

Alissa moves through her home quickly, cleaning, tending the fire, making the beds, and of course, cooking a large meal.

After all, her grandpa will soon be coming home from whatever he was doing... But really, she just wants to impress Artyom.

After leaving the food to simmer, Alissa moves to the door and opens it, staring out into the surrounding landscape. Trees, plants and grass, it truly is a wonderful sight, though a terribly rare one for this area. Most of the time the far North is covered in snow. Therefore the sight of greenery is greatly welcomed.

Swerving her head, her gaze finds the town of **Snowbird**, though some would instead call it a village considering it lacks any walls. Regardless, Alissa would still consider it a town by the number of people living in it.

Although most first time travelers would immediately list it as a large village, that is more a case of them being ignorant about the workings of the North. After all, what use is a wall if most of the [Warriors], [Hunters], and [Guards] have a [Minor Strength] bloodline. The town doesn't need walls if even a [Farmer] can physically beat down a snow wolf.

“Girly, you’re going to go cross eyed staring so much.”

Jumping up with a squeal, Alissa turns and her eyes land on her grandfather. Her several greats grandfather. Calling him old would be an understatement, especially considering the man in question is named and possesses a third tier class, increasing his vitality several times that of a regular human.

He is a mystery, even to Alissa, who doesn't know his true age, though many believe it to be in excess of three hundred years.

“Grandpa! You can't just sneak up on people like that!” Alissa glares at the smiling elder with his rather boring looking clothing, graying hair and long white beard.

The elder chuckles. “Can't help it, I've got so many movement skills that I literally have to try to make noise. It's quite difficult.”

Her heart still beating wildly from the scare, she shakes her head. “Foods not ready yet.” she says, before stopping.

“Where were you this morning? I saw that you left rather early, even before Artyom.”

The old man smiles when Alissa mentions Artyom. He can see the twinkle in her eye, a sign of her great interest in the big man.

"I'll tell you, but how about you make me some tea first," the elder states before brushing past her and entering the home.

Rolling her eyes, Allisa turns around, stopping suddenly as her eyes focus on her grandpa, already sitting and looking at her expectantly. Her mouth opens in surprise at the sheer speed with which he can move. It only took her a second to turn!

Closing her mouth and refusing to further acknowledge what just transpired, she enters the kitchen and finds that the meat is still cooking. She quickly moves and heats up the kettle.

The kettle she uses to boil water is enchanted. After pouring water into it, she touches the crystal handle at the bottom, immediately causing the bottom of the metal to heat up.

Grandpa had brought it for her as a present two days ago, and she appreciates it greatly. Her home, though it has many rooms, lacks a large kitchen. In other words, her hearth cannot be used to both cook food and heat up water at the same time. It's either one or the other.

Not even ten seconds pass before the water in the kettle starts to boil.

"Fast."

Still moving quickly, she grabs dried tea leaves and put them into the kettle. A nice minty smell wafts from the small opening. She smiles and grabs three cups alongside the kettle and walks into the living room, placing it on the table.

"Oh, I forgot the honey."

Moving back into the kitchen, she grabs the honey and walks towards the table again, only to find her grandpa already drinking from a cup of tea. She looks at him questionably.

"I prefer my tea bitter."

Allisa rolls her eyes at the man. Him drinking bitter tea isn't what's on her mind. No, what confuses her is how he manages to do so many things in mere seconds.

But she already knows the answer. After all, her grandfather is a [Grandmaster Martial Artist], the only one currently in existence. Strong enough to earn the name **Untouchable**. At least that's what the rumors say.

Sighing, she sits down across from him and pours herself a cup of tea as well, adding honey. She doesn't share her grandfather's disinterest for sweet things.

“So what have you done since this morning?” she asks, blowing on her very hot tea.

The grandfather shrugs, “I just had a talk with that innkeeper that fired you. It is rather distasteful that he fired you for a lower level [Barmaid], even if the new one is taller.”

Alissa groans as she brings her palms to her face.

“Please tell me you didn't harm anyone.”

“Only about twenty [Guards], several [Mercenaries]... And I may have created a new door in that Inn.”

\*Bang\*

Alissa's face strikes the table, followed by a very loud groan.

“Whyyyyyyyyy.” she asks.

“Because my granddaughter almost died. What in Eir's name gave you the idea to go into the woods with a woodsman's ax?”

Alissa blushes profusely at the memory. Her anger disappearing instantly.

She had been fired by the [Innkeeper] of the town. She had been angry. So very angry. She had worked hard. Cooked, cleaned, served anyone who came in. Showed respect to the customers. She is a level 57 [Barmaid] for crying out loud.. One of the highest in the town.

So she became angry at the town, blaming them for being fired. Thus, instead of doing something sensible like finding another job, she picked up her father's ax and went into the woods to... hunt.

“I was angry.”

The old man snorts.

“Angry enough to go hunting with an ax that you can barely carry.”

“Shut up,” she says, refusing to lift her head.

But that just makes the old man laugh.

“You are lucky Artyom saved you girly. That frost bear would have ripped you apart otherwise. Though, I would like to hear the whole story. Your man wasn't very descriptive.”

Blushing profusely, the nineteen-year-old finally lifts her head. "Well, um... So as I said before, I went out to hunt. Maybe to kill a rabbit or deer... or a wolf. And um, I ended up walking for a while and eventually found a den."

The grandfather shakes his head but still signals his granddaughter to continue.

"I thought it was a wolf den or something. I figured I could go in there, kill a baby wolf, and bring it back home to cook it."

Alissa's face takes on an embarrassed look as her grandfather fails to hold in a chuckle.

"Ahhh, girly, I would think you would have known more about hunting considering some of the people who visited your inn were [Hunters]."

"I was angry!" she yells, pouting, her hands wrapping around her chest.

"Bah, and that's what matters. Survive and learn. My old master told me life was all about overcoming trials and tribulations. Now then, continue Allisa."

Sighing out loud, Alissa grabs her teacup and sips a little before continuing.

"So I entered the den, trying to be very quiet. The only sound I could hear was soft breathing. The den was dark, but I did see something moving rhythmically. And then, when I got closer, I stubbed my toe on a rock... and I screamed."

The old man starts to chuckle again, no longer trying to keep it in.

"Oh dear, that poor Frost Bear. You must have startled it out of its mind girly. Probably nearly gave it a heart attack."

"Grandpaaaa!!!"

"Sorry girly, it just... Ahhhhh. Continue, continue. Ignore this old man." he says, pouring himself another cup of tea.

Giving a glaring look towards her grandfather, Alissa composes herself before continuing the story.

"I screamed and woke up the frost bear, then the frost bear roared and I started running away. It uh, chased me into the woods, probably for a good bit before I fell from exhaustion. When I fell, I turned towards the frost bear, white as snow, its legs were raised far above the ground. I screamed for help, and then a tree struck the bear."

Listening in, The old man perks up at that. "How big was that tree?"

Alissa takes a moment to think before spreading her hands, "It was this wide, and probably as tall as two men."

The old man frowns, something clearly isn't adding up. To be able to not only lift a tree of that size but also throw it requires immense strength. And considering Artyom's classes, he shouldn't be anywhere near being strong enough to do that.

Figuring her grandfather's silence meant she should continue, Alissa started talking again.

"The impact of the tree hitting the bear changed the direction of its charge and forced it to the side. It was here where Artyom appeared. He stepped in front of me, between me and the now very angry bear. He was...." Alissa blushes, "completely naked."

The grandfather nods, understanding what had happened, and how the rumors floating around came to be.

"He ran towards the bear as it was growling at him. The bear then also ran towards him, and they collided. He punched the bear, and it went flying into a tree. The tree broke from the collision, but Artyom didn't wait. He ran after the bear, jumped on top of it and started punching it for probably a good minute. He only stopped after the frost bear stopped moving."

At this point, the old man starts thinking. A frost bear is a very dangerous beast, usually an entire team of well equipped [Warriors] over level fifty is required to take one out. But this man, Artyom, had beaten the damn thing with just his bare fists... and without a single class.

"So yea, that's the story. After that I invited him over to my home, treated his wounds and gave him food." Suddenly Alissa remembers something she had forgotten about, causing her eyes to widen. She quickly jumps up and runs into the kitchen.

"Oh thank Eir, it hasn't burnt." With quick movements, she retrieves the meat from above the fire and places it to the side to cool. After covering the meat with a cloth she then moves back towards the dining table.

"Sorry, I almost burnt the steak."

"Yes, I'm sure Artyom would have been devastated if it had burned." The grandfather remarks, rolling his eyes.

Alissa shrugs, "Probably not, he seems happy with anything I cook. He doesn't speak much unless I ask him questions, and even then he gives very short answers."

“So you know nothing about him?”

“I wouldn't say nothing. I know that he comes from a country called Russia and that he was a [Soldier]. He also said he had a wife but she died... Um, I guess that's it... Wow, I actually don't know very much about him after all.”

The grandfather sighs, relieved at the man's secrecy.

“By the way grandpa, where have you been all this time? Last time I remember you being here was maybe six years ago?” Alissa asks.

“Well, that sounds about right. I left the North here and traveled far south, towards the mists. My old bones felt that things were changing, so I had to be sure. And something felt very wrong.”

“Ohhhh, what was wrong?” Alissa asks, very curious.

“Everything. The mana concentration was plummeting. War was ever present. The gods are now very active. I ended up leaving my student behind to get back here, up North. I refuse to be used as a gods pawn again.”

“Used? The gods used you? Wait, you hate the gods?” Alissa exclaims, her eyes wide open.

“Hate? No. More like despise. At least most of them. I'm ok with a lot of the minor gods like Eir, but Zeus and Odin, they are the worst. I'm just glad that the North up here puts very little emphasis on the gods. It is a good place to escape their petty rivalries and manipulative schemes.”

“What about your student? Your Disciple? You left them? Don't they need training?”

The grandfather grunts.

“I offered to take her with me, but she refused. Said she had plans and simply thanked me for training her.”

The old man frowns, shaking his head. “She has so much potential. Probably my best student so far. Gained so many levels so quickly.”

“Ohhhh, what was her name?” Alissa asks.

The grandfather smiles, looking at the bottom of his empty cup.

“Her name was Christine Rose.”

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A man, covered in a white cloak made out of the hide of a Frost Bear walks steadily through the forest. On his shoulder is a wolf. It is a big beast, powerful, able to kill with ease. One of the many predators of the North. Its claws are able to rend metal, its hide is strong enough for unsharpened weapons to merely bounce off. Unfortunately, this specific wolf is dead. Its head has been crushed.

The man walks a nice, easy pace, as if the three hundred pound wolf barely weighs anything. On his other shoulder he carries about twenty pieces of firewood. This too does not place a significant burden upon him.

And on the man's back is an ax, a strong steel ax. The same ax that had cut a tree down and chopped it up with ease.

Artyom's perpetually frowning face smiles slightly as he finally sees his home. It is a temporary one, but it had helped him come to terms with his predicament. Showing up naked in a strange land, with his body seemingly having been changed to become even more muscular, and screens popping up in front of his eyes.

That was probably the weirdest part. The screens kind of look like those from a videogame that his sons liked to play.

Artyom frowns, remembering his two sons and his daughter back in Russia. He loves them and misses them. He dearly hopes that they are ok. Wishes he can see them. But as of right now, it seems he is in a completely different world. Best to keep a low profile and obtain as much information as possible first.

Speaking of information...

Artyom Smirnov

Level 38 [Fist Warrior]

Level 13 [Hero]

Level 18 [Hunter]

Sense Prey

Thickened Endurance

Fleet Feet

Impacting Strike

Steel Fists

Strength	279
Dexterity	22
Stamina	28
Perception	41
Endurance	31
Vitality	112
Mana	210
M/regen	1.2
Affinity	6
Intelligence	67
Willpower	350
Soul	410

He has looked at it many times, but he still doesn't fully understand it. He understands strength, endurance, dexterity, stamina, even perception. But everything else is confusing. He has no idea what other people's screens look like, nor what is considered normal. He knows that his



strength is extremely abnormal. Alissa had gushed about it to him. Asking if he had a [Major Strength] Bloodline or something. He has no clue what that is.

Military training prepares people for many things, but not for a world like this. One which seems to be modeled after a video game. With levels and skills. Artyom feels very inadequate.

All he can do is be utterly thankful that Alyssa is being so helpful and respectful to him. If only she had been a bit older, then Artyom might have accepted her advances.

Unfortunately, he is over twenty years her elder. Much too old for such a young girl.

Looking up, Artyom notices an elderly man exiting the house. It is a one-story house that has the look of a very sturdy hut. The elder, who he now recognizes as Alyssa's grandfather, makes a beeline towards him. Artyom stops, eyeing the man. The man stops ten feet away from him, looking at him.

This man, this old grandfather, he reminds Artyom of his drill instructor in Russia. Dangerous, but respectable.

"Is something the problem Zeek?" Artyom voices first.

"There are many problems, a lot of which I'm sure have some relation to you... [Hero]."

With a quick movement, Artyom drops what he is holding and without missing a beat, draws his ax.

And then he blinks.

And the old grandfather is gone.

\*Bang\*

Something strikes his chest and Artyom is sent flying, the ax leaving his grip.

"Come now, young man. You have the [Fist Warrior] class but you still end up drawing a weapon."

Artyom, hurt, gets up, frowning at the old man who stands before him, his hands clasped behind his back.

Artyom raises his fists.

"Hmmm, decent posture. Not perfect, but a far cry from a [Fistfighter]. Lets see your instincts."

The old man disappears, the wind howls.

Without thinking, Artyom instinctively raises his right arm.

\*Bang\*

His right arm is struck, the force behind the blow sends him flying. But this time, instead of falling prone, Artyom controls his fall, doing a backwards roll before getting on his feet.

He grabs his right arm with his left, touches the elbow, and pushes.

\*Click\*

His dislocated shoulder is relocated back into place. All in one swift, trained, movement.

\*Clap, Clap, Clap\*

Turning around quickly, fists up, he finds the old man, clapping, with a smile on his face.

“Impressive, truly impressive. You actually blocked that strike. Very impressive instincts. You read my aura and reacted to it. Truly impressive.”

“What do you want?” Artyom asks, his voice cold.

\*Chuckle\*

“A trade. I will train you, make you stronger than me, provide you with the information you sorely lack. And in exchange, I want you to be a good husband to Alyssa.”

Artyom stares at the man, internally flabbergasted and confused. Husband? What is this old man talking about. He was acting so very different compared to the day before.

“I do not marry children.”

The old man snorts, his hands going behind his back as he heads towards the house.

“As I said, you lack information. But don't worry, I, Zeek the Untouchable, an old man of five hundred and seventy-two years old will teach you. Now pick up your things and let's go home. I'm quite hungry.”

Artyom stares at the man's back before shaking his head. He portrays no emotion, but many questions are twirling around inside Artyom's head. How Zeek knows what class he has, what he knows of [Heroes]... and if the old man is actually that old.