

Chapter 1

The scene starts in the castle where a lot of people have gathered to celebrate Hiel's 15th birthday, the 17th prince. The king tells him that now that Hiel is becoming an adult, he will receive his own dominion and will have to govern it. Hiel doesn't seem pleased to hear this. The scene then shifts to the ocean where Hiel is on a small boat with his belongings. As he gazes at the distant shell reef, he is shocked to realize that it will take about 10 days to reach the island where neither merchants nor pirates venture—an isolated, rocky outpost. He turns to see his kingdom's ship retreating without ensuring his safe landing, leaving him feeling abandoned. As Hiel nears the island, he is surprised to find no beach to land on. He realizes that from now on, this will be his life and his dominion. He recalls that the 11th prince, Valpas, and the 9th princess, Thalia, seemed happy about his new role. Hiel felt inadequate despite his efforts because everyone mocked him for his crest. While his brothers possessed prestigious crests like the Sword and King of Magic, Hiel bore an unknown crest, its purpose a mystery to all. He struggled to harness its power, disappointing his family who saw him as a source of shame. He asked his father if someone else could go in his place to govern the reef, but King Rui explained that the assignment was dictated by an oracle.

Feeling abandoned and worthless, Hiel likened himself to being exiled to a desolate mountain of rocks, contemplating that maybe death by treason would be preferable to his current situation. Spotting a spot to safely disembark his boat among the rocks, he slowed down using his wind skill, amazed at his own magic for the first time. As he unloaded his supplies, he noticed a cave nearby. Curiosity drew him closer, only to be shocked by the sight of numerous skeletons strewn inside. Even though he was scared, Hiel brought his supplies into the cave. As he rested, gazing at the beautiful yet distant ocean, he thought about the strife back in the capital. Determined not to lose hope, he resolved to survive on the island. He considered seeking help from passing ships, but they were unlikely to be from his country, forcing him to consider foreign ships and even pirates, where he might end up as a slave. There were no regular merchant routes near the island, making his situation even more isolated. Hiel calculated that he could survive for about a month with the supplies he had brought. Unable to rely solely on his magic, he decided to collect rainwater in barrels, fish for food, and clean up the cave. He then took out a tool to start digging into the cave wall. Just as he began, he heard a voice mentioning that the mining tool had been acquired.

Startled, he looked around to see who had spoken, wondering if the voice had been in his head. He asked the voice to repeat itself, and to his surprise, it asked if he wanted to mine. Hiel agreed and asked who the voice was. The voice explained that it belonged to the Crest, the Cave King, which served as an advisor and was not a living organism. Hiel was curious and asked what the Cave King was. Then he realized that he had always stayed in the royal palace and had never been inside a cave before. He understood that the Cave King would enhance his mining skills and provide support. Inside the cave, he could rank up various abilities. Unsure at first, he decided to give mining a try. As soon as he started, the mining process became optimized, surprising Hiel. He noticed certain parts of the cave wall began to shine, prompting him to wonder what was happening. The voice explained that these glowing portions were the best places to mine—they were easy to break but also resistant to cave-ins. Following the voice's instructions, Hiel dug into one of these shining spots and easily dislodged a piece of rock.

He remarked on how bright the surroundings had become, even inside the cave, and asked if this was one of the support effects. The voice revealed it was a night vision effect. Encouraged, Hiel continued mining to create a sleeping area. He found the process enjoyable, digging deeper and noticing he

was able to mine larger amounts of rock at once. The voice explained that his ability to dig increased as his mining skill ranked up. Hiel was amazed at how his abilities were improving. Suddenly, he slipped while mining, and the voice instructed him to retrieve the 168 rocks he had collected. Confused, Hiel asked what retrieve meant. The voice explained that the Cave King allowed him to store an infinite amount of what he mined. Hiel wondered where these items were stored, but the voice couldn't provide an answer. Undeterred, Hiel continued digging. Eventually, the voice informed him that storing items didn't affect his physical body and that he could access them anytime. Hiel agreed to retrieve the 168 rocks, which instantly filled his inventory. Checking his inventory, he found all 168 rocks there as expected. The voice suggested activating automatic retrieval, which Hiel agreed to before resuming his digging.

He noted that at his current rate, he would soon reach the other side of the cave and would need to start digging downward. As he dug deeper, the voice informed him that he had descended 10 meters from his starting point. Perplexed, Hiel asked what a meter was, realizing he needed to learn more about measurements. Before long, he discovered various items in his inventory, including copper, bronze, and even gold ore. He remarked that gold wouldn't be of much use on such a remote island. Hiel discovered a magic stone but wasn't sure what it was for. Suddenly, a guide for the magic stone appeared and explained that it would increase his magical power, even though it was currently quite weak. Intrigued, Hiel wondered about the Turtle Stone. Upon investigation, he was astonished to learn that each Turtle Stone would extend his life by one day. Despite not fully understanding the Cave King's role, he realized his crest was remarkable and that the Shell Reef could transform into an incredible domain under his rule. He continued mining, forgetting about searching for ships to rescue him. As he dug deeper, reaching 30 meters down, his inventory filled with various types of stones. However, he was particularly curious about the magic power stone and hoped it would enable him to use more advanced magic. The voice then asked if he wanted to use his 90 magic stones. Hiel agreed, but to his disappointment, nothing changed within him.