

That Time I got Isekai'd as Just a Human in a World of Elves (And Where Are These System Screens?)

"I'm just heading to Starbucks to grab some coffee and work on my paper, mom. I'll bring you your favorite. Be back in a bit!"

I didn't even wait for her to reply before I ran out the door.

* * *

I glanced up as I rode down the bike lane.

"What the hell is that?"

The sky was multicolored. Lights danced across in shades of blue, green, and purple. Looking around, everyone I rode past appeared as dumbfounded as me while they stared upward.

A car started to move into my lane.

"Oh shit! Dude! Watch where you're driving!" I yelled, waving my arm frantically as I did.

The man's eyes went wide and he swerved into the other lane. The motion forced the oncoming truck to veer the opposite way.

Toward me.

I froze as all I could see were headlights. I didn't even try to turn my bike out of the way.

There was a bright flash.

My mind should have been waiting for the hit, but right before my vision turned black...

All I could think about was how the truck was red.

* * *

Iris's eyes shot open. She'd had the damn dream about the Flash again. *That's the fifth time this week.* Her dreams clearly had something against her. As if her subconscious considered her out of shape. She hadn't even ridden her bike that day. After parking her car, Iris had been simply walking down the sidewalk toward the Starbucks on the corner when it had happened.

When I was isekai'd.

Just like the animes.

Looking around, she saw a thin stream of light coming from the window. Her head was throbbing—A side effect of all of the alcohol she drank the night prior. Spending her hard-earned coin in the tavern was almost a ritual at this point. As a self-proclaimed adventurer since her isekai, every bit of coin went toward either equipment, supplies, or getting drunk.

After all, there wasn't shit else to do in this gods awful world.

As if by cue, pain spiked through her head. *At least I'm not nauseous. This is why you stay hydrated!*

She groaned but then paused as she tried to move. Iris looked down and blinked.

There was an arm across her chest.

Shit. He didn't leave.

Gently moving the arm away, she glanced at the cute elf man lying naked next to her. She groaned again, but quieter. Iris had explicitly told him that he shouldn't stay the night... again. Gingerly crawling out of bed, she searched her room for her clothes. The small amount of light from the window did her no favors in her attempt to see.

She found her bra draped across the small plant in the room. And her underwear was... scanning the room, her eyes narrowed.

There.

...Hanging on the door handle.

Some hero I am...

Her undergarments were priceless. *I need to be more careful. They don't make them nearly as well here.*

Slipping into her underwear and settling her bra into place, she looked around for the rest of her outfit. *Why... why is this like a scavenger hunt? I need to stop drinking. Every time. I swear I act worse than when I drank tequila.*

No more.

I'm done.

Never again.

Squinting her eyes, she looked around the room again and searched for her armor. Her bow. Her backpack... *What the?*

Another groan escaped her. *Of course, he stayed the night. We're in his room this time. Damn it, Iris!*

She grabbed her pants that were *unfortunately* the Eona special and slipped into em. The material was not nearly as comfortable as anything from back home. A sudden snore caused her to freeze.

Luckily, the elf didn't stir from his sleep as she quickly dressed into the remainder of her clothes. Iris grabbed her sword that never left her presence and strapped it to her waist.

With one last look at...the—

Cute elf. She frowned. That's the third time, Iris. Three times and you've still yet to remember the dude's name.

Never. Drinking. Again.

She walked out of the room.

Right into Helda. The innkeeper.

The large telv woman glanced between Iris and the door before raising a brow. “Going somewhere?”

Iris plastered a big smile on her face and lifted her arms out. “Heeelda! How are you this lovely morning? I must say, you look fantastic.” Wincing at the sound of her own voice, she lowered her voice. “I was never here. You did not see me.”

Helda shook her head and sighed. “Iris. What am I to do with you, girl?”

Iris put her best puppy dog eyes on. “Me? Pfft. Have any eggs? My head is *throbbing*. Also, can I buy some more of the Root Tea? I ran out yesterday, and I definitely do not want to skip a day.”

The woman sighed again. “Yes. Tell Neri to get you some. I’m charging you extra. *One small silver* for a container.”

That made Iris groan. It would definitely cut into her funds and force her to take more odd jobs. *Worth it though. Fantasy fucking birth control in a bitter tea.*

Although... abstinence would be cheaper.

Iris sighed. *That’s not going to be easy. He’s a hunter...*

Making her way to the ground level of the small inn, Iris started planning her day. She needed to head to the Town Guard’s barracks and see if they had any more monster sightings that she could handle. That would hopefully earn her some decent coin.

Unless I run across a murder hare again. I’m running as fast as possible if that happens.

The even smaller tavern within the inn had a central fire pit like something out of Skyrim with a few benches on either side of it. Being nearly the end of summer, it sat barren. The little stone ledge that surrounded it became more storage for random odds and ends like a few boxes.

There were tables spread out around the room with ample space for people to walk around. The area was really meant for guests rather than any random passerby. However, after spending several weeks in the inn, Iris knew that Helda wouldn’t turn down coin for anything though.

Several men sat at one table, and they seemed to be eating breakfast before work. They appeared to be laborers of some variety, which made sense. The nation she had been isekai’d to was *strange*. She was told that there weren’t many other places like it, which made sense.

Every isekai had something quirky about the location the hero was transported to.

The Lehelia Queendom.

An honest-to-gods nation where the women were considered the brains and the men the brawn. Laborers, soldiers, craftsmen, and the like were filled by men. Jobs where that physique could be put to use.

It was fascinating.

And ironically made her job as an *adventurer* more difficult.

Because... *‘that’s a job for a man, why don’t you find something more suited to your unique capabilities?’*

It pissed her off.

The worst part? The actual irony of the situation?

They did not expect her to stay home with the family or marry some man as she had first thought. In fact, she had nearly smacked the *shit* out of some guard when he'd said something similar.

Nope.

The reason?

Nearly every position within politics, administration, accounting, and well any other thing you could think of that needed an inkling of thought was held almost exclusively by women. But that said, even in the armies, officers were predominantly women.

But they wouldn't take on the job that Iris had given herself alone.

No, siree.

They'd order a bunch of men around and make sure *they* got the job done.

Oh, they'd get their hands dirty if needed, but their role was to guide the men. To lead them. So, Iris choosing to brave the wilds to cut down monsterized beasts that prey upon livestock and farms... was strange.

Apparently, Lehelia was an outlier of the strangest degree. But as she learned more about this world, everything was weird.

Elves are some weird people, man.

Such strange priorities. Like the stereotypical obsession with nature. However, these people weren't sitting in tree houses. Nope, they just set up a bunch more parks than normal.

Then there was their vanity. Their obsession with their appearance had them progress an entire industry so far beyond everything else it was silly. And despite their love of fighting their neighbors, their ability in war was stunted. It was like their armies didn't eat their vegetables or something. Socially, they were easily a couple centuries ahead of where they should be. War? A solid century behind.

So strange. It bears repeating. S.t.r.a.n.g.e.

But as she sat down and asked Neri for some eggs and another batch of Root Tea—along with a cup to drink with her breakfast, Iris knew she was lucky.

I could be dead. Plastered on the hood of Truck-kun.

Anime and web novels did not prepare me for this shit.

Iris sighed.

She already wanted to drink again.

...Damn it.

* * *

Walking into the barracks, she rolled her shoulders. She had her armor on and looked like a proper *hero*. The bulk of it was a simple chainmail top, but her upper chest, shoulders, and arms were protected by plate armor. As were her legs. She wore her longsword on her hip and her bow and quiver were strapped to her back.

It was hot, heavy, and surprisingly comfortable. However, Iris had gained a lot of muscle since arriving. Her strength would likely make men quail at the gym back home. All in a form factor that had simply become more... *toned*. She felt like an MMA fighter. She loved it.

Her magic thrummed through her.

She was prepared.

Now to get a good job.

She strode up to the desk like a woman on a mission. Her red hair billowed behind her, and not because her only strap broke while trying to tie it into a ponytail.

“Morek. What do you have for me, buddy?” she asked the orkun man staring at her as she approached.

He sighed and started shuffling through various scrolls and papers. “Iris. What do you want this time?”

“Got anything that will give me some decent coin? I... may have spent more than I wanted last night and this morning.”

The man shook his head. “Iris, you always say that. How are you so bad with your coin?”

Ouch, that cuts deep.

“Look, you know how it is. You get spirited away to another world, leave everything you’ve ever known, and—”

“And you take up the role you were destined for. An adventurer. A hero. Yadda, yadda. Yes, Iris. You say this nearly every time you talk to me. Stop wasting your coin on alcohol, girl. Why don’t you—”

She lifted a finger. “Nuh-uh. None of that. I have a duty, Morek. I need to go level up. War is spreading all over the continent. Magic is here. I have to be ready when the call comes.”

It’ll come.

Why else would I be here?

“You and this call. These ‘levels’. You...” He sighed again. “You don’t give up do you, girl?” he asked.

At least the man was starting to get it.

“No, Morek, I do not. And I’m not a girl. Come on. We do this dance all the time. Got a job for me?”

He grabbed one and shoved it her way. “Fine. Don’t say I didn’t try. Here. Hunters claim there’s a beast in the woods to the north hunting all of the game. Same rate as usual, more if you bring back the body or bodies.”

She nodded and grabbed the scroll. “Thanks, Morek. You’re a pal.”

“Yeah, yeah. Try not to get yourself killed,” he said, a bit of actual concern leaking through his otherwise patronizing tone.

“You know, you could actually come with me if you want. I can show you some *real* magic,” she stated.

His eyes narrowed. “You haven’t been practicing within the town limits again, have you? You know the new law.”

She rolled her eyes. “Of course, I know the new law that was created *specifically for me.*”

The orkun shrugged. “It wasn’t me that did it, Iris. Don’t get testy with me. You shouldn’t have damaged the park. Or the first inn. Or the town hall.”

She threw her hands up. “Those were accidents!”

“That’s why you don’t have a debt right now, girl. Now, go use your magic on some beasts. Maybe you’ll gain your ‘levels’,” he said a bit condescendingly.

Maybe I will.

Jerk.

* * *

Iris rode toward the woods a few kilometers north of the town. After grabbing the scroll, she’d gone back to the inn and retrieved her horse from the stables. Her backpack and supplies were tied to the back of the saddle, and she sat comfortably on her best girl’s back.

One of the only things that had actually gone *right* for her was when she had helped an old rancher who raised horses. She’d fought off a particularly nasty monsterized animal that looked like a giant fox, but grey and white. The thing had been preying on the young horses of the ranch.

The old elf had appreciated what she’d done so much that he’d given her a great deal on purchasing a horse.

And thus, her beautiful chocolate-colored mare with her pretty white spot on her forehead had joined Iris in her adventure.

She gently patted the back of her girl’s neck and then gave her a rub. “You doing alright, Mocha? Just you and me, girl. Us against the world.”

Mocha Latte snorted and shook her head slightly before lifting upwards.

Iris rolled her eyes and leaned forward to scratch behind Mocha’s ear. “There, you’re too needy.”

Her horse sassed right back but clearly enjoyed the scratches.

The two of them stopped just outside of the woods. Iris dismounted and led Mocha over to a lone tree. “Alright, Mocha. I’m trusting you to not leave me behind again.”

Her horse whinnied.

“Yes, yes. I know it was one time and those damn murder hares are scary. Alright, wish me luck. If I die... delete my browser history or something.”

Mocha stepped forward and bumped her head up against Iris's chest. Leaning her head to her horse's, she whispered her usual farewell to her only friend.

She turned away and pulled out her sword, striding toward the woods. It was time to make some coin.

With one last look at her horse, she waved and stepped into the brush.

* * *

I swear it's been like five hours.

She moved quietly, taking care of where she stepped as she searched the woods. So far, there weren't any tracks out of the ordinary. Not that she was some fantastic tracker. She only remembered vaguely when she arrived, key things. Stuff she'd learned from her dad back when he'd taken her hunting.

That had also been over a decade ago.

But, that wasn't anything some alcohol and nice words couldn't fix. Back in Autumn, she'd gotten a hunter in a village south of Narmland to teach her to hunt and track.

She wasn't great, but it was enough to help her see that 'Yup, that big ass track is heading in that direction. Yup, that's fresh deer shit.'

Unfortunately, neither of those scenarios was present.

Maybe I'll head to one of the cities next. Maybe Brightburn or even head over into the Kingdom of Avira to Kristaria.

The Sovereign Cities were off the table. She didn't want to get involved in any war. She'd become a bit partial to Lehelia, but she felt that was a bit of Contact Bias. If that was even a thing. It was where she'd arrived, and despite nearly everything going around since then, it wasn't *too* bad. She hadn't been summoned by the queen or anything, which—quite frankly—was a bit disappointing. Usually the local royalty or the church or something wanted to talk to the hero.

Sure, the moment Iris teleported in, she'd had to flee from three bandits. Only to run into another group of bandits.

It was like they were all on the way to a damn bandit convention.

That fight had been brutal.

She'd gained her first couple of levels that day. Or at least that was what she attributed the energy filling her after every kill, spell formed, or ability created. Since then, she'd done all she could to gain more.

That rush was key to everything.

And she'd had thirty-nine of them since arriving. Which was something she kept strict accounting of. Because... this damn system doesn't have any damn screens. No matter what she'd tried, she couldn't bring up her system stats. She could feel it. Every time Iris used an ability or spell. She *knew* it was one. If this was a novel, they'd be in a set of brackets or bolded.

Or something. If this was an anime... thank Eona's gods it wasn't an anime. Iris wouldn't be caught dead screaming out her spells every time she wanted to use one.

That said, she'd known her attributes or whatever had increased fairly quickly. Mainly because she was stronger than most men she'd met. Not to mention the magic.

It was a moment that changed everything. When she'd discovered she could use magic, it was the affirmation that all the shit she'd gone through was worth it. That she was the hero of this story.

All the bandits, the monsters, the losing food, and falling into rivers. Getting robbed. Getting stabbed and mauled by monsters...

Eating the weird mushrooms that had her hovering over a hole for hours...

...The other group of humans that tried to manipulate and hurt her.

So much had gone wrong.

Nothing had been going right until she'd helped that rancher and met Mocha. That was also when she learned the priority of what gave the most... *experience(?)* toward her next level.

Spells gained the most. More depending on the higher complexity *As is right*.

Abilities came next.

Killing monsters fell into priority number three, and thus became the reason for her becoming an adventurer. *Maybe one day an actual Adventurer Guild will form.*

Maybe I should form it.

Then, finally, what she saw as killing sapient. It barely gave any toward a level. That helped solidify her theory that the system wanted *people* to grow. Not just individuals, but everyone.

That thought worried her. If the system was *preparing* the people of Eona for something, what could it be?

Iris trudged up a hill. As she neared the top, a noise sounded from nearby.

Movement.

Freezing, she made herself small and searched her surroundings.

She slowly propped her sword up against the tree next to her and then unslung her bow. Iris had made sure to string her bow before coming out here. She knew that some hunters chose to do it when they had an immediate need to use it, but she had learned to always have it ready.

Murder hares were no joke.

Grabbing an arrow and nocking it to the bow made her feel a bit better. She settled into a more rhythmic breathing. **Focusing.**

She caught sight of something large.

Scales.

Those aren't supposed to be roaming here... Shit.

It was a drakyyd. A tiger-sized reptile that hunted the forests of the region west of them. Beastiaries were important to learn for adventurers.

She slowly released the tension in the bow and returned it to her quiver. She felt through her arrows, feeling the small notches she'd etched into them. Each let her know which arrow was which. With an animal like the drakyyd, she needed something with a bit more penetrative ability.

Iris nocked the bodkin arrow and sighted in the dark green reptile.

She drew back.

And used **Unerring Shot**.

The arrow flew toward its target and *curved* slightly as it stayed on a path that would hit where she wanted it to. *Its chest*. Right behind its front legs.

It took but a moment. The beast roared a pained cry as her arrow pierced through its tough hide and into its heart and lungs.

The beast took a few steps but then collapsed.

She returned her bow to its spot on her back and grabbed her sword.

Just as she was about to move toward her kill, she heard another roar.

And then another.

Until the entire woods came alive.

Iris's heart dropped.