“I FUCKING TOLD YOU I DON’T KNOW HOW TO CAST THIS SHIT.”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA.”

“HOLY SHIT, I CAN PARRY, WHAT THE FUCK?!”

“HOW COME YOU’VE BEEN WANTING TO BE A MAGE BUT NEVER CAPABLE OF WIELDING A WAND?!”

“I NEVER KNEW IT’D BE POSSIBLE TO BE ONE IN THE FIRST PLACE!!! AND IT’S NOT A WAND, IT’S A STAFF!!!”

“HOLY SHIT, GUYS I CAN PARRRYYYYY!!!”

“SHUT UP, KURT!!!”

Hello, it’s me Cleo. The one with the sword is Kurt and that furry guy is- I’m not even going to ask you who that guy is, you know who it is. What gave it away? The glasses? Fuck no, it’s his FURRINESS.

You may be wondering why or how we got here in the first place. Let me just tell you that we are just as clueless as you. But I’ll tell you where it started.

A few days ago, I found an antique store and found an old video game card. A game that’s compatible with my old console. I figured I should test it out. And since the game only costs a bit of a money, I took the opportunity right then and there. After a few days of trying to find the old console and cleaning it up, I made time to set it up and test things out.

That’s when I heard my name being called out from the distance; it was my sister.

“Ate, si Louise.”

“Ay, teka lang ah.”

I cleaned up the mess before meeting him on the front door.

“Anong meron? Nasa galaan ka na naman.”

“Kasama ko si Kurt.”

“Ah, so, nasa date kayo ngayon?”

“Oo, tapos ikaw gagawin naming third wheel.”

“Har har. So, anong meron at napadaan kayo?”

“Ayun nga, aayain ka sana namin lumabas, boring sa amin eh.”

“Sa inyo lang, may pinagkakaabahalan ako eh.”

“Ay woooow. Ano ba ginagawa mo at ayaw mong maging third wheel?”

I let him take a peek inside. I was half done setting up the old console I found around the house.

“Oooh. Gumagana?”

“Ngayon ko palang ite-test eh.”

I told Louise and Kurt how I bought an old video game card from an antique store and figured I should test it out with my old console.

“Kaya ayan, makalat ngayon. Why don’t you sit back and watch me fail?”

“Ikaw Kurt?”

“Okay lang sa akin, ikaw ba?”

“Sigeee.”

After making up their minds, I finally pushed the power button from the console. Electricity flowed through the wires and soon light up the console, indicating its awakening after decades of slumber. Excitement showed on their faces as is mine when the TV flashed a familiar logo of a game console company which soon loaded up the game I inserted.

“Actually, ‘di ko alam kung anong klaseng game ‘to eh. The video card doesn’t have any pictures in it. So, ‘di ko rin ma-research what’s this game about.”

“What if adult game yan though?”

“Sus, I think we’re old enough for that.”

Finally, the game booted up and showed the title screen in which none of us could read, we tried but no matter how many times we did, it sounded wrong. It’s like that snack with Tattoos as its name but some read it as Tahoos. Seriously, I still don’t know to this day what’s it really called.

“’Yaan mo na, Cleo, start mo na para makita na natin.”

I pushed the thought to the back of my mind and pressed the start button.

I don’t remember anything after that, because when we came to, we’re in a completely different world.

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“HOLY SHIT, GUYS I CAN PARRRYYYYY!!!”

“SHUT UP, KURT!!!”

We’ve been trying to figure out what or how to survive with what we got. To clarify some things that may not be obvious to some audience. I turned into a Mage, Kurt into a Warrior, and Louise into a Beast (rawr?) It’s only been ten minutes and we’re already surrounded by slimes. The reason how Kurt can parry such creatures is that they can harden their skins and strike with their body. Kinda like how Kirby can turn into a brick and drop from the sky.

Kurt and Louise tried their best to fend off the slimes. It looks exhausting, as I can’t do anything at the moment, I backed off to not be a hindrance. That’s when…

I heard sloshing sound beneath my feet. I stepped on one of the slimes!

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA GET AWAY GET AWAY GET AWAY!!!”

“STOP BONKING IT WITH YOUR STAFF, CAST YOUR SPELLS!!!”

“I.DON’T.KNOW.HOW!”

“Guys? I need some help here!”

Louise backed off and used his claws to slash through slimes that were overwhelming Kurt. After a few beatings, the slimes finally dissipated which gave us time to rest and calm down.

“We should find a town or a city for refuge.”

“How are you so sure they’re gonna let us in? We’re strangers to them”

“Travellers more like.”

“AH! DO WE EVEN HAVE MONEY?”

“Why?”

“I’m hungry.”

“Of course you are, Cleo.”

We don’t know if there’s a town nearby. We made up a plan to help one of us to get on top of the tree and check if there’s any familiar buildings or houses near us, hoping it’d make it easier for us to spot one. We decided that it’d be me who’ll they boost up to climb up the tree. I aimed my staff at them and said,

“I’ll blast you off if you try anything funny.”

“You don’t even know how to cast your spells.”

“Ouch, hurtful.”

“But truthful.”

I climbed up the tree, struggling through the branches and there from a distance I saw an imposing castle surrounded by castle walls. Its structure is— well what more can I say, it’s a fucking castle, of course it’s grand and picturesque. Kinda like how Disneyland would’ve looked like if I actually went to see Disneyland.

I told them what I saw and from what direction it came from. We figured we should make haste while the sun is still high.

But some things just don’t go as we planned, right?

More slimes intercepted and ambushed us. It got easier and easier as we pushed forward but we could only go so far. We decided to rest for a while. And since I hardly helped them with the slimes, I took the opportunity to practice my spells. The two of them sat down as they watched me fail countless times.

“I don’t get it. Is it my pronunciation? It’s just like a fire ball, nothing complicated.”

“Maybe it’s your posture?”

“That couldn’t possibly it. I’ve been standing straight this whole time.”

“Maybe it’s your sexuality?”

“That’s not— Ha ha, okay, Louise, like you’re any different.”

Regardless, I followed his suggestion and fixed my posture. I took one last look at my spellbook and closed my eyes. I tried to feel everything around me, the ground, the air, the trees swaying through the breeze. I then chanted,

*Focus and release a concentrated burst of flame*

[Pyroblast]

A light suddenly enveloped us, it was a fireball with the size of a beach ball, flying through the sky as it arches down the earth.

“Uh oh.”

“Oh no.”

“What?”

“You’re an arsonist, a pyromaniac and a chuunibyou.”

“HEY, THAT’S SO UNCALLED FOR.”

Don’t blame me, fire is cool. Just don’t play with it. I won’t. Maybe…

BUT AT LEAST BE PROUD OF ME, WE COULDN’T DO ANY OF THAT IN REAL LIFE!!!

After a while, I can finally cast a few basic spells, ones that are easier to pronounce. I can heal, slow down enemies and nullify poison. Most of it are water-based spells, does it connect to the fact that I’m a Libra?

Kurt told me to hold back from practicing too much since we still don’t know how much mana I’ve already consumed and I might pass out if I run out of it.

The two gathered enough firewood, I casted Pyroblast so we’d have light at night.

We sat down and listen to the crackle of the wood as it burns when I broke the silence.

“Sorry guys, I couldn’t help back there earlier.”

“It’s fine, you’ve got a complicated role.”

“Are we just gonna accept the fact that we’re transported in a video game like it’s normal?

“Meh.”

“I mean, I’ve been kinda waiting for this. Daydreaming if ever there could be any possibility that this would happen.”

“You are such a chuunibyou, Cleo.”

“Let me have my fun, we don’t know how long I get to enjoy this.

Oh…

We…don’t know how long we’re staying here.”

They fell into silence as soon as they realized what I meant.

“What happened in our world? In our original bodies?”

“This must be a dream.”

“Then, are we sharing the same dream?”

“Oh man, what would Mom say?”

“We’re in another world and you’re still thinking about what excuse you’d have for disappearing?”

“I’m so used to not being able to go out without permission. And disappearing without reason already feels like a crime.”

“How are we gonna go home?”

“Can we even go back?”

“A bit too depressing to think about. But, let’s start with trying to adapt to our environment first and then figure out how we got here in the first place and how we can go back.”

“You’re right.”

“I suppose we should call it a night then?”

“One of us should keep an eye out.”

“Okay. Oh, hey, is this our first sleepover?”

“HAHA! I guess.”

Louise and I exchanged more banters before finally saying good night and slowly drifted off to sleep while Kurt stayed awake to scout. All I remember from that night were the stars looking beautiful as it glitters through the horizon, but if you ask me, I’d prefer the unfiltered stars in the real world.

THE NEXT DAY

We gathered some berries along the way, we figured we should let Louise taste it since, well, not to be stereotypical but animals tend to have higher tolerance to poisons. When he thinks it’s good and tastes good, we keep it, otherwise we throw it away.

Besides, even if he’s poisoned, I can always nullify it myself.

“By the way, how are you guys holding up playing as a game character?” I asked.

“Personally, I wanted to try being a Mage myself but being a warrior isn’t that bad,” he said as he pierced his blade at the wind.

“You think I can wield two swords?”

“Not right now, but sooner or later, you will.” It’s written all over his face, he wanted to try being Kirito.

“How about you, Louise?” asked Kurt.

“Me? I don’t know, aside from taste-testing some berries, I think I can hold myself in a fight. Probably. I feel like Warwick.”

“Why? Not like you’re on bloodlust though?”

“I honestly don’t know yet. We haven’t got much fight for me to know after we got closer to the capitol.”

The capitol, that’s what we started calling it ever since we bump into some locals in the forest. We’re not there yet but we’re closer than we were than yesterday. The trail is getting clearer, it’s obvious now that a caravan travels through here. Passing through the forest isn’t exactly relaxing in this world, every rustling, you turn over your shoulders and keep your guard up. You just don’t know what might jump at you.

Another rustling and this time it’s associated with voice.

“Ahhhhh, this is so cool.”

Louise hushed us down and told us to lower our heads. He led the way towards the direction of the voice.

“He’s doing it again,” Kurt whispered.

“Doing what?”

“Leading the way, doesn’t he usually get in trouble for leading the way recklessly?”

“Oh, right.”

We stifled our laugh. We got closer towards the sound of the voice and saw a guy with a bow and a sword.

“Damn, I can cut bushes like paper.”

*Uh, because they’re leaves? They’re closely frail as a paper.*

“Weird, why is he out here?”

“What do you mean?”

“Like he just got here and discovered he can cut leaves like butter with his katana.”

“Oh. OHHH.”

“You mean, he’s just like us?”

“Shhh.”

Louise’s hush was louder than our voice which got us in trouble.

“Who are you, oh fuck, it’s a wolf. Stay back! I’ll cut you off!”

“Relax, we just have a few questions to ask.”

He looked at us with suspicion and reluctantly nodded.

“I—”

I turned back to Kurt.

“What are we going to ask?”

“I-I don’t know! You know these stuff, ask him how he got here.”

“Alright alright.”

I turned back to the stranger.

“Sorry about that but um, where did you come from?”

“Wha? Shouldn’t I ask you that? I was already here. I— wait. I don’t know how I got here. Oh, okay. I get it, this must be a dream, right?”

*Been there, done that.*

“Apparently, it’s not.”

Louise went and threw a pebble at him.

“Hey! Wai- Ow!!”

“See?”

“Normally, you’d pinch a person, Louise.”

“Uhm, okay, ARE YOU NOT SEEING HE’S HOLDING A SWORD?”

“Louise? Wait, if you’re Louise, then you must be Kurt. And Edith?”

“Guess again, I’ll burn you if you get it wrong twice.”

“Oh, easy. Cleo.”

“Better. Wait— what do you mean easy?”

“HAHA! I still remember you joking about burning the school down back in senior high!”

“No way. Justine?”

“Yeah.”

He flexed his sword like he knows how to hold a real one. But I doubt he held a real sword in real life. We do know he had a wooden sword. Still, it’s amazing now that he’s able to hold a real sword.

“I’m finally a samurai that I always wanted to be.”

“Congrats, now you can slice bushes like paper.”

“YOU HEARD THAT?!”

“Yeah, you look like an idiot doing it too. We didn’t know who it was at first but base on your reactions, we assumed you and I were the same case. We got transported in this world.”

“I was wondering about that as well. How did we even get here?”

“Well, at first, I thought it was because of Cleo’s newly bought video game. But then finding you here means there’s more to this.”

“Video game? You think we got transported to a video game?” His voice mixed with excitement.

“Yes. But like I said, you weren’t there with us when we tried the video game. So, it’s out of the question.”

“There has to be another reason as to how we got here. “

“Yeah, and it seemed like whatever who or what put us here, it knows what we want.” Justine looked at himself. His clothes and weapon resemble the kind of character her wanted to play in video games. A samurai, or any character that wields a katana.

“I think it shaped us into the characters we wanted to be.”

“That kinda makes sense. In RPGs, you get to customize your own characters. Maybe that’s why we look the way we are now?”

“And our powers too. It fits us too well.”

We shared our ideas and assumptions, answering our own questions. Perhaps to amuse our curiosity and make sense of whatever it is going on here or what’s going to happen to us. Despite our excitement, I can tell there’s a lingering worry at the back of our minds that we don’t say out loud.

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We took some rests along the way. We take turns who’s on the lookout while the rest can do whatever they need or want. Most of the time, Louise tries to figure out his potions as he is an Apothecary. Kurt and Justine do some mock battle to enhance their skills. In my case…

“…” I stared at the puddle, particularly my own reflection. I look different but the person I’m looking at is me.

*Feeling emo? Really? That’s what I’m gonna do?* While everyone is doing their best to improve. Well, it’s not so bad to sit back and contemplate. I had a good view of the scenery. I hardly see any grass back home. There ARE trees but grass that painted in rich green colors are a rare sight from where we live. Well, it IS a city after all.

I traced the edges of my staff, there’s a gem infused at the top that lights up when I cast a spell.

Hmm. That being said…

“Look out!”

“Woah!”

“What the— WHAT WAS THAT FOR?!”

Kurt and Justine looked at me in surprise.

“I’m bored. Let me join you.”

I pointed my staff in their direction and declared war.

“There would be times that you wouldn’t be able to deflect an attack, especially if the flying projectile is intangible. Our today’s training is: DODGE THE BLASTS”

Kurt made an *Oh* sound, a sign of understanding, meanwhile, Justine says otherwise. Both scolded me for throwing a fireball at them without warning.

“You think your opponent would warn you of their attack? Geez, what kinda anime were you watching anyway?”

“But you’re a friend!”

“Not right now, I’m not.”

They gulped. Their stances changed, albeit awkward, it’s the best we could do right now.

“Just in case you get burned, we have Louise to heal you.” Louise waved his paw at the call of his name.

They nodded reluctantly, warned me not to go too far with my blasts.

If only I knew how.

I could only fire a huge fireball at once and it takes time for me to cast another one. It’s a good practice for all of us three. Four if ever someone gets burned.

I aimed at Kurt.

But casted Pyroblast in Justine’s direction.

“Oh shit— THAT WAS CLOSE!” shouted Justine.

Now he’s slightly close to Kurt, I aimed between them and fired another Pyroblast, in which they successfully dodged.

I kept firing in their direction, some of the fireblasts did them some damage while most of my shots have missed my poor friends. Some have grazed over their clothes, their hair and skin.

“What’s wrong, Cleo? Can’t keep up?” He said in between his panting.

“Not gonna lie, this is more exhausting than I expected it to be.”

I raised my hand in defeat, saying that I need a break. The two of them agreed and dropped their weapons.

“We should avoid using too much energy for when we really need it.”

“Ah no worries, we’re almost near the capitol anyway.”

It took us almost two days to reach the capitol, yesterday included for when first we got here. We gathered our things and embarked once again. Compared to yesterday, we didn’t encounter many monsters. I guess this just means we’re getting closer and closer. After finally reaching the border walls, we were welcomed with open gates with several castle guards near the entrance. Perhaps they’re not so tight when it comes to adventurers, I’m guessing they’re confident with their security, huh? They didn’t even check our bags.

Wait, this isn’t a mall.

Huge wooden gates standing at least 10 to 15 feet tall looms before us, its height is overwhelming to look at. We look around and saw that we’re not the only ones who’s travelling. Different creatures, great and small, different color and different shape, they all look fascinating. I fixed my robe and my bangs and straightened my back.

“Pressured much?”

“Yeah, I guess.”

Louise smiled and patted my back. Kurt and Justine took the first step forward that pushed us to enter the capitol. Standing amidst the crowd, I feel small, aside from my actual height in this world, I feel small emotionally and physically.

*This is too overwhelming!!*

“We should look for a tavern, an inn or something.”

“Is there like a hotel here or something, maybe we could ask at the receptionist there.”

“Hotel in this kind of setting is called an ‘Inn’, Justine.”

“Oh, right! Sorry, I forgot!”

[I’ll switch from 3rd person perspective]

They tried their best to stay together and not get swept away by the crowd or tempted by whatever it was selling at different shops. After asking a few people for directions, they finally reached their destination.