful against rats. How are we doing offensively?"

"The second floor of the enemy dungeon... is a labyrinth!"

"Truly? He would use a labyrinth to challenge me, *the* [Ivory Labyrinth]? I am impressed, to say the least. Split our troops and begin exploring." Impressed or not, Haku wasn't worried. Labyrinths were effective against adventurers, but not dungeons. Mazes were meaningless in the face of a map, and once the exit was discovered, troops could be directed along the correct path with ease.

“Oh, it looks like golems are wandering around. They’re moving in groups of five... a-and they have bows?! Golems with swords are guarding archers in the back! They’re crushing our goblins!”

“What?! Golems, acting like adventurers? That’s quite a sight. We have no choice but to use lizardmen against them. Move the goblins as sentries while attacking with lizardmen, then minotaurs.”

“W-What in the world?! Those golems have really powerful weapons! They’re cutting right through our lizardmen’s blades?! I-I can’t believe it... The three swordsmen in this golem squad all have magic equipment!”

“What did you just say? These golems... have Magic Blades?!” No matter how economical it was to summon golems, they weren’t strong enough to bother equipping them with Magic Blades. After all, even a low-tier Magic Blade would cost a ton of DP and stronger monsters would make much better use of them.

“And really now, we’ve been seeing nothing but golems for a while now. He must truly love golems.”

“...Is he using them out of favoritism or something of the sort? If so, that lack of seriousness will prove to be his undoing. Gather our troops and crush the golems between our minotaurs!”

“Understood! W-Wait... what?! H-Hold on, the map is acting weird! Why is there a wall right there?!”

“...What?!” The map showed a passageway, but looking through the monsters’ perspectives, no such passageway could be found. And as they tried to figure out what was going on, their gathering troops were being steadily cut down.

“No way! Is this an [Illusory Labyrinth]...?! No way, one of this size would cost way more than 100,000 DP!”

“Perhaps he isolated only a few, crucial areas to be mobile. If so, he could buy one with only fifty... no, forty thousand DP. Hopefully that is the case, and that would make this his last line of defense.”

Haku genuinely admired Keima’s strategical skill. He had used his small pool of DP quite efficiently. Very good. This Dungeon Battle had been founded on

the idea that they would duel with the same amount of DP. The winner, then, would be decided solely by the quality of their strategies and tactics. Who could use less DP to do more? That was the true core of this battle. Would Keima have won had Haku fought fair and truly used the same amount of DP...? She didn't even need to question it. She knew, deep inside, that he was her definite superior.

"Fufu. I suppose my one regret here is that we are dueling with a mere 100,000 DP." If the battle had been one with 1,000,000 DP instead, their duel would have become a genuine war. But instead, they were fighting with only 100,000 DP. From Haku's perspective, that wasn't nearly enough for Keima to prevent her from winning in quick fashion.

Keima's Perspective

I had equipped the sword-wielding golems with mass-produced Golem Blades. They were made of stone with only the blade being iron, which helped save a lot of DP since I could make several Golem Blades from a single iron ingot. The stone was free, as it could be mined from the dungeon walls.

I had made the bows without putting much effort into them. The arrows, too, I had made from whatever stuff I found lying around. I would have been that lazy with the bows, too, but since the arrows flew better with wooden bows, I cut down some trees and made the bows out of them. The only other thing I used, really, was determination and mana potions (in barrel form). Since their weapons were golems too, this party of golems would normally be displayed on the map as an actual army of golems, but thankfully I could designate them as "golems + equipment," which saved me some map space. Very convenient.

And of course, I was watching the map and moving the Wall Golems around as soon as they were completely out of the enemy's sight.

"Hell yeah, the Wall Golems are moving around undetected!"

"Those are the things you had Niku punch earlier, right? They can move? I don't see feet on them or anything."

“They’re a new model. I put tires under them so they can drive around.” Thanks to that, believe it or not, these mobile Wall Golems cost exactly 0 DP. They were free. I made them from leftover parts and I did everything myself. Plus, since they’re only moving around inside the dungeon, I didn’t even have to buy magic stones for them. My motto? Reduce, reuse, recycle.

Haku’s Perspective

By the time Haku conquered the labyrinth, invaders had already surpassed the third floor of her own [Ivory Proving Grounds]. There were still over one hundred and fifty rats still alive. They were cleverly and effectively avoiding the flamethrowers, as if someone was giving them detailed instructions. But even so, thanks to all the lizardmen she had gathered in the staircase room, many of the rats had perished.

“I can’t believe that we have to climb back up a floor now. I thought perhaps the third floor would return to more standard practices, but instead, the labyrinth continues up to the second floor.”

“It might be wise to employ this man not as an adventurer, but as a dungeon adviser...”

At the end of the labyrinth was an upwards staircase. The second floor ended with an exit that took them up two whole floors. If the initial entrance was called “Floor 1”... would they now be on Floor 0? Or perhaps Floor Negative 1? In human terms, they were technically on the second floor, but...

“...I have no idea what to name where we are.”

“He has no intention of making anything easy for us, does he? I declare that this floor will be known as the Second Above-Ground Floor!”

“Yes, understood! And... I see a door right away on the Second Above-Ground Floor!” The staircase led them right to a room with a large door in it. By borrowing the vision of their monsters, they saw just how firm and durable the door looked. That, and a brightly colored sign right beside it.

“...What is written on it?”

“Umm... It appears to be a riddle. I’ll read it out loud. ‘The answer is simple. You mustn’t think too hard about this. Please tell me how to split one silver coin between three people.’ And... that’s it.”

“How to split one silver coin between three people...? Um, one silver coin is worth one hundred copper coins, so...” Haku smiled as she watched Dolce start to count on her fingers.

“I know the answer to this. First, you convert the silver coin into one hundred copper coins. Then, you hand the copper coins one by one to each individual, and give the final copper coin to whoever handed out the coins as payment for their labor. In other words, two of them get thirty-three copper coins, and the third one gets thirty-four.” A question as simple as that was nothing to Haku, an experienced Dungeon Core with a long history of dealing with riddles and puzzles.

“Fantastic, my lady!”

“That answer certainly satisfies the question.”

“I could not imagine a more perfect answer.”

“And there you have it! Open up, door! A riddle of this level would never be able to stop our lady, Dungeon Core Number 89!” The floor beneath their monsters collapsed.

“Eh?!”

“What?!”

“But how?!”

An uncomfortable atmosphere filled the [Ivory Proving Grounds’] Core Room. The entire floor of the puzzle room was a pitfall... and it led to the entrance floor.

“But why?! My answer should have been perfect...!”

“L-Let’s just calm down! I-I mean, look, our entire army wasn’t in the room, so we’re still safe! We can solve this really soon! U-Um, how many were wounded in the fall?!”

“Ah! E-Er, one of the minotaurs broke his ankle. He won’t be able to fight

anymore. Two of the minotaurs died from the fall, and... all three lizardmen survived. But every goblin that fell died! To list off the survivors, we have six minotaurs, twelve lizardmen... minus the three that fell... and eight goblins left!”

Haku squeezed her fists tightly and choked out her next order.

“Use the three surviving lizardmen to carry away the wounded minotaur. Ngh...! I cannot believe I failed after being so confident in my answer! This is humiliating! I’ll rip apart the wounded minotaur and mount his corpse on my wall so I never forget this shame!”

“M-My lady, let’s try answering the riddle again, using only a single goblin! We can move our entire army again if we answer it correctly!”

“...B-But that would be shameful in its cowardice! You do realize that Number 695 is watching us, don’t you?!”

“I think we should prioritize winning here...”

“Th-They’ve conquered the fourth floor! The rats are moving like trained soldiers, we can’t stop them!”

“My lady!” Chloe was silently begging Haku to realize that there was simply no time. And Haku, experienced as she was, made her decision.

“Very well... We will boldly, BOLDLY, use goblins here!”

Keima’s Perspective

“Whoever found the silver coin gets the extra copper coin!”

Poof, wooosh... crash!

“The extra copper coin becomes the party’s shared property, while the other ninety-nine coins are split equally!”

Poof, wooosh... crash!

“...You cut the silver coin into thirds and split those!”

Poof, wooosh... crash!

“Two of the party members are slaves, and their owner gets to keep all the money to himself!”

Poof, wooosh... crash!

“The money is given to an impartial third party who chooses how to split the money himself!”

Poof, wooosh... crash!

Heh. She’s completely fallen for it. Though, as expected, she started sending out only a single goblin after getting the riddle wrong once. Hm... It might be fun to block off the door if there’s not enough weight on the room’s floor.

“Hey, Keima... Isn’t this riddle the one that I...?”

“Yep. This is the one you solved in three seconds, Rokuko. You’re incredible. I’m sincerely impressed. You didn’t even read the entire riddle before answering.”

“W-Well, that’s because it told me the answer at the start! I can’t believe Number 89 is struggling so much with it...”

“This kind of riddle is harder the smarter you are. Once you get stuck, it’s really hard to realize what’s going on. And I mean, wow, your older sister really is smart. I’m actually really impressed with all the wild answers she’s thinking up on the spot.” I watched Haku’s troops out of the corner of my eye while guiding the rats through her dungeon. They were a lot easier to control now that so many of them had died. *I might even be able to win this without using my **secret weapon**, huh?*

Haku’s Perspective

Poof, wooosh... crash! Due to a wrong answer, another goblin fell down the pitfall.

“GAAAH!”

“My ladyyy!” Haku had completely fallen into the puzzle’s trap. No matter how hard or long she thought, every answer was wrong! Wrong, wrong,

wrong...!

“Ngh, how fearsome...! I didn’t expect such a psychological attack during a Dungeon Battle like this...”

“Um, my lady... Is this truly a [Gate of Wisdom]...?” A [Gate of Wisdom] is a special dungeon trap that tests the wisdom of invading adventurers. It was an incredibly sturdy door, but anyone could pass through it if they solved its riddle. Haku had challenged the riddle on the plaque assuming that the door before her was in fact a [Gate of Wisdom].

“...Wh-What? Do you have any evidence that it is not, Chloe?”

“Indeed. First of all, I question the veracity of any puzzle that one with a mind as strong as yours could not solve, my lady. And secondly... I must also question whether Keima would have enough DP to purchase a [Gate of Wisdom], considering how expensive the traps before this one have been.”

“Ah...!”

Indeed. Haku herself had said “I doubt there will be any significant traps beyond this point” after overcoming the labyrinth. A [Gate of Wisdom] would, at the very least, cost 30,000 DP. The simpler the riddle the more sturdy it would be, and the harder the riddle the more fragile it would be. It would cost large amounts of DP to keep the door sturdy with such a difficult riddle. This was quite an expensive trap for a battle of only 100,000 DP.

“Which means... This is...”

“It is quite possible that it is simply an ordinary door that he expected to be broken. Or perhaps it is a trap where attempting to answer the question in front of it will cause the floor to open.” That would be an absolutely devilish trap. No matter how many times you attempted to answer the riddle, the door would never open—even if your answer was correct. The moment you stopped to think about the riddle, you had already lost. *M-My goodness, this is just frightening...! Wh-What in the world is wrong with Keima’s head...?!*

“I-I’ve never seen a trap as unfair as this one! It’s just cowardly!”

“And if you never notice the trick, you’d be stuck here forever...”

“Ngh, but even so, it is our fault for being tricked. Let us accept our loss here with no more shameful griping. Fufu. But truly, I am impressed you saw through it, Chloe. You supported me when my vision grew too narrow, just as I’d expect from my right-hand woman.”

“Your praise honors me beyond words.”

“Um...” Misha, the pink-haired werecat, hesitantly raised her hand. Among all the five retainers in the Master Room, she was the least suited to solving riddles. To put it simply, she was an airhead. Haku directed a bright, visibly angry smile towards her.

“What is it, Misha? I’ve already decided to destroy this door through righteous violence. Are you trying to get in my way?”

“I-I would never dream of that! It’s just, um, I was thinking... Maybe the answer to the riddle is just... ‘simple’...?”

“Hm? Simple...? Wh-What are you talking about, Misha? Oh, I see. It is true that this is quite a simple trap at heart! It merely presents a question without an answer!”

“N-No, that’s not what I mean! Um, it says right there at the start that ‘the answer is simple,’ doesn’t it?” The air froze.

“N-No way... Hahaha, that’d be ridiculous...”

“G-Geez, Misha, what kind of idea... is that...?”

“Ah, hahaha... Seriously, Misha, that’s just...”

Their voices were stiff and shaky. By this point, all the retainers were thinking that might actually be the right answer. The retainers... and Haku herself, too. Even Chloe.

“...Chloe. I will give the riddle one more try...”

“Ngh...! Understood...”

Haku gave the last answer herself, prepared for her heart to shatter if that was indeed the correct answer.

“The answer... is ‘simple!’” Ding! The door made a sound, signifying that it

had been unlocked. Haku's heart shattered.

The [Gate of Wisdom] slowly opened. Haku gathered her shattered heart together as best she could and tried peering through the door... but couldn't. Reason being, there was a solid wall on the other side of the door. And on that solid wall was a sign with "Under Construction" written on it.

Haku's shattered heart exploded.

Keima's Perspective

"...Oh nice, she figured it out."

"Hey, why'd you end the dungeon there, anyway? Weren't you going to make a whole floor there?"

"Yeah, but I actually ran out of time before I could finish it... a-and not because I was sleeping, okay? Seriously." Rokuko shook her head, clearly thinking "Ah, he totally slept instead of making it." Rokuko checked the map to confirm that there was nothing on the top floor before looking at me. Unable to bear her narrowed eyes, I changed the subject.

"To tell the truth, I gave up on the riddle after you solved it instantly. I figured it would be best to just be bold and not make the floor at all."

"How is that bold?"

"I just thought it'd surprise them, basically."

"Well, it is pretty surprising. Who would end a massive labyrinth with a dead end...? But anyway. Where do they even go from there?"

"I hid one Dummy Core in a pitfall and three in the labyrinth. They walked by every single one." Two of them were in small rooms pushing out of the square-shaped labyrinth and one was in the ceiling. Haku didn't notice them since I had hidden them behind Wall Golems. The dungeon would cease functioning if the real Dungeon Core were hidden behind a wall, so if I needed to use the castling function to swap it with one of the Dummy Cores, I would just make the Wall Golem there move out of the way. As an aside, the Dungeon Core wouldn't be

considered blocked off as long as there was a door to its location. I didn't really know the exact logic behind it, but surrounding it with Wall Golems was a clear no-go. *No idea why, though.*

But my thoughts were interrupted by our units finding the Boss Room. I was genuinely stunned that our rats had made it that far into the dungeon.

"GRAAAAAAAAAH!"

Within the Boss Room was a minotaur. But not just any minotaur. The minotaurs that invaded our dungeon all had brown fur like you would expect, but this minotaur had red fur... making it a Red Minotaur.

"This guy sure is red. But why red? Is he super shy or something?"

"Yep, he's red. I think monsters of the Fire element usually end up being red. And you can count on fire monsters having high attack power. That's their thing." Indeed, the Red Minotaur was snorting fire out of his nose.

"We can't just ignore him and slip into the next room, can we?"

"No way. The door out won't open until you beat the boss."

Our gray rats were facing a Red Minotaur as their final opponent. *Er... There's an idiom that goes like "a cornered mouse will bite a cat." Hopefully being cornered gives our rat pals here enough courage to beat this red, muscular cow.*

"GRAAAAAAAH!" The Red Minotaur swung his metal club sideways, scraping it against the floor. Our rats were blown back in all directions, as if they had been packed tight into a water balloon that just burst. Several of them managed to escape by jumping away, but nonetheless, over fifty rats had died in a single swipe.

...Oh shit. That was almost half of them.

"Keima, are you going to use your secret weapon now?"

"Nah, it's not an actual weapon or anything. It won't help us here... C'mon! Go bite him, rats!" The rats responded to my order by biting the minotaur's feet. But they were flung aside after he shook his feet, and to make matters worse, he crushed several rats after bringing his feet back down. We were getting destroyed. At best, our rats could scratch the minotaur's skin a little.

“...Yeah, I guess I shouldn’t expect rats to beat the Dungeon Boss too. Niku. Prepare our second wave, the Golem Platoon.”

I hadn’t expected the rats to reach the Core alone, so I had prepared a platoon of golems equipped for dungeon invasion. But could they beat the Red Minotaur either? Golems weren’t fast. They’d be crushed beneath his club just like the rats were. They were ultimately just dolls made of clay and stone, after all.

Welp. I was starting to question whether I could win this. The more time we spent here, the more time Haku had to conquer our dungeon. She would find one of the Cores eventually, no matter how hard I tried to hide them. She was actually very intelligent. I had led her into a trap by exploiting her intelligence, but once she calmed down, it wouldn’t be long before she found the secret path in the pitfalls or noticed the golem walls hiding the Dummy Cores.

The Red Minotaur spat out fire, burning ten more rats alive. There were thirty-eight rats still alive, not even ten percent of the original invasion force. I ordered them to circle the Red Minotaur to at least avoid the survivors being wiped out with a single swing of his club. *The only thing I can do here is watch as they all die, huh? Welp. Guess I should use the last of our DP to buy some nice tools that’ll be useful while I’m working in Haku’s dungeon. Oh, this Magic Blade looks pretty nice. I guess the story of Keima the Adventurer begins here...*

“Wait, Keima. I have an idea on how to win this. Can we try it out?” Rokuko smirked confidently, her tone dripping with pride.

“Huh? Tell me what the idea is first.”

“Okay. Listen up, because I’m about to tell you something amazing. Believe it or not, minotaurs die if their heads come off!” *Uh... I think that’s true for basically every living thing, not just minotaurs.*

“So basically, we should just focus on attacking its head. Even gray rats should be able to do some damage then.”

“I dunno about that. Won’t the fire from his nose just burn them all to death?”

“Not if they clog his nose and stop him from breathing.”

“That’s not what... I... Wait, hold on. Stop him from breathing, huh? Alright... Let’s give it a shot.” I watched the roaring minotaur closely while giving orders to the rats.

“...All units, attack the specified point!” The rats surrounding the minotaur all charged forward. Experienced as gray rats were with climbing even steep cliff faces, the minotaur’s legs proved to be no more than ladders assisting their ascent. The Red Minotaur swung his body around to try and knock them off, but he couldn’t shake them all off. Five rats managed to reach his head.

“Ngggh... Graaah...?!” The Red Minotaur tried to spit out fire. But him preparing to spit out fire was exactly the opening I was waiting for. I sent two rats towards his large nose, and soon both of his nostrils were clogged. The minotaur immediately opened his mouth to suck in air... and as he did so, I sent the other three rats straight into his mouth.

“Wait, what?! Keima, he ate them!”

“Nope. This is what I was banking on, Rokuko. Now that they’re in his throat, I’m gonna order them to keep still and block it up!”

The rats obeyed my orders and kept still, clogging the Red Minotaur’s air duct. Unable to breathe, the red monster could do nothing but flail his body around in a rampage. He crushed the rats in his nose with his hands, but it was too late. He couldn’t even roar with his throat blocked up. Helpless, he fell to his knees and gripped his throat. His club fell from his hand and noisily hit the floor. He then tried to pull the rats out of his throat... but his hands were too big and his fingers couldn’t reach deep enough inside. He tried throwing up, but his air duct was so solidly blocked that he couldn’t even manage that. Saliva flew out of his mouth as he writhed helplessly.

And then, after a few minutes passed, his arms weakly fell to the floor and his body started to twitch. One more minute was all it took before the door to the next room opened up. The rats that had been in his throat climbed out of his mouth, covered in minotaur saliva but still alive.

“Well... We won.”

“Yep. We won.”

“...Minotaurs die if you clog their throats, I guess?”

“Uh... I think basically any living thing will die if you clog their throat.”

“Really? That’s good to know.” *Rokuko doesn’t even need to breathe, huh? I mean, she is a Dungeon Core, so I shouldn’t be surprised about that. But anyway.... Uh. Yeah. Enemy or not, holy crap! I feel bad about suffocating that thing to death with rats! Geez!* I ordered the rats to advance while praying for the Red Minotaur to have a peaceful afterlife.

We still had twenty-seven rats remaining. All we had to do was find the Dungeon Core, and it had to be in the room right after the Boss Room. The map showed that we had explored everywhere else in the Dungeon. Haku’s Dungeon had ended up being incredibly normal, what with a boss being the final obstacle and all that.

The rats raced through the dungeon hall. As expected, the next room was the Core Room. In the middle of it rested a familiar looking, basketball-sized orb... There was Haku’s Dummy Core, with nothing standing between its pedestal and my rats. *We can win this!*

I ordered the rats to jump at it, but someone appeared out of the Dummy Core at the last moment. It was... Chloe, wielding a spear. *You can teleport out of Dummy Cores too, huh? I didn’t know that. I could’ve made a lot more golems if I had known. I can already see the endless flow of golems appearing from seemingly nowhere in the labyrinth... Wait, hold up. Are you telling me they have a **second** last line of defense? That’s breaking some kind of rule, isn’t it?! Wait, it doesn’t matter! She’s full of openings, we can sneak a rat past her!* Or so I thought, the exact moment before Chloe...

“Protect me, {Flame Wall}!” Crackling fire roared up around the Core in a circular fashion, turning the five rats I had sent charging to ash.

“...Oh man.” *This is too much. I guess the Red Minotaur was just for show and this is the real last boss, huh? C’mon.*

Haku’s Perspective

“.....”

Those in the [Ivory Proving Grounds’] Master Room were all stunned by the “Under Construction” poster. The only thing that differed was in which exact way they were suffering. First of all, Haku. She was frozen with a smile on her face. Misha, the only one who figured out the correct answer to the riddle, was green with anxiety and had “I said something I really shouldn’t have...” written all over her face. The other four retainers, Chloe included, felt indescribable fear from Haku’s smile and found themselves unable to say anything.

“...Ah! The enemy has broken through the Boss Room! Th-They’ve found our Core Room!” The silence was only broken after Amelia, head of defense, gave a panicked report. Dolce, head of information, immediately replied.

“Wait, what?! Hold on! What happened to the boss, our Red Minotaur?! They had to beat the Boss to reach the Core Room, didn’t they?!”

“Th-The... The Red Minotaur suffocated to death after they stuffed rats into his throat!” The air froze. Not just because of how terrifying a mental image that gave everyone, but because it was unbelievable that their boss monster had been defeated by mere rats.

“A-Ahaha! Th-This doesn’t even make sense! Gray rats aren’t supposed to be this powerful! This monstrous!”

“Please calm down, Dolce. Ah... My lady.”

“We haven’t lost yet. Order the attacking force to continue their search. There’s surely something we overlooked. Chloe, please go defend the Core using my spear.”

“...Understood! I will protect it even if it costs me my life!” No one suggested that she was over-exaggerating how serious a battle with the rats would be. They had just witnessed Keima sacrificing his rats to clog a Red Minotaur’s throat and choke him to death. Chloe was much smaller than a minotaur; it would only take one rat to choke her to death.

“There are still... thirty foes remaining. I pray for your victory.”

“My life belongs to you, my lady. I will not let it end here... To battle!” Chloe grabbed the spear and jumped out of the Core the exact moment that the

horde of rats charged at it.

“Just in time, I see...! Protect me, {Flame Wall}!”

That one short chant was all it took for a wall of fire to sprout out from the floor and surround the Core. The rats all backed off after witnessing those at the front burn to death. Such was the power of Haku’s Magic Spear, the [Flame Wall Spear]. It used the wielder’s mana to cast the High-Rank Fire spell {Flame Wall} after a keyword was said. Indeed, it was literally a magical spear. And a rare one, too. If one were to offer up even a single [Flame Wall Spear] to a dungeon, one would easily earn 100,000,000 DP. It was a treasure among treasures. It was one of Haku’s favored weapons, an impressive feat considering the massive size of her collection.

“Haaah... I should be able to save some time with this.” *How will they move now, I wonder?* Chloe began thinking to herself. At most, she expected the rats to bundle together and try charging through the wall of flames. She took a good look at the enemy and saw that the rats were indeed bundling together. *Very well. I shall counter their charge. If I ready myself, there’s nothing I can’t handle —*

“Chloe! No, look behind you! The enemy is behind you! There’s five of them!”

“What?!” She turned around, but didn’t see anything. She looked for the enemy but could find nothing. There was nothing behind her. *But she said there were five of them!* The flames swayed in the air, as if reflecting Chloe’s panic.

“What in the world?!”

“...Ah! Chloe... They touched the Core...!”

“What?! But how?!” She didn’t understand anything. The strength drained from her body and the {Flame Wall} dissipated. Chloe had failed to fulfill her promise with her lord. That reality hit her with a harsh sense of loss and emptiness, but she kept the spear gripped firmly within her hand. She didn’t know what had happened, and she felt a need to figure it out. The flames faded slowly... and she noticed that *something* was resting on top of the dimly glowing Dummy Core.

“What... is that?” There she saw something that looked like a transparent,

square bug. It was unlike anything she had seen before.

Keima's Perspective

I'm so glad I prepared that secret weapon...

The wall of flame that {Flame Wall} produced was impressive, but not perfect. It sprouted from the floor and went up a good distance, but it didn't reach the ceiling.

"Oh, so that's what those weird things were for!"

"I knew you could do it, Master."

Hey, don't call them weird. They're called "drones" in my word, and they're like tiny helicopters... Okay, yeah. They look weird in this world.

I had originally intended for the drones to help the rats reach locations they couldn't on their own while exploring the dungeon. Making them transparent was just a side thing. I just happened to have a bunch of empty mana potions lying around, so I tried making the drone out of the clear glass bottles and things went surprisingly well. The result? My ultimate secret weapon, the [Stealth Drone Capsule].

I had made them with only a single material, and thanks to them being golems, they didn't even need a power source. Even skeleton frame drones in modern Japan still needed to have visible power sources and communication devices on them. Magic sure is amazing. And miraculously enough, I made them just large enough for rats to fit inside of them. Though... It was such a tight squeeze that I had to break the drones to get the rats out. I felt kind of bad about that, but we won thanks to it. Hopefully the rats forgave me.

Long story short, we didn't have to actually beat Chloe like we did the Red Minotaur. And thanks to the drones being clear, they were very hard to see, especially in the middle of a bunch of roaring flames! It was a bit difficult to pilot the drones while they were buffeted by hot wind, but I managed to land one of them on the Core. *Things woulda gotten real bad real fast if I had missed it...*

Either way, I successfully made the touchdown. We had won.


エロメ

Epilogue

"You defeated me." Following the battle, Haku visited our [Ordinary Cave] once again. Chloe was of course with her, wearing the same butler outfit as always.

"I may have lost, but that was a battle with much for me to learn from. Never would I have thought that gray rats had so much potential within them. Both as scouts and as warriors..." I had known the rats would serve as excellent scouts, but I honestly hadn't expected at all that they would beat the boss on their own. By the way, I sent the surviving rats into the forest and ordered them to survive for as long as possible. I might end up using them again sometime. *I'm sure they'll... grow in numbers if I leave them alone for a bit.*

"I truly did not anticipate being unable to find even a single one of your Dummy Cores. Where did you end up hiding your Dungeon Core? Would you be kind enough to tell me?"

"Sure, if you pay me an extra 50,000 DP."

"Oh my, that little? Very well. Please tell me. I won't be able to sleep at this rate." *Whoops. I said that as a joke, but she's actually planning to pay me. Guess I have to tell her now. I'll keep where I hid the Dummy Cores a secret for now, though.* But I had actually hidden the real Dungeon Core in such a silly place that I was worried Haku would get mad at me. Fearing the worst, I answered her.

"...Well, to tell the truth, our Dungeon actually wraps around the outside of the mountain. There's a small room about one kilometer away from here. I put the Core in there." I pointed in the direction of the goblin room from forever ago. My initial plan involved Haku noticing that immediately and going straight towards it, but in the end, I never had to move our Dungeon Core even a single time. And as expected, Haku was stunned to hear that. But... She didn't seem mad at all. Rather, she just seemed to be sincerely impressed.

"...It's true. Now that I'm paying attention to it, I can sense the mana in that

direction. I can't believe that you extended your dungeon not only to the field outside of the cave's entrance, but that far around the mountain as well... I didn't notice that at all."

"In other words, you put the Dungeon Core in a single room connected directly to the outside... What a bold move. My lady, I am quite surprised as well."

"I knew Number 89's strategies were right!" *Uh, I don't know how you came to that conclusion, Rokuko, but you're definitely wrong. There's a big difference between using a hidden room off to the side and having your whole dungeon just be a single room. C'mon.*

"Haaah... Your labyrinth was impressive as well, filled with tricks even I've never seen before. Even your pitfalls were cleverly inventive. Though I do wish to note a flaw in placing weight-based pitfalls on your first floor. I used minotaurs as my primary offensive might this time, but I also have armies based on weightless wraiths. I believe it would have been better to place those pitfalls on the second floor and with plans to adjust them according to which troops I sent out." *Weight-based pitfalls...? Oh, those broken covers I made. Those... Those were just an accident. I accidentally doubled the thickness of the golem covering a few times due to lack of sleep. The fact they wouldn't break under goblins but would under minotaurs was basically just lucky. I'll keep quiet about that, though, since she went out of her way to give me advice. And it would have been fine for me even if those pitfalls never activated. She just never would have found the secret path in one of them.*

"And also... ngh! Was that riddle you used with the [Gate of Wisdom] from your world?"

"Yep. Honestly, I had a tough time getting that gate thing ready. Not a lot of my riddles worked with it."

"You know other riddles like that...? Well, either way, it was quite a clever trap. May I please punch you in the face just once?"

"Hahaha, nope." She still looked pretty frustrated about getting tricked by that riddle. I decided not to tell her that Rokuko had solved it in three seconds.

"...I'm interested in those riddles you didn't use."

“They’re basically just little word games. Though it looks like they’re being translated into your language without my input, so...” For example, if I were to say “Go break a leg” to Rokuko, she would hear that as me saying “Go snap the bone in your leg” without comprehending the “good luck” nuance of the phrase whatsoever. She often just wouldn’t quite understand what I was saying. Unfortunately, that meant that even legendary puns were completely lost on her. Following that, a riddle like “What time do you have to go to the dentist?” (answer being “tooth hurtie”) wouldn’t work with the [Gate of Wisdom]. The first riddle I went with was “This word becomes shorter if you add two letters to it. What is the word?” The answer was just “short,” but that didn’t work in this world’s language, because according to Rokuko “shorter” and “short” didn’t share the same relationship somehow.

To take things a step even further, a riddle based on making letters out of matchsticks wouldn’t work either. The shape of letters in this world was completely different, after all. Pictures in general still worked, though, so I was planning on doing something like that next time.

Learning about all this was the moment when I simultaneously thought “Magic is incredible!” and gave up learning this world’s language. So much stuff is being auto-translated that I had no way to study it. I might have been able to manage it if I tried really hard, but come on. I wasn’t gonna do that, especially not when I was managing just fine as is.

“Oh yeah! Guess what, Sister! My name right now is Rokuko. This comes from the number 695 in Keima’s language! ‘Ro’ is six, ‘ku’ is nine, and ‘ko’ is five!” Yep. Thanks to auto-translator stuff, Rokuko hadn’t noticed the logic behind the name I gave her at first. I told her what was up after noticing that, and it made her super happy. I thought she’d be ticked off that I just straight-up turned her number into a name, but that actually ended up being really important to her. I couldn’t have picked a better name, basically. *Yeah, I don’t get Dungeon Cores at all.* It seemed they even had special rules regarding their names, like attaching “Dungeon Core Number” before the number itself as a sign of respect or something like that.

“Oh my! That’s wonderful! Aaah, what a splendid name... I’m quite jealous.”

“Uh-huh! Please call me ‘Rokuko’ from now on, Sister!”

“Certainly, Rokuko. Haaah... That name truly is wonderful. My former master named me Haku just because my hair is white, you know? He truly was the worst master imaginable, without a speck of good taste within him.” Despite all I said earlier, there were some words that coincidentally were the same in both Japanese and this world’s language. For example, “Haku” could mean white in Japanese as well.

“...Wait, what? Haku, your name doesn’t come from your number? 89?” Haku blinked in surprise after hearing me say that.

“How would Haku come from 89? Wait... Is that how it works in your world’s language?”

“There’s a lot of different ways to interpret it... but yeah. Haku can mean both ‘white’ and ‘89’ in my language.” Haku closed her eyes briefly and put a hand on her head. It looked like that revelation was giving her a lot to think about. After a minute or two, she opened her mouth again.

“...Rokuko. Would you please call me Haku from now on as well? That way, both of our names will come from the numbers of another world.”

“Okay, Haku!” She still seemed to be a little conflicted, but Haku nonetheless rubbed Rokuko’s head while smiling a somewhat pained smile.

“Ah, it seems we’ve gone quite off subject. There is still much I’d like to discuss with you, but I am unfortunately a fairly busy individual. I built an entire dungeon for this, which I now need to take care of. And although I am concerned about that last trick you pulled, it would be exceptionally boorish of me to pry that far into another dungeon’s secrets, wouldn’t it?” *That last trick...? She must be talking about my secret weapon. I wouldn’t mind telling her at this point, but she may want to have some fun by trying to figure it out herself.*

“Now then, Rokuko. It’s about time for us to... exchange DP, isn’t it?”

“Y-Yeppers!” Haku took Rokuko’s hand and gave her a gentle, pleased smile. She paid us 150,000 DP in total. Despite talking about how busy she was, she really took her time with the mouth-to-mouth DP exchange. *I’m glad you’re enjoying yourself, Haku.*

Day 34

Haku went home the next day. With the Dungeon Battle over, I made the decision to get serious about my duties as Dungeon Master and focus on managing our dungeon... not. I actually decided to just sleep for a while.

“Wheeew. I should be able to kick back and relax for a while now.”

“Uh-huh. I’m totally spent after all that.” For some reason, Rokuko was resting in a futon laid out next to mine. *Eh, whatever. We both worked a lot. I’ll let her sleep by me just this once.*

“Master...”

“Huh? What’s up, Niku? Are you getting too hot?”

“No. I want you to squeeze me tighter.” As requested, I hugged Niku tightly. Her skin was as smooth and pleasant to the touch as ever.

“Hold on, Keima. Listen to what I’m saying too.”

“And what exactly do you have to talk about? I’m pretty sleepy right now, y’know.”

“...Seriously, why do you sleep that much? I’m really surprised you actually managed to beat Haku like this...”

“What can I say? I won because I’m in love.”

“EEEH?! Wh-What’s with you all of a sudden?!” Rokuko began to panic a little, stammering nervously.

“Huh? You’re the one who asked how I can sleep so much. I just love sleeping.”

“O-Oooh, that’s what you were talking about. I totally thought, um... you were saying you loved me or something.”

“Well, yeah. I love you too, Rokuko. Mind if I rub your feet? Actually, just let me rub your feet.”

“...No way.” Rokuko turned me down, blushing.

“Eh, alright. I’m gonna sleep then.” I could make joking orders like that

because I had gotten rid of my Absolute Authority. If I hadn't, Rokuko would have held out her feet without a word and let me rub them... *Wait, crap. I feel like I've made a huge mistake here. Oh well. I was just joking around when I said it, anyway.*

"Hey, Keima... Are you going to stay with me? You're not going to go anywhere, right?"

Rokuko spoke to me in a sweet voice, as if seeking comfort. My heart thumped.

"What, do you want me to leave?"

"...No way. [Melon Rolls] don't taste as good without you around, Keima." *I dunno what she's talking about, but alright. I feel like I could sleep all day today. So let's do it.*

Extra Episode — Rokuko is a Dakimakura

When I woke up, I saw Rokuko staring straight at me. *The hell? Is her hobby watching people sleep?* As I rubbed my sleepy eyes and grumbled to myself, Rokuko suddenly said something.

“By the way, Keima. I guess you’re actually going to use that dog-eared girl as a dakimakura now, aren’t you?”

“Huh? Oh, yeah. I guess I am. I thought other people were bad dakimakuras at first, but after an extended trial period, it turns out they’re actually pretty good.” *Trial and error is pretty important. Never give up after one go. Keep at it and things might just work out! Yep. Words to live by.*

“...Hmm.” Rokuko gave me a meaningful look and thought for a minute before opening her mouth again.

“Hey, Keima. I want to try that out too. Is that okay?”

“Huh?” *I guess she wants me to lend her Niku. I don’t have any problem with that. Sleeping without Niku for a day won’t kill me or anything, and I could just sleep with a normal pillow in her place.*

“Sure, sure. Just for today, though.”

“Oh, really? You’re really okay with it?”

“Yeah.” She really makes a point to get my clear permission. *Do I really look like I’m someone who can’t sleep without someone else in their bed?*

“Okay, Niku. You need to sleep on your own today. Thanks!” *...Wait, what?*

And so, that night... Rokuko was right in front of me. In the same futon as me. To make sure everyone completely understands the situation, let me make it clear that I’m not saying we were sleeping in the same room. I’m saying we were in the same futon, under the same covers, and as an aside, Rokuko was in her bustier form.

“...C-Come on, why aren’t you hugging me? You need to squeeze your

dakimakura.”

“Wait, hold up. How’d things end up like this?” To be honest, I should have said something earlier. Rokuko had slid into my futon before I knew what was going on, and then she slid my arms around her back, making me hug her awkwardly from behind.

I smelled something good. It was a sweet, soft scent quite different from Niku’s.

“...Didn’t you hear me when I said I wanted to try being a dakimakura too?”

“Honestly, I thought you meant you wanted to try using Niku as a dakimakura.”

“What, am I not a good enough dakimakura for you?”

“...You are, but I mean...” Well, her hair tickled me less than Niku’s due to it being so long, at least. That didn’t make things any less embarrassing, though. I usually never got this close to Rokuko.

“You and I are partners in body and soul in the first place. Doesn’t it just make sense for us to sleep together like this?”

“Uh... Maybe?”

Either way, Rokuko felt a lot different from Niku. Not only because she was bigger, but because she had a sort of fluffy softness that Niku’s puppy-esque body lacked. *Wait... Hold on, hold on. Don’t turn around to look at me, Rokuko. I’ll be too embarrassed to sleep if you’re staring at me like that. Come on, your face is so close... holy crap, it’s so close! Your breath is literally hitting me!* Sensing my slight panic, Rokuko hmph’d in satisfaction. *Nooo! Your breath tickles so much!*

“H-Hmph. Your face is bright red, Keima. Why’s that, I wonder? Are you that happy to have me as your dakimakura?”

“C-C’mon, your face is way more red.” Indeed. After Rokuko turned around, I realized that her cheeks were bright red.

“Eeeh?! Th-That’s not true!” Rokuko immediately turned back around. *Woah now, cool it with the sudden movements. Don’t blame me if my hands end up*

touching you in weird ways. It's not my fault my fingers are pushing into your soft body. This is all on you.

"Wh-What? I'll have you know I can sleep facing whichever direction I want." *Like, at least use your small form for this. You're causing some, uh, problems here. Know what I mean? At this rate I'm gonna have to leave the futon. Come on.*

"...Hey, Keima? My hips are feeling kind of cold. Would you mind pushing yours against mine to warm me up?"

"I DECLINE!"

"Eh?! W-Well, you don't have to if you don't want to." *If I pushed my crotch against her hips right now, some serious crap would go down. I mean, I'm a guy. I can't help what's going on down there right now.*

"Hmmm... W-Well, okay." Rokuko pushed her back against my chest a little. *Calm down, me. This is Rokuko we're dealing with. Huh? Actually, wait. Why would that be a problem? I mean, Rokuko does have some pretty feet... Wait, no. No no no. Sleep is a time of holiness. I mustn't allow my heart to be swayed like this.* I closed my eyes and focused my mind on anything but Rokuko. As I did so, I felt sleepiness slowly come to me.

"...Alright, time for me to sleep."

"Eh? Hold on...!"

I shut my eyes even tighter. At first I thought I'd never be able to sleep like this, but that turned out not to be the case. I fell asleep pretty fast, all things considered.

Rokuko's Perspective

Keima's face is right in front of mine. I was really surprised when he took my offer to be his dakimakura seriously. At first I really did plan on just using Niku, but after he said okay, I decided to push my luck and try being his dakimakura myself. And then he really did fall asleep while hugging me from behind, as if I were his pillow. Though, he's pulling his hips away from mine for some reason.

...I was reaaally looking forward to this, though.

“...Are you actually sleeping?” I poke his cheeks.

“Bleeeh.”

“Ah!” He lets out a groan, which surprises me. But that’s all he did.

“...I guess he is asleep.” It looks like Keima really did go to sleep for real. His peaceful breathing makes me feel conflicted, like I’m relieved and a little sad at the same time.

“Well, okay. This isn’t nearly as big of a deal as I though it would... be... Okay, it actually is.” I’m really surprised Keima could sleep in this situation. Geez... At least get so nervous that you can’t sleep. Or start breathing so heavily it’s obvious what’s going on in your head. I’m your partner, but I’m the only one feeling that way. This isn’t fair.

I turn my back to Keima, making sure to not wake him up. If I keep staring at him like that, my Core’s just going to explode. Geez.

...After calming down a little, I put my hand on Keima’s and wrap my fingers around his. Nmm... This is making me smile for some reason. Aaah... Geez, what the heck am I doing?

In the end, I didn’t sleep at all. I stayed awake and just faked being asleep after Keima started to wake up. Seriously... What the heck am I doing...?

Afterword

Hello to those who don't know me, and hello to those who read the web novel version of this story. I'm Supana Onikage, a guy about to gleefully play a ukulele to express his joy over his web novel being officially printed for the first time. I won't actually play one, though.

Okay. Let's talk about this novel. A lot of people truly helped me along the path of turning my web novel into a printed novel. I have infinite gratitude for Youta-san, the illustrator. He went to great lengths to ensure that Niku's ears were drawn exactly as I envisioned them. I'm thankful for the designer who made the book cover, and I'm thankful for the editor who pointed out a lot of typos and such in the story. This is a novel that only exists due to the combined efforts of many people, and I give them my sincere thanks. And of course, I need to thank the person who's holding the book in their hands right now and reading this afterword. Thank you very much. Novels aren't really novels until people read them, after all! Which means that you, the reader, are the final part that completed this novel.

To those of you who were attracted by Youta-san's art and just wanted to skim the afterword before starting, I would be very grateful if you read the story. But... Now I'm afraid I need to begin my apologies. I only get two pages for this afterword, and I didn't want to just turn the whole thing into a bunch of apologies, so here we are.

First of all... Let's talk about the big changes between the printed novel and the web novel. If you're familiar with the web novel, you're probably feeling pretty weird about how the main heroine was handled here. Indeed. The novelization process demanded a big change from one character in particular: Rokuko. Her main form is no longer the loli form. She defaults to her more mature form. This has to do with... adult circumstances. The editor asked me to make the main heroine a girl about as old as the protagonist.

Was that really the right thing to do? Thinking about my existing fans, I spent

eight entire hours doing nothing but thinking about this problem. While sleeping, like this novel's protagonist.

The main heroine's appearance is very important. And heroines as old as the protagonist are more popular among readers. Attracting new readers through the cover art is vital, and the size of the heroine's chest makes all the difference there. It all comes down to boobs, huh? People prefer main heroines with big boobs, huh? Nothing I can do about that. People just love them, it's the way of the world right now. I'm sorry. I couldn't beat big boobs.

But I didn't want to abandon my web-novel fans, so I made it so that Rokuko could alter her appearance as necessary. And I mean, Rokuko is a Dungeon Core of unknown age, so it makes sense that she can turn into a loli if she wants to. That's the kind of main heroine we settled on. Basically, we got the best of both worlds here. And thanks to me acquiescing there, I got to keep Niku as a loli without changing her at all.

Huh? But that one part of the story turned into something else? You're right, it did. That has to do with adult circumstances as well. If you've read the web novel, you probably know what I'm talking about here and why it was changed.

I hope that was a good enough afterword. Thanks for reading, and let's meet again after Volume 2.

Supana Onikage

Table of Contents

Cover

Color Illustrations

Prologue

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Epilogue

Extra Episode — Rokuko is a Dakimakura

Afterword

About J-Novel Club

Copyright



Sign up for our mailing list at J-Novel Club to hear about new releases!

Newsletter

And you can read the latest chapters (like Vol. 2 of this series!) by becoming a J-Novel Club Member:

J-Novel Club Membership

Copyright

Lazy Dungeon Master: Volume 1

by Supana Onikage

Translated by Quof Edited by K. “Kitty-tama” Jordan This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Copyright © 2016 Supana Onikage Illustrations by Youta

Cover illustration by Youta

All rights reserved.

Original Japanese edition published in 2016 by OVERLAP, Inc.

This English edition is published by arrangement with OVERLAP, Inc., Tokyo English translation © 2018 J-Novel Club LLC

All rights reserved. In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the scanning, uploading, and electronic sharing of any part of this book without the permission of the publisher is unlawful piracy and theft of the author’s intellectual property.

J-Novel Club LLC

j-novel.club

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

Ebook edition 1.0: August 2018