

Beast Master 1061

Chapter 1061: Supply Proposition

The mage and cleric walked back into the arena, while Karl put the new items in his inventory.

He didn't bond the Amulet of Destruction yet, though he couldn't see himself giving away something so valuable. It would surely be useful to the others as well, but only one person could bond and use the bracelet.

So, it made sense for the strongest to use it.

The Epic Guard was already excited about it. She would love to be Mythic Rank.

But the stronger you were, the scarier that item got. Not much in the world would be able to stand up to an Immortal Rank skill, or damage an Immortal Rank defensive ability. If they were given time to prepare for a battle, the Amulet would allow them to stack up an impenetrable fortress.

Well, in theory.

Karl knew that there was a chance that when you chose another spell to buff, the other one would return to normal strength.

That seemed like the most likely outcome. The system seemed to think it was funny to thwart the best plans.

Now that the negotiations were over, the guests were beginning to go back to the Auction, but Karl had no intentions of returning after the chaos that their presence had caused the first time.

So, instead of continuing the day as planned, he walked out into the arena, where he was immediately surrounded by the more powerful spectators congratulating him on his victory, and their assistants.

Most had prepared a small token for him, as congratulations on making a third Over Rank victory, and for a victory against a Myth. That was an incredibly rare occurrence, as you had to deal ten times the damage that your opponent did just to make it an even fight.

Or some combination of that and damage reduction, as Karl had.

"Champion Karl, do you have a moment to chat? I believe that we might have a proposal that you would be interested in." A Mythic Ranked mage asked, pushing through the crowd.

Karl's first thought was that he was a beastkin of some sort, due to his size. But like Professor Tank, he seemed to be simply a mountain of a man.

[You know that mage specializes in casting 'fist'.] Cara giggled.

He certainly looked like the sort, the way that he was glaring at others.

[Mages lack physical skills, so he built his own.] Thor noted, pleased with the man's ingenuity.

He had compensated for his weakness.

"What sort of offer?" Karl asked curiously.

"My Group controls both a Mythic and a Totem Ranked Dungeon. We would like to discuss a Guild Alliance for our people to work together."

Karl smiled and nodded. "I believe that could work well for us. As a Guild primarily of crafters, we are always short on raw materials, and we are lower in number than most adventuring Guilds."

The massive mage smiled, and a few other Guild Leaders pushed forward to join him.

"These are the leaders of our other Allied Guilds. Might we ask, who is the Guild Leader of the Darklight Host?" The mage asked.

Karl chuckled. "Supreme Lady Matilda is our ranking member. But I am the head of the Drodh Branch of the Guild, as she doesn't often concern herself with other regions outside her own territory."

The others all made protective gestures in front of themselves, and Karl shrugged.

"It's fine to deal exclusively with the Drodh Branch. I understand that our Guild Leader has a bit of a reputation." He suggested.

The Guild Leaders conferred for a moment, then one by one reached out to shake his hand.

"We will let the others say their piece first, and then we can talk business."

With that, the assembled spectators who hadn't returned to the auction cleared out, leaving only Karl and five Mythic Rank Guild Leaders.

"Why do I get the feeling that Drodh is a bit under level?" Karl joked.

The big mage waved his hand dismissively. "The Zilaz region of Sholaha is one of the highest power regions on the Dragon Isles because there are nearly two dozen Totem and Mythic Ranked Dungeons all in one area.

Most of the Dragon Isles are similar to the rest of the Island, with Myths leading larger cities, though some have far more Totems than can be called reasonable.

Dragons are like that."

Karl led them back to the sitting room where they had worked out the deal for the defeat, and took a seat on the same sofa again. Only two of the five Guild Leaders chose to sit on the provided seats, the others took their own from inventory instead.

"Alright, let's get started. What sort of crafters do you have, and what do they specialize in? We know that you're supposed to be a Totem Ranked Runelord. But you said your whole Guild branch focuses on crafting.

Karl nodded. "We have an Overlord Ranked Runic Alchemist, An Overlord Ranked Demonic Grandmaster Smith, a Master Leatherworker and tailor, and assistants to them all. Mostly at the Commander and Royal Rank."

A Guild Master with tattoos all down his arms smiled. "So, you have the ability to provide a steady flow of Commander Rank healing and cleansing potions?"

Karl nodded. "We sell them as regular stock at the store in Drodh."

The man looked startled. "Really? Nobody keeps healing potions as regular stock. Getting enough ingredients is a nightmare, so most of us just keep a few as backups in case we get out of range of the healers."

Karl tried not to laugh at the expression on the lone Druid's face at that comment. Apparently, the Myths weren't any better at staying in range of the healer than the Overlords in Bara were.

Possibly worse because they had more confidence in their powers, as they were among the peak powerhouses of the continent.

"So, that's what you want out of the alliance? A steady supply of weapons, armour and potions for your juniors?" Karl asked.

"Partially. We would also like to send some juniors as apprentices. Too many of the arts were lost, or kept insular. You are the first Runemaster that we have heard about outside the Dwarves in centuries. Then, you have a Runic Alchemist, and that art was lost so long ago that I've never even heard of it." The big mage explained.

"Ah, so training and supply. That's a reasonable thing to want."

One of the others cleared his throat. "Don't forget about the higher rank items. What drops out of the Totem Ranked Dungeons is mostly crafting materials. It's a Fae Dungeon, and all the rewards are plant-based.

So, those of us who don't use bows and staves are still a bit starved for weaponry."

One of the warriors laughed. "The Mythic Ranked Dungeon that our group controls drops one Rare or Epic Grade Mythic Rank item every four runs on average. The rest is all considered trash loot, not better than a Rare grade Totem Ranked item.

Sure, it's great for filling out the juniors, but it would actually be better to have higher grade items at a lower Rank for the diversity of buffs they would give.

I don't know why the Mythic Dungeon is so cheap with its loot, but it's a cruel one."

The Druid nodded in agreement. "It rewards based on some sort of internal calculation, and not directly from the killed mobs."

Karl sighed. "I've seen ones like that before. They're a bit of a pain, especially when you realize there is a loot cap that doesn't care if you carried the group, fought evenly in a small group or brought a whole ten-person team."

"I take it you've been to Bara, then?" The Druid asked.

Karl nodded. "I made a deal with the Dwarves, and they gave me tax-free entrance. I really should go back again soon and clear it a few more times. Or at least send Guild Members. It's the primary source of crafting materials for the Guild right now."

Chapter 1062: Guild Stock

The Druid smiled as he recalled that the item he had put up at the auction was made of Elven Steel, the primary export of the Bara Dungeon.

The fact that Karl had turned that into something that would touch off a Guild War with a Mythic Raiding Team was impressive enough that he wouldn't have any reservations about taking them as a full partner in the Guild Alliance.

Normally, Guilds would have to fight and prove that they were worthy of being full members, as that came with implied protection if one of the Guilds was threatened, or someone tried to take their resources.

But the Darklight Host appeared to be powerful enough that they could stand as a life skills Guild equal to the top Raiding Guilds.

"Can you provide a few samples of items that your Guild can produce that aren't on the market?" The Druid asked, making sure that they hadn't overestimated based on Karl's combat ability.

Karl smiled and began to take out random items. A Totem Ranked blade he made the other day, with [Flaming Body] on it. A set of decorative armour that Rae had made for Ophelia, but hadn't found time to give her yet. A few Overlord Ranked [Full recovery] potions from Remi that would heal, refresh stamina and regenerate mana for the imbiber. A prototype advancement potion, now with a slower release rate and much lower potency, so it could be used as a supplement to aid growth, and not just to break bottlenecks.

And finally, Karl took out an Arcane Element stone and carved the [Recall] spell on it.

Anyone could use the spell to return to their Guild House, even without setting a location or having a marked stone with them. So, it was useful all the time, and to anyone.

Plus, the spell was rare and powerful, but easy to write.

The Guild Masters stared at him as he worked, then the stone when he finished.

"Well, I have to say, this is all special order quality. Epic Grade, Totem Ranked berserker armour, for a female Berserker, is quite a nice touch. But what is that strange Overlord Ranked potion?

The Full Recovery Potion is a masterpiece, and I would like a few of those today, if possible. But that other one..." The big mage asked.

"Oh, that's an experiment that our Runic Alchemist is running. She discovered a way to force advancement through the lower Ranked bottlenecks, and she's been adapting it to not risk the life of the imbiber. That one should be more like a health tonic. Drink it at lower ranks to advance quickly.

Well, not too low of a Rank. Royal or Monarch ranked imbibers are best.

I can ask her to make lower grade ones for the youngsters to grow more quickly, but that one would probably make them explode with an overload of mana their bodies couldn't process." Karl explained.

The Druid looked intensely curious.

"If you don't mind, can we sample it and see if it's a legitimate potion, or another snake oil attempt to recreate a Legendary Potion?" He asked.

Karl nodded. "Go ahead. Who do you plan to use it on?"

That was a good question. He hadn't thought about who to actually feed it to.

The big mage opened a portal, and brought through a beastkin girl in a maid outfit.

"Here's your big chance, Lia. You've been bloodline locked at peak Royal for a while now, and this might help you break through to Monarch." He explained.

Karl chuckled. That was exactly the same tactic that they had used in the past to get people to drink suspicious things that Remi made.

The maid didn't even hesitate as he handed her the potion, and Remi came out of her space to watch while draped around Karl's neck.

"And who might this be?" The Druid asked.

"This is Remi. She is our Runic Alchemist, and that is her handiwork. She's also my bonded partner, a Naga Queen that evolved and grew from a hatchling Spirit Snake at my side."

The Druid smiled. "It's good to have friends. We should have brought our team's Ranger to watch today, but he was out playing with his dog."

The Warrior beside him laughed. "It's a Frost Mountain Wolf, and he's a Beast Ranger. But he treats that five hundred kilo monster like a lap puppy."

Remi giggled. {It's nice to be appreciated. We have an Impenetrable Bulwark Behemoth with us who absolutely adores having people brush his scales.}

As soon as the maid drank the potion, her power began to grow, and her body became a bit more youthful looking, adapting to the longer lifespan of a Monarch Ranked beastkin. It was a clear victory, but her power was still slowly growing.

Not fast, but noticeable by the powerful Guild Masters in the room.

"How long will that last?" The Druid asked.

Remi waved her serpentine head side to side as she calculated. {About an hour. There is an initial surge to help break the bottleneck without damage, then I slowed down the rest so that it didn't overload the user. The first version released all that energy at once, and it was somewhat less than optimal.}

Dana was still mad at her.

"What would happen if she immediately drank another after this one was done? Could she reach Overlord in a day?" The big mage asked.

Remi bobbed her head. {Probably. But she would never advance even a little bit again, and she would most likely die in a few months. The plants that go into that potion are a sort of toxin that most cleansing spells don't touch, and the fast advancement makes the cells of the body unstable.

If she drank another one next year, it shouldn't be any more harmful than this one, but I don't know how much closer together would be safe.}

The mage smiled. "Such a moral and considerate researcher."

If Dana could hear him, he would likely strangle him.

Or Remi.

The only reason Remi knew the answer was because she had done the math after she had used the first one on Dana, and watched her body recover.

Advancing Dana to Totem as soon as Remi was able had definitely been an early option, before she discovered the side effects.

Chapter 1063: That Potion

The big mage ran his fingers through his hair. That potion changed things. It could bypass Bloodline limitations and move people a Rank over their limits.

For those like him, who had Dragon blood, it wasn't much of an issue. But for the Beastkin, the Elves, the Fae species and those with Monster blood, it was practically a Divine Gift.

They had never even dared to hope that they could make it past their bloodline limits.

The Elves and Fae could theoretically reach Immortality. But something about their compatibility with the System left them stuck at random spots. Nobody understood why, but the older Dragons said it was just part of the System awakening, and if they waited a few hundred more years, the problem would go away.

However, if you were stuck at Commander or Royal Rank in a city full of Overlords and Totems, those would be two hundred really lousy years.

Like Drodh, Zilaz and most of the other major cities of the Dragon Isles set social status by power level. In Zilaz, the standard was Royal, not Ascended, to be considered worthy of basic dignity in the workplace as an adult.

Like the beastkin Maid who had just made it to Monarch Rank.

The Guild Masters silently conferred about the terms of the deal that they wanted to offer. Clearly Karl and his team could offer far more than expected, not just a steady supply of gear and basic potions, which would have already been enough to make them an invaluable asset to a large alliance.

"You know, this sort of thing really does make it difficult to work out equitable terms." The Druid muttered.

Karl laughed. "You have no idea. Keeping the Darklight Host Guild members happy is a never-ending battle. Half the time we just go for keeping the Green Dragon Cleric happy, which entertains everyone else.

But advancement opportunities, especially ones that please the Dragon Gods, are always near the top of our list.

My Class grows in power far faster than it logically has any right to, and everyone else that I came up with is struggling to keep up. Most are Monarchs now, but we will have them advanced to Overlord as soon as someone verifies that the new potion is safe enough."

The Druid snorted in amusement. "So, when you said that the potion was experimental, you meant that it worked in theory, not that you'd actually begun trials."

Karl shrugged. "This is version two. The first one definitely worked, but nearly killed the imbiber. Even with Totem Ranked healers present.

This one is much safer, but we didn't know if it would be effective enough.

The real danger is that using it might damage their future potential. Getting them to Overlord now, so they're only one Rank behind me, is a good start. But if it hinders their ability to make it to the Totem Rank, what are they supposed to do when I reach Mythic?

I have already confirmed that my progression should be smooth and without a bottleneck. So, if I don't do something, I will end up leaving them behind."

The Druid smiled softly as the others argued about the terms of the deal.

"That is somewhat inevitable, I fear. You're already a dominant force among Totems, and even if they make Overlord today, there is little to no chance that they will manage to match up well enough to keep joining you in the near future.

However, with a Guild Alliance, you will gain access to over two hundred more Overlords between our Guilds.

That's more than enough to keep everyone occupied.

What classes are the rest of your group? We might be able to fit them into an existing Raid Group, as we have a number that are recently advanced." He offered.

"That's the fun part. There are three Dragon Priestesses. Of the Red, Green and Black, though they all hold advanced classes now. Then an Ursine Avenger, the Rare Grade version of a Titanic Bear Totem Berserker. And a Mystic Blademaster, who has a particular skill with Golems, thanks to her class." Karl explained.

"So, it's just you and the berserker, surrounded by beautiful clerics and a Divine Fox beastkin lady mage? I can see how that might have drawn enough envy to start a fight." The big Mage laughed, beginning to understand the backstory to the day's events.

“It was only the mage and myself at the Auction. The others are resting and waiting for me to finish my journey to the Naga Temple so that we can let the Naga Queen here visit the Shaman God shrine.

If he had known that we were blessed with so many enviable members, he might have demanded more.

Also, the berserker is a female Werebear. Well, possibly a human with the transformation ability from her Class, but I rarely see her outside Werebear form.” Karl explained.

The Druid whistled in appreciation, and Remi giggled.

{Why is everyone so obsessed with the Werebear? Not that it’s not funny to see her get hit on everywhere she goes, but she’s more into dainty Nature Priestesses than large men who are into Werebears.} Remi asked.

The Druid shrugged. “I don’t know. I was more impressed that Karl managed to land a group like that. The obsession with big muscled women isn’t for me. Oh, I’ve got a picture.”

He took out a picture of a middle-aged badger type beastkin woman, heavysset and surrounded by children.

{You’ve got a lovely family. My sister Cara says you have good taste.} Remi informed him.

“You have a sister with you?” The Druid asked, confused.

Cara came out to stand by Karl, startling the group, and Remi darted her head in Cara’s direction as a way of pointing in snake form.

{That is my sister Cara. The Chaos Badger.}

The Druid was fully belly laughing now, distracting the others, who had only noticed that something was going on when Cara appeared.

But when they saw that Karl’s group had a badger, it didn’t take them long to put things together and realize that it was something to do with the Guild Master’s Family.

“Chaos Badger is redundant, isn’t it? All badgers are Chaos. Especially as children.” He chortled happily.

{This one is extra crispy spicy chaos. Not only can she fly, but she can see the future sometimes.}

The Druid smiled and nodded. “That’s a good friend to have. We will have to talk more about your group later, I should join these guys to discuss the terms of the alliance offer.”

Chapter 1064: Nara Group Guild Alliance

It only took them a few more minutes before they had a full offer ready to be presented.

It was drafted by someone in their Guild, and the beastkin maid presented it to Karl with a reverent look that said she would not hold it against them for using her as a test subject.

Karl unrolled it, as they had written the offer in the form of a scroll, and looked through the terms.

{Nara Group Guild Alliance Offer}

{The Nara Group invites the Darklight Host to join as full members of their Guild Alliance.

Included as basic terms of the Alliance are:

⇒ Protection services should the Darklight Host or its members be challenged or attacked by Guilds outside the Alliance.

⇒ 30% off wholesale price for raw materials from the Allied Guild Warehouses.

⇒ Open access to the Guild Alliance Dungeon team organization board.

As additional terms to the Alliance, the Nara Group requires:

⇒ Open access to new items created exclusively by the Darklight Host

⇒ Purchase order priority for Epic Grade and higher crafted items before they are placed on the open market or at the Guild Store.

⇒ Wholesale Pricing on Epic Grade and higher items crafted by the Darklight Host.

The Nara Group additionally offers:

⇒ Open access to Totem Rank and higher item drop bidding.

⇒ Once Weekly escorts through Totem Rank and higher Dungeons for Darklight Host members of suitable ability, free of charge.}

Karl read through the scroll, and had a few questions.

“How does the bidding for Totem Rank items usually work in the Alliance?”

Hugo, the oversized mage, smiled proudly as he answered. “Normally, the only ones with the right to bid are those in the group, and if they don’t need it, the next offer goes to those at or above the level of the item with an associated class. It’s our way of making sure that items make it to the ones who need them first.

Also, the bidding is not done with money or items of value. We only trade opportunities. A priority spot on a Dungeon team, our bidding spot on another item, and so on. For you, I suppose that it would be fine to trade favours, as you are the only Totem Ranked crafter in the Guild at the moment.”

Karl smiled. Being able to trade things he could make for things he wanted would make his life much easier.

Deve, the Druid, nodded in agreement. “It’s how we maintain our power. Most guilds hoard items, or let members do so. If we’re not actually going to use the item, it goes to bid. Thanks to that, we’re one of the best geared alliances around the eastern shores of Lake Naraledum.”

“Can I have a moment to confer with my Guild members? I don’t see this being an issue, but they might see something that I don’t.” Karl asked.

“Of course.”

Karl passed the scroll through a small opening into the Tiny World so that everyone could read it on their own.

“Your control of transport magic is impressive. What is your portal range?” Hugo asked.

Karl shrugged. "Intercontinental, if I keep the portal small. I'm not particularly well travelled, but I have no problem reaching back to the Kabtunia Continent, where I was born."

The Myths all paused to stare at him.

"That is absolutely broken for a Totem. Not just that, but it would make the exile process completely redundant. We've recruited a few Overlords into the Guild Alliance who arrived close to the bottleneck, and if it was so easy to just go back when they reached Totem Rank, most would have.

Fortunately for their home nations, none of them were mages to guide the spell with a group of Totems backing them."

Karl chuckled. "Every so often, I send care packages home of items suitable for my friends at home."

"What nation are you from?" Deve asked.

"The Golden Dragon."

The Druid nodded. "That explains your fondness for Priestesses."

“When you start out not expecting to make it above Commander Rank in your life, a friend who can create food is an important travelling partner.” Karl agreed.

Deve snorted in amusement. “That’s a concern at every level. Hell, if it wasn’t for the Dragon Clerics, half of the Guilds would starve.

The area around Lake Naraledum is an unofficial war zone. There are constant monster spawns, over a dozen high ranked Dungeons just within walking distance of the city, and the highest concentration of psychopaths and narcissistic losers on the continent.

But the opportunities are so good that we still stay.”

[The terms look good for us. Even Rae is happy with them.] Dana informed Karl, so he could take the scroll back.

Karl took the scroll back from the Tiny World and signed it, then shook hands with the Guild Leaders when the System Notice appeared in all their interfaces.

{System Notice} The Darklight Host has joined the Nara Group Guild Alliance.

Karl saw a whole new category of System functions appear for him, including the Alliance storage area, the Dungeon Team signups, a bulletin board, and a separate Alliance Leader chat.

Moments later, the Darklight Host's section of the board began to autopopulate, based on what was in their Guild Store Inventory.

Karl also noticed that he could access the Guild Store inventory again. The Guild Houses of the Alliance members served as a bridge of sorts, shortening the distance between him and the bank location.

Or perhaps it extended the distance you could access the Store from?

Either way, it worked, and now Remi could start loading in all the stuff she had been stockpiling. As could Rae, though she just put a bunch of stuff into the Guild House storage with labels for various members.

There was immediate celebration in the Guild Alliance chat channel, and the Darklight Host's Guild Bank balance was increasing at an insane rate.

Not even the Commander Rank healing potions were safe.

"You guys really were short on crafters, weren't you? They've bought over a thousand healing potions in the last minute, and the store put a ten per customer limit on them." Karl laughed.

The Guild Leaders shrugged. "Not everything is done in a group, and if you don't walk around with a cleric beside you all the time, it's good to have potions on hand."

Chapter 1065: Out Of Stock

Not only did they sell a massive number of potions, they were also cleared out of accessories.

Weapons were much more common drops, but specific accessories were almost impossible to get from a Dungeon, where the stats on the very few that dropped were random, and rarely perfectly matched to any class and specialty.

So, even if they were Commander and Royal Rank, the ones that were sold by the Darklight Host were still an upgrade for basically all the Alliance members Overlord Rank and under.

For the stronger members, even one Stat in their category was enough to make it better than anything at the Royal Rank. However, the Guild Leaders had hopes that Karl would soon put a few items at higher Ranks up for sale.

Ashbringer's Overlord Ranked weapons had sold very well, though they weren't all gone yet. But when Karl put up a dozen Overlord Ranked rings for warriors, they were gone faster than anyone could feasibly have read the full description.

"I think that I have some work to do once we get to the Temple." Karl laughed.

{How many Overlords and Totems are there in the Alliance?} Remi asked, planning her potion production.

"There are a combined sixty-four Totems and nearly two hundred Overlords between the five guilds. We're all membership capped at one hundred and ninety-nine regular members each. So, nearly a thousand members in total."

One of the other Guild Leaders snapped his fingers and pointed at Remi.

“Brilliant! I just realized that your Branch house only has like twenty people. With a Totem Ranked leader, you should be able to have a hundred. So, we could transfer all the hopeful crafters in the Alliance to the Darklight Host as members.” He explained.

Karl frowned. “We are somewhat particular, not just about skills but personality. The Guild treats each other as family.”

The Guild Master shrugged. “That’s fine. We’ve got five thousand people on the waiting list to enter one of the Alliance Guilds. I’m sure that you can find enough junior craftsmen or aspiring apprentices to do a full round of interviews.”

Karl nodded in understanding. “I will talk to the group leaders about bringing in more people. We’ve still got work to do with some of our other crafters, to get them up to our exacting standards. But after that, we can take in a new batch of children to train.”

“Is it that hard to learn trade skills, that you have to start as children?” Deve asked.

Karl shook his head. “No, I could teach you a trade skill now if you don’t have one. But how much actual crafting would you get done?”

The druid nodded in understanding. “Good point. My whole life would turn to chaos if I was suddenly being asked to make Mythic Rank crafted items at every hour of the day. I have far too many responsibilities for that, and frankly, I wouldn’t want to.

But on a related note, you’re going to get plenty of requests for accessories.”

Karl nodded. “I have a load of Overlord Ranked raw materials on hand, I just haven’t been focusing on making extra items, just custom orders.

We have an agreement not to sell higher Ranked items from the Guild Store in Drodh without a custom order.

In the past, I put a bunch of them on the shelves, and it caused some issues with exporters.”

Karl looked through the list of Alliance members from Totem Rank and higher. Over half of them were warriors, and the majority of the others were Mage and Shaman type spell casters. They didn’t have many Clerics at all, and most of the Shamans and Druids were tagged as healers in the Member Notes.

Karl noted that someone had tagged him as “Runemaster” and “Crafting Team Organizer” already, which seemed a bit ironic given how he had ended up in the Alliance.

They hadn’t even known the extent of the Darklight Host’s crafting skills until after the negotiations started.

“You said that you were going to take this lovely young lady to the Naga Temple, right? Why don’t I open a portal for you, and we can continue this chat there? The Naga will be going crazy over a new Queen for at least a day or two.” Hugo suggested.

Remi was confused. {Are there that few Naga Queens?}

Hugo chuckled. “There are under twenty of them. In total. On all four islands combined.”

Deve nodded in agreement. “There is roughly a five percent chance that a Naga Princess will become a true Naga Queen. Most tribes are led by Princesses. Some are even led by Shamans because they have no Royal Lineage left.”

{That sounds like they’re going to be annoying.} Remi muttered.

But she still wanted to see the temple.

“Please open the portal. I have a whole group of Naga waiting to show her the Temple, and we’ve made them wait a whole day already.” Karl suggested.

Hugo opened the portal to a small rocky hill overlooking a massive temple complex, the size of a village.

“Welcome, Queen Remi, to the Naga Temples. Now, where are the Naga who wanted to escort you? Did they say what entrance they would be at?”

Remi laughed. {We have them in a separate space.}

Karl opened the Tiny World, and the whole group exited, with the excited Naga leading the way.

“You weren’t joking, your group really is the envy of most Guilds.” Deve joked.

“Isn’t that a Behemoth?” One of the other leaders, a Warrior named Raj, asked.

Thor nodded. “I sink in the swamp if I don’t transform. It’s a really useful skill.”

The Guild Leaders didn’t miss that he lifted Tessa by the waist to lift her over swampy puddles, but they refrained from joking about the Behemoth’s obvious crush on the Priestess.

She clearly didn’t object.

The Naga search party leader eagerly shook Karl’s hand with both of his own.

{Thank you so much for bringing us right to the Temple. I will arrange somewhere for you to rest while we give Queen Remi the tour. Some areas are off limits to all but the Naga, and those are the ones where it is most important that the Queen visits.} He insisted.

“Alright, I have no problem with that. Remi, have fun. We will see you tonight.”

Remi nodded, then transformed back and realized that she was still draped over Karl. But she had transformed too early, it was muddy out here, and who knew what was in that mud?

Oh well, Eternal Lightning would keep it off her scales.

Chapter 1066: Naga Temple

The procession attracted huge amounts of attention from the Temple Guards as they approached with multiple Totems and five Mythic Guild Leaders in their number.

That was not the normal process, as each should be welcomed individually if they were going to visit the Temple.

But when they noticed that there was a Naga Queen leading the procession with one of their own at her side, the Temple Guard nearly forgot that they had duties other than as greeters. They all prostrated as she approached, and Karl felt Remi’s happiness at the chance to have random people worship her just for showing up.

[Don’t get used to it.] Karl reminded her.

[Just for a little bit. I mean, how often do I get to meet so many new Naga?]

Once Remi passed, the Temple Guard turned to the rest of the group and bowed politely, though not nearly as low.

{Welcome honoured guests. What brings you here today?} The Guard Captain asked.

“We are the Guild members and escorts accompanying Queen Remi. If you could find us a place to wait while she finishes her visit to the Temple, it would be appreciated.” Karl explained.

The Guard looked briefly confused, but nodded.

{Of course. We will arrange that now.}

[These Naga are acting particularly sketchy. If anything seems off, return straight to your space, don't wait to find out how bad things can get.] Karl informed Remi.

[Yeah, now that we're away from the group, all the worship is getting super creepy. People keep trying to touch me.]

Karl tried not to laugh at the mental image of bowing Naga reaching out to touch her scales as she slithered by.

The Temple Guard led them all to an empty dormitory full of small rooms around a large common area, similar to the ones at the Seminary Academy, or the Capital Cathedral. Rooms intended for simply sleeping, while everything else was done elsewhere.

But it had comfortable seating in the main room, and a pair of Naga in servant's uniforms waiting in the kitchen.

Hugo settled onto a recliner that groaned under his massive bulk, and turned his attention to Karl.

"Now, I don't suppose that you could make a few custom items while we wait?"

Karl shrugged. "I don't see why not. I have the materials. What did you need?"

The mage smiled. "I don't suppose that you can buff spell power directly with your skill, can you?"

Dana snorted in amusement. The man had set his expectations far too low.

"I think that I can come up with something suitable for a mage. I've got an Elven Steel bracelet here that will do the job."

Karl mentally worked out the best way to put Spell Damage, Skill Activation Speed, and Mana Cost Reduction on the item, then quickly carved them and empowered the runes.

The Guild Leaders watched with rapt attention as the runes flashed through the colours, then settled on inky black at Totem Rank.

It wasn't Epic Grade, just Rare due to the limited runes on it. But the combination was perfect for a mage.

"How is that? Better than what you have? Or should I try with something a bit more precious?" Karl asked.

It wasn't like they could possibly know that the outcome was based entirely on his efforts, not the actual materials.

Hugo turned the item over in his hands reverently as the others examined its System information.

"That is beautiful. Exactly what I was hoping for and more. Even though it's Totem Ranked and Rare Grade, it's still worlds better than the one that I have been using." Hugo agreed.

Then he took out a number of Mythic Ranked gems and metal bars.

"Suitable payment?" He asked.

“Perfect choice.” Karl agreed.

Deve cleared his throat, but Raj stepped in front of him with a challenging look.

Karl laughed. “Don’t worry, I have more bracelets to work with, I can make one for everyone easily enough. Just tell me what you want.”

“Strength, speed, skill power.” Raj insisted.

“What Hugo got looks good.” Deve replied, still giving the item envious looks.

The other pair of warriors gestured at Raj. “What he said. Warriors are simple creatures, and we’re all the main tanks for our Guild Raid teams.”

So, Karl got to work, first making a duplicate bracelet for Deve, and then starting on the Warrior Class specials. There was limited room for runes, and he couldn’t go overkill with Elven Steel, as it was an Overlord Ranked material, and he was already overloading it a little making Totem Ranked Rare items.

They had more material at the Totem Rank, but there hadn’t been any reason for anyone to use it with Karl gone. So, there were no premade items available.

Draconic Strength, Improved Agility, Skill Damage and Damage Reduction all complemented each other with a bit of Dwarven Poetry on Karl's part. Each of them might not be as high as only adding two or three buffs to the item, but as Karl added the mana, the bracelets were stable.

The effort of making three at a time left Karl panting, and gave the others the impression that was his daily limit. But the success was undeniable, and the three Warriors cheered as they looked at the identical items.

Even the percentage bonuses and flat damage reduction of 350 points were the same on them all.

That wasn't a lot of Damage Reduction, especially for Mythic Ranked warriors, but it was not a primary bonus for the items. The greatest of the bonuses was the extra strength, followed by the skill damage, which best matched with Draconic Strength.

"Well, Gentlemen? Is that what you needed? If not, I can try to make something different tomorrow." Karl offered.

The three Warriors shook their heads. "No, this is perfect. It's got everything that we wanted, plus a bit of damage reduction. Flat Damage reduction isn't worth nearly as much at Mythic Rank, but it's enough to nullify the damage from weaker creatures."

"Perfect. Now, did you want to stay here the night? Or are you heading home? I suspect that Remi will be a while." Karl asked.

“We will wait. Something is off about these Naga, and I suspect that if we leave, they will start to cause you trouble. Our Alliance agreement did say we’d help, so call this a preventative intervention.” Hugo insisted.

Chapter 1067: Remi’s Temple Tour

The pair of Naga servants looked vaguely nervous at his comment, but confused, as they hadn’t actually been informed of why this group was at the Temple. As the lowest ranked of Naga Workers, they didn’t even qualify to be told.

After all, a hundred more like them could easily be hatched if something happened.

[They’ve shown me the various historical sites, and now we’re going into the temple area for the Naga Shaman Goddess.

Oh, there is a shrine to my lucky statue lady here too.

Goddess Shaman Naga looks grumpy. I wonder who carved her? We need to have a talk.

Elemental spells are fun, she should be a smiling Goddess.

Oh, there’s a big ceremony thing.

Cleanse myself first? I can do that.]

Remi's narration made Thor and Cara laugh, especially when they realized that Remi had downed a long acting [Purification] potion before washing herself so that she wouldn't be affected by negative spells for at least the next hour, unless they were stronger than her potion.

As Remi started her ceremony to be properly introduced to the Naga Gods, a group of senior Naga Shamans came in to greet Karl's group.

"Thank you all for bringing the young Queen here. It is so rare that we get to meet a new member of an ancient Royal Family." Their leader announced, speaking Common with a heavy accent.

"You can continue in Serpent if you prefer. The System translates it without any issue." Karl suggested.

The aging Naga laughed and made a gesture towards himself.

{Unfortunately I do not have a System Interface.} He explained in Serpent.

Karl shrugged. "That's fine, I can understand you anyhow."

The Guild Leaders and the other members of his group all nodded. They had no problem understanding the Shaman.

{In that case, this becomes much less stressful for me.

Can any of you tell me of the origin of Queen Remi? Her Clan isn't listed in any of our records, and when we did a divining, something went wrong, and it said that her mother was born hundreds of thousands of years ago, but her egg only hatched a few years ago, likely less than three.}

Karl nodded. "Her egg was recovered from a Dungeon, and she was born as a Naga Spirit Snake. She then evolved to Princess, and later Queen as she gained power."

The Shaman was visibly shaking with excitement before he 'sat down', collapsing onto his coiled body, and the servants brought him a cup of tea.

{So, she is from an original pure Naga bloodline. That explains so much. But you are certain that her egg was from the Dungeon? Not a Monster Spawn Anomaly?} He asked after a few moments to calm himself.

Karl nodded. "It was definitely a dungeon."

The other Shamans made notes and discussed the possibilities as the servants brought around food for the group.

{That is wonderful. The Dungeons were formed ages ago, so Queen Remi won't have been affected at all by the generational changes and selective breeding over the many centuries.} One of the Shamans declared.

"I take it that is important to you?" Karl asked.

The Shamans all nodded eagerly. {It has become nearly impossible for most Royal Families to even reproduce enough Royals to keep their population up, much less expand to fill in the gaps in the depleted tribes.

An original Queen should be able to hatch an entire clutch of Princesses at will.}

The Shaman saw the confusion on the faces of most of the group, and decided to elaborate.

{The majority of Naga evolution determinations are decided before hatching by the Queen or Naga Mother that birthed them. Only, they can't choose a Rank above their own. So, Warrior and Servant mothers can't make Royal Guards, Shamans, or Royals.}

Karl shook his head in dismay. "If you're hoping that Remi will have a clutch for you, you are likely to be disappointed. She's still quite young, and it will take quite the Naga Warrior to impress her.

Well, unless you've got a Naga King like her father."

The Naga looked startled. They didn't recall Kings being a part of Naga culture at all. Male Shamans, sure. But they weren't Royals.

{Can you describe this Naga King?} The elder Shaman asked.

"Sure. He had some Elemental abilities, water based. He was three times the size of a full-grown Shaman Queen, and massively physically strong. He was the boss of the Dungeon where we found Remi's egg. There is no question about the status, as the Dungeons are excellent about naming their occupants." Karl explained.

Two of the Shamans raced out of the room, which alarmed the Myths. But the elder Shaman held up his hands in a placating gesture.

{They've just gone to the Library to look for historical references to a King among Naga. Our society is Matriarchal, a male Royal is something new to us.}

Lotus tapped the table to get their attention. "Maybe that's why you're having problems keeping up the Royal lines? Nobody made any male Royals, so there are no men strong enough to be worthy of a proper Queen?

Like, with Dire Bears. If the male is too weak, the female simply kills him for insulting her with his advances. He wouldn't be able to make strong enough children. But a grizzled old former Alpha bear, well, past his prime and barely mobile, doesn't get the same treatment from the females, even though he would struggle against the weaker males in a fight."

The Shamans considered her proposal. A servant of the Green Dragon understood animal nature very well, so they couldn't just discount that the genetic imperative might apply in their case as well.

But if that was true, it could derail their plans.

How could they convince a true Queen to help them with their lineage issues, when they didn't have a male present that she would deem worthy? And what would happen if someone tried to force the issue?

Queen Remi was only an Overlord, but she had powerful friends.

Chapter 1068: Naga King?

The first of the Shaman Elders returned within a minute, pointing excitedly at a picture in a book that appeared to be an ancient book of Naga Fairytales.

{I found it. There was a Naga King. THE Naga King. He was a Legendary Rank hero from another world who saved the Naga race from the aggression of the Lizardfolk Warlord Sshithssal. Then he simply vanished.

I know it's just a story, but it might be based on reality.

If there were a pure Royal Lineage, with both male and female Royals, then we really might have lost something important.} He blurted out before his body had even stopped swaying from the sudden stop.

Lotus nodded in satisfaction. She knew that her knowledge would be correct, even if she didn't know the Naga that well.

[Remi, how are things going?] Karl asked.

[They're doing some sort of ceremony to wake the Shaman Goddess so that I can be instated as a full Queen of the Naga.] Remi replied, distractedly.

Lotus pulled the edge of the book down so she could see it, then stole the ancient tome from the Shaman and turned it to face the group.

"Look, it's that guy!"

She was right. That image was definitely of the Naga King in the Dungeon. Every detail was exact, so whoever had drawn it had seen him.

"I believe that the story was not quite what you expected. That drawing is exactly the same as the Naga King in the dungeon, right down to the markings on his head. So, I think that whoever wrote it had been there, and had made up the story afterward to explain what they had seen."

{So, it's real. It's really real, and verified that a Naga King once existed.} The elder Shaman breathed quietly.

He was lost in thought, but the other Shamans waited for him, as they all had much to process before they said or did anything else.

Oddly, it was one of the servants who connected the dots first out of anyone.

{Master Solomon? If the young Queen was placed in a dungeon by the Gods, what will happen when the welcoming ceremony ends?} She whispered, but not quietly enough for Karl and the majority of the group to miss it.

The Shamans were immediately alarmed. How were they supposed to know that? What if the Goddess was upset that someone had brought her out? Worse, what if she sided with Queen Remi and turned on the Temple residents?

There was an ancient school of thought that the Dungeons were actually a preservation method, to remind people what the original members of the various cultures lived and looked like.

Had the other Shamans already informed her of the breeding program? Or had they wanted to wait until after she was initiated and the Goddess' influence was stronger?

[The Shaman Goddess is really friendly. She says that there is a reverse scale to the Apocalypse spell, and Brother Hawk is going to hate it.] Remi cheered.

[So, their ritual worked?] Karl asked, while watching the Shamans silently conferring about the servant's speculation.

[Yep, it worked well. It's not done yet, though. She says I'm going to get a present.]

The Shaman Elders were looking nervous, and the Guild Leaders all gave Karl matching 'This is about to get sketchy' sorts of looks. But before anyone said anything, a surge of Divine power from the far side of the complex slammed into them.

The Naga prostrated themselves, and everyone under Totem Rank was forced to their knees, while Karl resisted the urge, but bowed under the pressure.

The Mythic Guild Members were showing the strain as well, but they were all seated, so their positions didn't change much.

Then, the power was gone, and the distinct feeling of an advancement filled Remi's space.

Sudden shouts of panic filled the temple complex, and then alarms began to blare while someone began to ring a gong, causing chaos in the room.

"What is happening?" Deve demanded as he leapt to his feet with sword and shield in his hand.

The elder Shaman flailed his hands wildly. {Please calm down. I don't know what happened yet. That is the emergency alarm, but they are ringing the gongs for intruders on the loose inside the city, instead of the bell for invasion.

Our Temple Guards will protect this area, please rest assured that you are in no immediate danger.}

In her space, Remi downed one of her own diluted advancement potions in an attempt to stabilize her advancement and get a bit of extra power boost, then watched the situation from Karl's point of view.

It was only getting more intense outside, and then an explosion in one of the temples alerted Karl to the fact that this might not just be about Remi vanishing from the Temple.

That had been his first assumption, and the reaction of the Naga would have been somewhat justified. But it appeared that they really were having issues.

The sound of explosions became the sound of combat in the streets, and then guards were surrounding the building. They barricaded the doors, locking the Elder Shamans inside with Karl and his group.

Deve gave Karl a confused shrug. "Well, it looks like we're not the threat they were so worried about."

The elder Shaman turned to him. {What do you mean?}

"You've all been acting off all day, and we thought that you might be trying to abduct one of our allied Guild members. But that doesn't seem to be the case." The Druid explained.

The Naga looked embarrassed. {Well, I admit we intended to ask her to stay with us, but there was no violence in the plan. Do you have contact with her? Is the young Queen alright? Is she in danger?}

Karl smiled and shook his head. "When she advanced, she went home to consolidate her gains. She's not in any danger."

One of the Shaman Elders sighed, while the servants quietly laughed. The Elders had been talking all day about how they had such big plans to recruit the Queen to stay at the Temple, and she just went home when she got what she wanted. So fast that nobody could even try to stop her.

It was very much Regal behaviour. The opinions of lesser Naga were irrelevant when they contradicted her will.

Of course, they didn't know that Karl meant a separate mental space right here. The assumption that everyone else, including the Guild Leaders, had made was that she had returned to Drodh.

After an advancement, it could take days before your power was stable enough to be fully active, and most people preferred to sleep off the change in their own bed if possible.

Which was exactly what Remi planned to do.

But on her altar, with the new statue of the Naga Shaman Goddess she had obtained to accompany the old lucky statue she had.

Chapter 1069: A True Queen

The Shaman Elders quickly came to the same realization that the servants had. Remi was a true Naga Queen, and she had dismissed their opinions as less important than the stabilization of her advancement.

The best that they could hope for now was to convince her people to bring her back for a visit, where they could try to recruit her again, or at least convince her to stay for one clutch so that they could spread Royals to some of the declining tribes.

Without intervention, they would surely fail. But there weren't many options when most of the Royal lines could hardly produce a successor at all.

So, they tried to convey the urgency of the situation to Karl, who appeared to be her closest ally.

{Totem Karl, please relay an urgent request from us to Queen Remi. I know this might be very forward, but it is imperative to the survival of many of the tribes that they find a new Royal Lineage to continue.}

He paused as if unsure how to phrase the next part.

{We would like to ask Queen Remi to part with a clutch of Royal eggs so that they might repopulate the Royal Families of our declining tribes.}

In her space, Remi snorted in amusement. They thought that they could just pass her eggs around like party favours? That was not how it worked at all. A Queen could only be born in circumstances that were worthy of them.

If the tribe was disloyal and had forgotten the old ways, they would never have a Queen.

The Goddess had said so.

If they weren't so stuck on their delusions that the Shaman Elders could 'guide Naga society' they would realize that it was their Divine Mistress, Serpent Lady of the Swamps and Seas, that was the true deciding factor behind Naga Society's future.

Karl caught most of her thoughts, though she was too drowsy to relay them clearly.

"I have relayed the message, and Queen Remi has a response, of sorts. She says that it might be possible in the future, but no Queen can be born to a weak tribe, or one that puts others above the will of the Divine Mistress of the Swamps and Seas." Karl relayed.

The Shaman Elders all froze in shock.

{That name, how do you know it?}

Karl blinked slowly, wondering if the day's events had shocked them too much. There was, after all, a massive battle raging through their Temple complex, and they were more concerned about getting Royal eggs.

Before Karl could answer, Lotus snapped her fingers and gestured wildly as she came to some realization.

“I get it now. That’s why this place feels funny. It’s a zoo. A Naga Zoo, where the young are raised in captivity and domesticated.”

The Shamans looked somewhere between horrified and offended.

{We are not zookeepers. We are raising the future Royals to know their duties to the people and Naga Society.} One of them retorted.

Lotus shook her head. “No, I am right. They’re being taught to follow orders and submit. That’s not right, it goes against the Divine Magic of this place.”

The Elders were about to explode with rage, but the senior among them, raised his hand in a cautioning gesture.

{The Green Dragon’s Priestess speaks her truth.

Indeed, the Naga have become civilized with the times. No longer are we feral tribes building shrines in the swamps and seas. We travel, we trade, and most importantly, we have forgotten that the Shaman Elders are not leaders of the Naga.

We are servants of our Goddess. First, foremost, and only.}

Lotus nodded happily. That was the right answer, even if he didn't believe it or intend to give up his power.

Karl patted Lotus on the shoulder. "Queen Remi agrees. The tribes no longer follow the ways of their Goddess, so they are losing her blessings. Even with the System active again, if their patron doesn't favour them, then the Royals will continue to fail to become Queens."

A glimmer of soul energy caught Karl's attention, and he motioned for Rae to grab whatever was hiding in the corner.

It turned out to be a tiny Spirit Snake, a hatchling that had hidden from the battle in a corner of the roof, then made its way inside.

Karl took the startled snake from Rae and gently stroked its head as he considered the next step.

"Can you tell me who is attacking your Temples? It could be important." He asked the Elders.

The Shaman Elder looked embarrassed. "It appears to be one of the Naga Tribes that was visiting. I don't have a reason for the attack yet, but they appear to be targeting one of the dormitories and a secondary temple."

“A particularly traditional tribe?” Karl asked, leading the Shaman Elders to the desired answer.

The Elder nodded. {As you say, they were resistant to the idea of having their young Shamans trained at the Temple. The council determined that they had strayed from the Goddess’ teachings, so their next generation of leaders was brought here for proper education.}

Deve sighed and shook his head. “You realize how that sounds from our side, right? It sounds a lot like you abducted the heirs to their tribes, to indoctrinate them into your version of the Naga traditions.”

The Shaman Elder shook his head. {It’s not like that. Their tribe was falling into savagery. If we didn’t act, they would have been wiped out by their neighbours.}

The Mythic Ranked Druid shrugged. “Sounds like they don’t agree. But as the matter doesn’t concern us, we won’t get involved in Naga Politics.”

The tiny snake in Karl’s hands bobbed its head in agreement.

{Well spoken, Druid. The Goddess approves of your stance.}

Karl considered setting the Spirit Snake down so that she could properly address the crowd, but she seemed to have a high level of affinity for head pats, and actively rubbed against his hand when he stopped.

For a moment the Shamans were confused, then one of them realized what had happened.

{Princess. Call off your tribe. Violence against the temples is not the way of the Goddess.}

Chapter 1070: Is All About The Attitude

The tiny Spirit Snake laughed, shaking in Karl's hand with amusement at the Shaman Elder's assertion.

{Why don't you ask the Goddess to expel us from her Temple? Surely, if your ways are the right way, she will protect her loyal Shamans?} The little Princess asked.

The Shaman Elder visibly calculated the chances that Karl would not interfere if he attacked the little snake. It was only Commander Rank, a tiny obnoxious little Royal that he could squish with a single strike.

But the battle was getting more intense in the compound, and the fighting was getting closer to where they were now.

One of the other Elders pushed forward to address Karl directly.

{Can we count on you to do the right thing, if there is no peaceful resolution?} He asked, but his tone made it more of a demand that expected to be obeyed.

“Let me confer with the Goddess.” Karl replied.

The Elders looked confused as Karl borrowed the new Goddess statue from Remi’s space for a moment and placed it in his other hand, while still holding the Spirit Snake up.

“What do you think?” He asked the statue, with a small pulse of mana into the carving of an offering in its hands.

The image of a six-armed Naga Shaman Goddess appeared in front of him, then dissipated into a blue Water Magic barrier over the tiny snake.

“I think that’s our answer.” Karl replied with a shrug, then gave Remi back her statue so she could finish stabilizing her power.

The Shamans stared in shock at Karl, and even the tiny Spirit Snake was frozen in confusion.

{Did you just get a direct answer from the Goddess to your question?} The little Princess asked quietly.

“Of course. That’s kind of how Holy Relics work. As long as you ask them the right question and offer them some mana in good faith, they’ll give some sign as to their opinion.

Though, I would note that no answer is an answer of its own.” Karl explained.

The Spirit Snake tilted her head in confusion. {How is that?}

“Haven’t you ever met someone who asked questions that weren’t worth a response? Not even a flicker of recognition?” Karl asked.

Deve and Lotus began to laugh, while Tessa and Ophelia shared a knowing look.

Lotus was one hundred percent guilty of being that person on many occasions. But it made her happy to ask, even if she’d already made up her mind to do the thing anyhow.

The young Spirit Snake was looking at Karl as if he knew the wisdom of the universe, and even the Shaman Elders had to smile. It was a bit more complex than that, but surely the young one would remember this day for the rest of their life.

As short as it might be.

They were about to take action when the doors swung open and the Temple Guards slithered in, followed by two younger Shamans and a Naga Princess who looked a lot like Remi had before her colouration had changed at Overlord Rank.

Karl’s first thought was that this meant the battle was over, and the insurrection had been handled, but the look on the faces of the Elders said that was not the case.

{Hi, Mom. I made a new friend. He's friends with Queen Remi, and the Goddess answers his questions.}
The Spirit Snake greeted their new guest.

{That's nice darling.} The newly arrived Princess replied, clearly confused by the situation.

Then she turned to the Elder Shamans. {Greetings, honoured Elders. I believe you will find that there have been some changes made around the Temple today. The Goddess is most pleased with the change of management, but it does come with some restructuring.

Your managerial roles will no longer be needed. However, we will be blessed to keep you on as advisors to assist the future of the Naga with your decades of wisdom.

Guards, kindly escort the advisors back to their rooms. I believe that they require a good night's rest. Tomorrow will be a long day for everyone.}

The Shaman Elders were shocked when their own guards turned on them, politely but firmly leading them out of the building, where Karl could still hear some lingering battles.

Then another group of Naga Royals entered, before looking around the room in confusion.

{Should there not be one more Queen here?} One of them asked.

The little Spirit snake popped her head up to get noticed.

{Queen Remi is sleeping off her Totem Rank advancement.} She replied helpfully.

The Totem Ranked Princess nodded. {That is understandable. I take it that you are all friends of the young Queen? It appears that she's in good hands, with those who respect the will of the Gods.

If you would like to remain here, we will ensure your safety during the transition of the Temple.}

Hugo shook his head. "I think that we've done what we came here for, and I really don't feel like getting caught in the middle of a political transition. So, if Karl will turn over the young snake, I will open a portal to our Guild House in Zilaz, and we can continue our introductions to the rest of the ranking members of the Guild Alliance."

The Spirit Snake was startled. She had forgotten that Karl's hand was more than a warm and soft place to rest, and that it would inevitably leave with him.

She quickly slid down his arm and across the floor to climb up her mother, another safe perch where she could still see what was going on, and relay the heroic tale of her spy activities.

While omitting the part where she was instantly caught by Karl's friend.

“Good luck with your work here. We can catch up in the future if I happen to cross your territory, or see you again when Remi returns to confer with the Goddess.” Karl informed the Naga Royals.

{Perhaps we will see you again. Once you have met once, it seems much more likely that fate will pull you together again in the future.} The Spirit Snake’s mother agreed.

Then, Hugo opened a large portal, so he didn’t have to duck to walk through, and led the way out of the Naga Temple.