

Beast Master 1091

Chapter 1091: Bring The Tanks

Hugo arrived within ten minutes, accompanied by a group of six Overlord Ranked warriors with powerful builds.

"Miss Dana, thank you for the update. I brought the primary tanks from the twenty-five and forty person Overlord Raid teams. Both teams struggle to keep enough healers, as they run multiple times a week." Hugo greeted her as one of the Gargoyles opened the door for him.

"Is that a gargoyle?" One of the warriors asked, then paused halfway through reaching down to pet the small creature.

"Indeed it is. They're friendly if you're friendly, though." Dana agreed.

The Warrior smiled and ran his hand down the Gargoyle's furry back as he followed the group in.

"So, the Darklight Host has three clerics, a Mage subclass and a Bear Tank Berserker at the Overlord Rank now. Ask what you need to know." Hugo informed his Warriors.

The Warriors looked at the group, and decided to start with Dana and Ophelia.

"What are your specialties?" A dragonkin man with scales down one side of his face asked.

"I am a Mystic Blademaster, so my specialty is a pair of Golems with [Auto Parry] and greatly increased attack speed. I can fight either at short range or long, but the Golems are best up close." Dana replied.

"My new class is Ursine Avenger, and it's actually specialized in group damage reduction and self-healing in giant Dire Bear form." Ophelia added.

"Group Damage Reduction?" The tank asked.

"I have [Limited Invulnerability] and a skill to redirect a portion of group damage to myself. So, I can tank a portion of the damage that the whole group would normally take, and shrug it off, as long as the transferred damage pulses aren't more than Limited Invulnerability can deal with.

If it gets too much, I can turn that off, but I am quite durable, and I have Bestial Regeneration as well, so I don't need too much healing."

The Warrior chuckled. "So, you're saying that you're actually best suited as a Main Tank, but you prefer an off tank, or support warrior role? Alright, we can work with that."

Ophelia smiled. Being the main tank came with requirements of knowledge and guidance. They were the team leaders by default, as they were responsible for keeping the monsters under control.

So, she wasn't at all upset about a role as supporting damage reduction and crowd control.

"I'm a healing tree." Lotus informed the group of tanks proudly, then laughed at their confused expressions.

"[Tree of Life] healing transformation. I specialize in large area and long duration healing." She elaborated.

Tessa nodded politely at the group. "I can heal as well as any other Cleric, but Red Dragon Clerics specialize in combat buffs, increasing the damage and defence of the group. I am a capable combatant when needed, but I don't lack for healing."

Finally, Nachtia shrugged. "I'm an Overlord Ranked Black Dragon. I can heal, I can kill. Both please the goddess. I don't have as many area healing spells as Lotus, but I do have significant area damage abilities."

Now that she thought about it, she should get Karl to teach her those healing totems. They would be incredibly useful in a Dungeon setting. Hopefully, she could use them, as they were a nature oriented spell, and she was generally considered the reverse scale of all things natural.

Quinn, the warrior who had been doing the questioning, smiled at the group. "Well, that's a pleasant change from most of the other Clerics. The White Dragon Clerics are very 'We heal, what more do you want?' and the healing Shamans are always out of mana."

Lotus shrugged. "We've all gotten so used to having [Eternal Lightning] on us in this group that we don't even have to think about mana in most fights. Even the mages struggle to run out with that level of regeneration. But even without it, my spells are very efficient, and I've got a huge amount of mana cost reduction and added healing on my gear."

"Is that something you can do while in another group?" Quinn asked, confused.

Lotus shrugged. "Maybe. We can ask the Karl to make us something with the spell on it, so the healers don't run out of mana. Usually, Thor casts it. The behemoth."

The warrior looked confused. "You have a behemoth tanking for the group?"

Lotus frowned. "Of course not. Tessa rides him into combat. The golems tank."

Karl resisted the urge to laugh as the whole group of Overlords tried to determine how their whole battle strategy worked. How could they have Golems doing all the tanking while they had a Behemoth and a giant Dire Bear in the group?

Where did they even deploy?

"Oh, next time, we should have Rae make her Spectral Knights tank. There are a bunch of them, and they've got shields." Lotus added helpfully.

Karl patted her head. "We're talking about you and the others joining Overlord Ranked missions, and Rae is a Totem now. It would be a bit unfair to let her loose in an Overlord Ranked Dungeon."

Quinn chuckled. "Just how many summoned helpers does your group have in total?"

Lotus quickly counted on her fingers. "Dana's five, Karl's five, Rae has two plus the dozen or so undead, then Remi has two. So, twenty?"

Quinn blinked slowly at her attempt to do math.

It was a good thing that the Green Dragon had chosen this one, she had given up on the calculations halfway through.

"So, with just the six of you, you've got a whole raid team worth of fighters? Or, at least melee combat golems?"

Lotus nodded. "But some of them are advanced ones that can use magic from a distance."

The Warrior sighed. "If only they were all still Overlords. We could steam roll the Dungeon."

Hugo shrugged. "I'm sure that the Totem Rank teams will be plenty happy to have him once he finishes with the backlog of orders that we placed."

The Warriors rolled their eyes at him while he wasn't looking their way.

There was no 'we' as far as they were concerned. They hadn't gotten a chance to make custom orders like the more powerful members had. They just bought out what they could from the Guild Store and hoped for the best in the next round of restocked items.

Chapter 1092: Dosage Issues

Quinn and the other Overlord Ranked warriors conferred quietly for a moment, then made an offer to the ladies.

"We can make enough spots in a twenty-five-person run, if you're confident that you can do the job. Then, once we have seen what you can do, we can work out how to arrange things for future runs." He offered.

Tessa nodded. "That works for us. We're good as a five-person team, though we might be a bit short on damage compared to some teams. So, I think that you shouldn't have any issues finding teams that we could fit with, even if it was just for the larger teams."

Quinn nodded. "If you won't need a new team for the five-person dungeons, then we can just slot you into the larger teams for the time being. We need the healing, and there's always room for more classes that aren't warrior."

The others nodded in agreement. Warrior skills didn't leave a lot of versatility. They were all using the same set of basic skills, and very few of them had managed to find a way to gain an advanced class.

Out of those who did, they were mostly Paladins, which still made them main tanks, but with a bit of side healing.

That was useful, but not really a change from the basic warrior template.

"Alright, when does the next group go to the Dungeon?" Dana asked.

They were all advanced now, and eager to test out their skills as a group. Especially without Thor and Karl buffing them and the group to invincibility.

Not that they were unappreciative of the protection, but sometimes you needed to know just what you were capable of on your own. Tessa had already explained that to Thor, who was eager to come along with them.

Letting Tessa go to battle without him just didn't feel right.

"The next run is tomorrow afternoon. It takes about two hours, and we prefer to go after lunch when the morning rush has died down. There is a toll on the way out, so we use the group loot function of the System Interface, and it drops all the loot at the end for the team to sort." Quinn explained.

Tessa shrugged. "That makes sense. It's easier than having to go through everyone and risk someone starting trouble or pretending they got less than they did. The collectors surely know what their share of the run's loot should be."

"Wonderful. If you would like to join us, I will let the others know, and we can shuffle the team to give some of the members a day off. They've been working overtime to make up for the healer shortage.

Normally, everyone only goes twice a week, so they don't burn out.

But some of the more highly demanded classes, like tanks, healers, and Golem Spec mages get much more frequent requests.

Especially healers.

We will apologize in advance for the fact that you're likely going to get a message every day requesting one or more healers for Alliance runs."

Lotus winked at him. "If they're desperate, they can come over to plead their case. We can have cake and coffee."

Quinn laughed. "I can see how this ends now. The Warriors come to plead for a healer, the Nature Priestess gets to meet new people and throw a tea party, and then someone goes off to do the run."

Lotus nodded in satisfaction.

"If you show up at just the right time, you might even get to test new and experimental potions."

Quinn frowned. "Why does that sound more like a threat?"

Lotus shrugged. "Remi is at zero deaths so far. Plus, she's come up with some really cool things. Like the scent repellant soap, the anti-aging cream, and even a cure for baldness."

One of the warriors cleared his throat, and Lotus giggled. "There is stock in the Guild Store. You can buy a bottle if you need. It's a cream, and it works really well, so don't go overboard."

A small container of cream appeared in the man's hand a second later, and he took off his hat, revealing the fully bald top of his head, despite his apparent youth.

The man slathered the entire small tub of cream on his head, while Lotus laughed.

"I take it that is a prank product?" Quinn asked.

"It is when you use it like that. Just watch."

Over the next ten seconds, thick black hair began to sprout from his head, while his body heat softened the cream, which began to drip down his forehead and cheeks.

But the man was so intently watching the sprouting hair that he didn't bother to do anything about it.

His baldness was long gone, and the new hair growth was rapidly exceeding the length of Lotus' own pixie cut. But the real changes were in his eyebrows and his scraggly, youthful beard.

As the formerly bald warrior began to focus on the fact that he had used too much cream, he decided to wipe it away. First on his face, not realizing that his beard growth was only moments behind the hair on his head, then he panicked and tried putting it back in the container.

However, the cream expanded as it warmed, and the little jar rapidly filled with creamy liquid.

While he tried to salvage the situation, his beard began to sprout. First a youthful goatee, then a bushy mountain man beard, and finally into full Dwarven Majesty.

"The magic of the cream is used up after you apply it, no need to try to salvage it." Lotus informed the panicked warrior, who now sported more hair than most of the beastkin, despite being a half-blooded dragonkin.

"Bro... that beard is epic." One of the other warriors informed him, trying and failing to take the situation seriously.

"How long does this effect last?" The now hairy warrior asked, not calming down at all.

"It's just hair. If you don't want so much, just trim it. But the hairline should last at least a few years. It just resets it back to your natural hairline, so you'll lose it again naturally, but not right away." Karl explained, as Lotus was laughing too hard at the man's still growing hair.

Chapter 1093: Always Time To Snack

Lotus brought out a tray of small sandwiches and placed it on the table.

"If we've got a few hours before the run, we have time for a snack. Come, sit down, and let's talk about the Dungeon." She insisted.

Hugo motioned to Karl, suggesting that they should leave.

Karl nodded and gestured to the new crafters. "Let's bring you down to the basement and get you working in your proper shops. Guild Master, would you like to join us? I will be spending some time working while the others head off to test their skills."

"Of course. It's always interesting to watch a master in action, even if I don't know exactly what you are doing." Hugo agreed.

When they got downstairs, the Gargoyles greeted them happily, bumping up against the new arrivals for attention, and Karl realized that their personality certainly wasn't set by the spell, as the group at the Guild House were very silent and serious, sitting on the walls watching for intruders.

These ones were happy to meet people, as long as someone from the Guild was with them.

"This is our workspace?" One of the new arrivals asked in wonder.

"Actually, this is the landing area. There is a portal to the Drodh Guild House over there, and this area is security before you pass through to the work areas or the Villa. If you exit the maze, you will be in the actual room." Karl explained.

"What a fascinating use of the Illusionary Domain spell. What happens if someone breaks the domain?" Hugo asked.

"Then they get to deal with the defensive barriers and a dozen enraged Gargoyles. The other end is a single target platform to our Guild House, so I'm not expecting too much trouble through this portal." Karl agreed.

Hugo smiled. "It would be quite the convenience for the Warriors, though. The ability to go all the way to Drodh in a single jump."

"The great disadvantages to being a warrior, you're at the mercy of the Mages to get around more quickly. But as I can use the Portal spell, it's more about the amount of the world that I have seen than the actual distance." Karl agreed.

Hugo shook his head in response to Karl's comment. "No, I meant that the Naraledum Lake Region is notoriously hard to travel in and out of with magic, due to the instability from the Dungeon Portals. Most mages have to go to Sholaha City first to get far enough away to use a longer range spell.

Well, that or go to Khizdila in Nulnalgat. But that attracts too much attention when it's a Mythic group going somewhere.

So, we usually send assistants when we need something, and that is a gigantic headache. But with your people in the Alliance, we can likely request someone as a personal shopper, to deliver to your house here for our people to pick up.

Even if there is a substantial delivery fee, it will most likely be cheaper than getting it locally for anything under Overlord Ranked, and who needs to do that much expensive shopping?"

Karl nodded. "I get it now. Because of the fees, everything is balanced around the income from Totem and Mythic Dungeons. So, even the most common of items are expensive."

Hugo nodded. "If we pick them up in Sholaha, we can save a bit. But who has time to search out a powerful mage to go get toiletries and new socks? Plus, you need to be good friends to convince someone to go shopping for socks with you."

Karl laughed. "We've got staff at the Guild House, and I can hire one or two more so that they can do all the shopping you need. It might make the front room look a bit like a general store, but I would prefer to only send Guild Members through that portal, as it leads to a secure location, and the guards there wouldn't react well to strangers."

Hugo shrugged. "That's fine by me. If they don't live here, they don't have to be paid the full local rate, either. It will make delivery cheaper. I can give you a map of the compound, so they can do door to door deliveries as well. I'm sure that our Alliance members probably tip better than Drodh Food Delivery workers usually get."

Karl sent a brief message to Caretaker Jo, informing her of the situation, and the Demoness was quick to respond that she could add it to the morning routine.

[Hire two more shoppers. Mara is too small to do all the deliveries, even with a cart. There are a thousand Guild members here who need random stuff. You can let her deliver it to the house here if you want.]

Mara, the small gecko lizardfolk girl they had taken in as the caretaker's apprentice, was under a metre and a half tall, and not yet ten years old. While she had the enthusiasm, she was not well suited to carrying supplies up the stairs.

It was a moment before Jo replied. [The Kitchen staff have someone in mind to be our full-time errand runner. They have a Class, so they can put the items in inventory, and then Wendy has volunteered to do the deliveries.

She's quite excited to see the new location, and all the people who have been on the road.]

Wendy was a Commander Rank member of the Runecrafting team, so she was actually quite busy. But she was also very fond of seeing new things and learning new magic. Both of which were common here.

The assistants had mostly finished exploring the garden, and were headed out the sides of the hedge maze, while Hugo waited for Karl to finish his silent conversation.

"I've got it all sorted. They'll hire two shoppers, and then my apprentice will bring the goods here to make the deliveries."

"You have an apprentice? Not just Guild Crafters, like these ones?"

Karl smiled. "Well, I am a bit neglectful. But there are a few who are closer than others. One of the sculptors and one of the Runecrafting apprentices. You'll see when she arrives.

Do you have an initial shopping list?"

Hugo looked sheepish as he held out the paper. As he had said, it was a bit embarrassing to ask a powerful mage to go shopping for necessities.

Chapter 1094: Armor For Raj

Karl forwarded the list to Jo, who promised him it would be there within an hour.

There was nothing on the list that couldn't be bought in bulk within a ten-minute walk from the house, as the shops in the area specialized in loading full merchant caravans.

There would be a small extra fee, as the shoppers needed to go in and out of the city, but Karl was happy to cover that, and it would still be within the budget that Hugo had set.

It was a concerning amount of product, though. Hopefully, the shoppers had a class that let them store bulk goods. But Karl wondered how Wendy was going to deal with it.

Well, that could be a test for her, since she volunteered.

But Wendy had a secret weapon. She had purchased four storage rings, to supplement her inventory, and now she had the chance to show them off as she loaded them up with deliveries.

"What are you making next?" Hugo asked as Karl led him toward the exit of the maze.

"First, a gift for my apprentice. Then I'm going to start on the armour that our Grandmaster Blacksmith just finished.

I transferred him plenty of high-end materials, and he spent all night making a full suit of plate armour with fire and poison resistance capped out, per the request of most of the Totem Ranked tanks.

If this is satisfactory, he will make the metal armours that the Mythic Warriors requested. It will just take a day or two per suit."

Hugo looked a bit embarrassed. "I know that we're holding up production. But I'm not going to apologize for the request."

"Don't feel bad. The shop is always busy with something. Plus, I've now got an Overlord Ranked Nature Cleric who can make wooden weapons when we need them. The magical wood holds runes very well, and I can make a half dozen an hour if I need." Karl explained.

The transfer was made to the Store's storage, but it wasn't just the one set. One suit of armour was obviously made by Ashbringer, but there were ten more made to a slightly lower quality standard, out of the same materials.

[Ashbringer, did you learn a new trick?] Karl asked.

The Demon laughed as he replied. [I could only wish. But no, I hired a Dwarven Forge in the outer city. Their levels aren't high, but they're Dwarves, so the craftsmanship is pretty good and the price is reasonable, as they're still considered Journeymen.

You can deal with the upgrading of the pieces, and the material alone will give it a solid base. We all win. The armour is made on a budget, with a bit of extra material. They get their skills and Ranks improved, as they have the Dwarven Smith as their class.]

The Darklight Host was slowly taking over Drodh.

[I will give you permissions to take Apprentices into the Guild, if you want to make them part of our team permanently. One Grandmaster will not be enough forge workers to keep up with demand.

Not even for the Alliance.

Once they start actually using this armour, they're going to put it through hell, and that means sending it back for regular repairs.] Karl reminded him.

[Alright, I will think about it. How many spaces do we have?]

[A hundred in total for the branch, so we've got around seventy left. Don't worry about a shop worth of new workers if they want to join.]

The garden vanished as Karl stepped through the arched exit of the maze, and he was left standing on one side of the large room, where the Runecrafters were sorting through all the wooden accessories that had been made by the Orcish Druids at the Drodh house.

They were simple, but they had been working on their creation skills, and the outer surface looked like entwined vines.

That was likely because that was how they were actually made, before the inner surface was smoothed to be used as bracelets and rings. But it was good enough for their Royal Rank bulk items.

Karl moved to an empty table and brought out the suit that Ashbringer had created.

"Oh, that is nice. I can see why your smith takes his time, even though he could stamp out plates with magic much faster." Hugo noted.

Karl nodded. "Yeah, it also helps the armour's base stats before I start modifying them. Poor craftsmanship with expensive materials is mostly just wasteful. If we were making Royal Ranked armour, he would have the ability to just press them out in a die. But if we're going to make it into something decent, we all need to put in the work."

Hugo watched silently as Karl worked, covering the entire inside of the armour with runes. The armour was just so receptive to the magic that he decided to make it a Totem Ranked and Totem Grade item for the Mythic Warriors.

If he could get their work out of the way first, it would be best. They were the major income source for the Alliance, so everyone benefitted when they got more efficient.

Karl finished and nodded in satisfaction at the suit in front of him.

{Item Created} Totem Rank, Totem Grade, [Indestructible Plate of the Stalwart Defender] Adds 1400 points of Damage Reduction, Reduces Damage Taken by 2%, 10% bonus to Movement Speed, 20 Percent Resistance to Poison and Fire Element attacks. [Additional Effects] Self Repair Level 7, [Earth Shield] Elemental barrier Skill

Hugo hummed as he stared at the armour. "That is truly impressive, and it comes with its own barrier skill. That's not something that most warriors get, so how are you going to decide who gets it?"

Karl smiled and took out the list from the other night. "First come, first served. And if there are any complaints about that, I will blame Deve. At the very least, he can take a punch."

Hugo laughed, knowing that the same was true of Karl.

"Well, that makes sense. What happened to the plan of making armour for the Totems first?"

Karl shrugged. "The combination of metals just worked out too well. So, I went all out. In fact, I'll likely do the same for the other sets that I have today. They're not as fancy, but if they get the same stats, I can just give this one to Raj, and claim that it's because he's Guild Master, and not because I only had one like it in stock."

Hugo gave a full bellied laugh, holding his sides.

"I think that's a trade secret that you're not supposed to share with others. But I am certain that Guild Master Raj will approve of getting the fanciest of the suits."

Come to think of it, there were two other warriors among the Guild Masters. Well, supply issues would have to serve as an excuse for everything.

Chapter 1095: Wendy's Delivery

Wendy arrived just after Karl finished with the first suit of armour, and Karl got a flood of messages.

[I'm here.]

[Oh, there's Gryphon puppies!]

[Does Lotus know?]

[Where are you?]

[How do I get out of here?]

Karl laughed, and Hugo gave him a strange look.

"The shopper is here with the first batch of delivery orders." Karl explained.

The massive mage smiled at what they were likely to be experiencing in the maze right now.

"What sort of shopper did they send?" He asked instead.

"A teenage Demoness. She's a Commander Rank Mage, and always eager to see new spells and places. I promised her dad I would keep her safe, but I can't see anyone here attacking her while she's making deliveries." Karl explained.

Hugo shook his head. "It would flag them within their Guild for attacking an Alliance member. Nobody would risk being expelled to steal someone else's shopping."

Karl went to the maze to meet Wendy, who was wrapped around a Gargoyle, nuzzling its face.

"Ah, you made it. Welcome. I've got a map of the delivery locations for you. Did you separate everything by individual orders?" Karl asked.

Wendy nodded, but didn't look up. "Yeah, they're all in paper bags, except a few big ones that are in boxes. I put names on them, I just need to know where they go."

Karl passed her the map of the various Guild Manors within the complex, and Wendy smiled. There was only one house per Guild, for the most part. So, she could just drop off an entire pile of shopping with their staff, but still get to meet new people.

Then she realized Hugo was standing beside Karl.

"Hello, Guild Master Hugo. Oh, you're a Mage. Totally didn't expect that."

Hugo chuckled at her candid response.

"I get that a lot. I don't have the traditional mage build, but I have excellent compatibility with new magic."

Wendy smiled. "New spells are the greatest thing ever. Do you have cuddly golems? Dana has the cuddly golems."

Hugo looked confused, so Karl explained. "Her Greater Golem spell summons a pair of Dragon Hounds."

Hugo nodded. "I don't actually have the Greater Golem spell. I will have to get your Dana to try to explain it to me one day. Do you have Golems as well? I suspect that you will be quite the powerful mage when you grow up."

Wendy nodded eagerly, and then called the pair of juvenile Cerro patterned golems.

"Oh, defensive Golems. Great choice. So many mages focus entirely on offensive skills, but the world is overrun with Warriors, and they're almost all attackers. Nobody wants to be the one taking the damage." Hugo joked.

It was a lot of trust to put in other people. Not just the healers, that they wouldn't let you die when the monsters got past your defences. But also in the damage dealers, that they wouldn't slack and leave you in a bad spot. When they weren't taking the damage, and they weren't going to be blamed for the lack of healing, many didn't feel the urge to put real effort into the battles, and would just coast along doing just enough to not get yelled at.

So, if the mages could back the tanks up with some defensive Golems, it took a lot of pressure off, and made it much more obvious when the problem was the lack of damage.

When the tank wasn't having problems holding the group, and all the monsters were occupied, it was hard to argue that the time taken to kill it was anything but the responsibility of the damage dealers.

When the Tank was doing his best to keep everything attacking him, they could say that they had to do what they were doing to not bring the monsters to them.

"How about I show Miss Wendy around, and then I will come back to see how the armour is coming?" Hugo suggested.

Karl nodded. "I will do my best to have at least one more finished by the time that you two get back. You might as well bring Raj and someone else if you happen to see them on your route.

Thank you for looking after my Guild Member."

Hugo nodded. Wendy was definitely going to talk his ear off, but the young mage's enthusiasm was refreshing. Everyone who came here to attempt to join a Guild for the dungeons was at least a little jaded by life.

But she lived in a crafting warehouse and what sounded like a magical library. How exactly did a Library in the Guild house have a whole city outside the window? It had to be an application of the [Illusionary Domain] spell.

But that explained why Karl was so confident about the security of the portal.

When you broke an Illusionary spell, you tended to end up in the equivalent location in real space. So, if you were in a city that was below a tower in the Illusionary Domain, you would end up buried in the ground somewhere near the Guild House.

That could very well be instantly fatal.

Walking with Wendy was a new experience for Hugo. Everyone was somewhat intimidated by his power and position, but Wendy had no filter, and she greeted every mage that they passed, and even asked them random questions about magic.

"You really do love magic, don't you?" Hugo asked.

Wendy bobbed her head repeatedly in agreement. "Very much so. I've learned my whole skill tree already, and nine new spells from books or from Karl. If I keep up this pace, I should be able to get to a hundred by the time I reach my eighteenth birthday."

"Is there a reason for wanting a hundred spells?"

Wendy shrugged. "Not really. But it's a nice round number, isn't it? A hundred spells just sounds pleasant to say. Oh, I see the first house. Are they all inside this big building?"

Hugo nodded. "Yes. It's safer to have the whole alliance stationed inside this one house, though most of the Alliance's Guild Members live elsewhere or have bases in other cities.

What did they order?"

"A bit of everything. Towels, toothbrushes, our specialty soaps, alarm clocks. Just general household stuff. The orders of big stuff will have to be filled later. The shoppers didn't have room for them.

But most of the Guilds only ordered daily necessities." She explained.

Wendy knocked on the door and Guild Master Raj answered, having sensed Hugo outside.

Then, he was nearly buried in paper bags.

"Sir, your delivery is here. That's everything that your members put on the list." Wendy announced proudly.

Hugo chuckled. "You need to wait and ask him where to leave the bags. Nobody wants all their shopping set blocking the front door."

Chapter 1096: Adorable Demon

Raj laughed at Wendy's expression, then looked up at Hugo for an explanation.

"Who might this tiny agent of chaos be?" He asked.

Hugo patted Wendy on the head, and the girl smiled as she returned all the shopping to her storage items.

"This is Miss Wendy, the delivery agent for the Darklight Host. She has all the common items that the Guilds requested to be delivered from Drodh, and the Darklight Host will message you later with the total." Hugo explained.

Raj chuckled, as all the items were Commander Rank or lower. The total would literally be pocket change for a Mythic Raid team member.

Wendy smiled and handed Guild Leader Raj a piece of paper with a number on it.

"That's the total, per customer order, so you can collect it from your Guild members."

Now he couldn't resist, and pulled the small mage into a hug.

"You are absolutely adorable. Here you go, payment for the order, and you can keep the change as a delivery fee." He insisted, passing a small bag of coins into her hands.

"Just place the orders along the wall in the main room, so everyone can come get their orders." He added as Wendy laughed and pocketed the money.

Doing deliveries was a lucrative trade. Plus, there was new magic everywhere.

Wendy was swarmed by Guild Members as she set out the orders, but nobody tried to interfere with her work.

"You forgot to order the good soap." One of the warriors joked.

The man beside him held up a stick of descending deodorant. "I did one better. It's on the out-of-stock list from the Guild House, but they managed to find me one for the order."

One of the others sighed as he opened his bag. "Damn, not everything on backorder made this shipment. How often are the deliveries coming?"

"Once a week is the schedule for now. If it gets too busy, we might be able to come twice a week and still get most of the items." Wendy informed him.

A female Cleric of the White Dragon came over and ducked to give Wendy a hug.

"The Darklight Host are devious geniuses. Sending this girl to do the deliveries, how could we be mad even if the orders were wrong?"

Wendy giggled, then took out a small wooden token with a hole for hanging it as a necklace charm. Then she wrote the rune for 'lucky in love' on one side and empowered it to the Commander Rank, the strongest she could.

"For you, lovely Priestess."

The Cleric stared at it for a moment, then took the talisman from her.

"What sort of skill is that?" She asked.

"Runecrafting, of course. Though I am not at the level of the Karl. He's way better, but that's only one rune, so it's easy to get right. It's for good luck." Wendy explained.

The Cleric held the simple wooden disc in her hands, just now realizing that it held an incredible value, as only a handful of crafters on the entire continent could manage what this young girl had given her.

"Can we keep her?" The Cleric asked, looking at Hugo.

The big mage laughed. "No, she's already a full Guild member. But I'm sure you can convince her to visit more often. Perhaps after she finishes visiting my Guild's Library. We have quite a few obscure magical tomes."

Wendy's eyes lit up. "Magical tomes?"

Raj's Guild Mates chuckled. The pure innocence of this tiny demon was impossible to resist. There was no question that the Guilds would likely try to poach her from the Darklight Host in the future.

Just not yet.

As she was still only a Commander, it would be hard to find a proper spot for her. Their Guilds were already full, and someone would have to be ejected if they wanted to actually make her a member.

But in the meantime, they could build goodwill.

"Lots of them. But first we need to run off and do the rest of the deliveries. Miss Wendy will be back next week." Hugo added.

"Oh, right. Raj, talk to Karl when you get a moment. He should have a suit of armour ready for you soon."

Raj practically sprinted out of the house as Hugo and Wendy discussed magical theory on their way to the next Guild Manor. While Wendy wasn't technically an Obsession Demon, the big mage was beginning to discover just what it meant for a Demon to share an interest in their favourite topic.

Wendy already knew more about the fundamentals of magic than most of the mages in his Guild did, even if they had a wider variety of spells and far greater power.

If anything, she should likely be rerouted away from combat pursuits and towards magical research, using her Runecrafting skills to attempt to forge new skill books. Once the first one was written, the Inscriptionists could duplicate it.

The problem was the first one.

In theory, every skill could be turned into a functional skill book. But for some reason, very few of them ever were. Either because the ones who could use them weren't the same people as the ones who could make the books, or simply because it was just too difficult.

The knowledge of how to create a truly unique Skill Book was lost before recorded history.

Hugo planned to bring that up once they were in the Library, where she was surrounded by knowledge. The Darklight Host was already in their Guild Alliance, and it didn't matter how powerful an Inscriptionist was.

Only that they could make the books.

It might not be practical to recruit this adorable mage yet, but he could help her build a base of skills as well as a stronger bond to his Guild.

They went to the other Warrior led Guilds next, so that Hugo could inform them that Karl had armour incoming, and Wendy managed to charm the mages and clerics at all of them. To the point that Hugo was beginning to wonder if she had some sort of passive skill equivalent to [Fox Charm].

Darklight Host members were all a bit strange. He wouldn't put it past Karl to have taught her one.

Chapter 1097: Even The Gargoyles

While Wendy and Hugo made their rounds, Raj ran to the Darklight Host villa to meet with Karl.

Dana greeted him at the door, and silently pointed at the stairs to the basement when she saw the excited look on the Guild Master's face. Raj sprinted down the stairs, then found himself blocked by a large set of wings as the Gargoyles blocked his entrance to the garden.

"I promise, I'm just here to meet with Karl. He has armour for me." He informed the puffed up little Gryphon.

It lowered its wings, but didn't let him enter until Dana came down the stairs behind him and stroked the creature's feathered head.

"He's just excited about new toys, he's not trying to rush past you. Good job guarding the garden." Dana whispered, while the Gargoyle purred.

Even the Gargoyles here were a bit strange, Raj thought.

Normally, Gargoyles weren't active all the time, only when a condition of the spell was breached, and they needed to defend their assigned property. But these ones were certainly active, and he was reasonably sure that a pair of them had been playing chess in the garden before he came in.

The board was still set up.

Dana led Raj to the exit of the maze, then turned away when he walked through. The Gargoyle in Lotus' bedroom had informed the Cleric that there were more people coming, but Lotus didn't want to come down and deal with them in person.

Not when she finally caught one of the Gargoyles in a spot it wasn't trying to leave.

"Guild Masters, I will lead you to the workshop. Karl is working on the armour suits now. Please follow me into the basement. Guild Master Raj is already there waiting."

The other two warriors sighed in regret.

First come, first served worked much better when you were the first person in line. But Karl had turned out good equipment so far, so there was little chance that they wouldn't be satisfied with whatever he turned out for them.

If it was Totem Ranked and Epic Grade, it would be an upgrade. But he had been turning out Totem Grade equipment for the mages, and most of them hadn't seen a piece of that quality in person before.

There was a small chance that they would drop from the Mythic Dungeons, but anyone who got one kept that information to themselves.

Even the Guild Masters and the members of the Mythic Teams wouldn't actually tell anyone outside their own group what quality of gear they had. To others, it would be fashionable Epic Grade armour, and the world would be jealous.

But in combat, they would have the advantage of the larger bonuses and the extra skills that had pushed the equipment to the next grade of quality.

From what they could tell, the major difference was that they didn't have to give up a core bonus to get the added skill effect on Totem Grade equipment, as would happen on Epic Grade gear at lower levels.

The three suits sitting on the table when they entered the work space were very close in quality, every bit as good as what the Dragonkin crafters turned out in the Sholaha region. But they did notice that one was detailed in the Demonic style, and two in the Dwarven.

"Welcome. I have prepared armours for you. Now, it doesn't really matter which one you pick. Functionally, they're all identical. But I made Guild Master Raj wait for your arrival so that you can discuss it among yourselves." Karl greeted them.

The new arrivals took a closer look at the suits and found that Karl was telling the truth. They all had identical bonuses.

[Indestructible Plate of the Stalwart Defender] Totem Rank, Totem Grade Armour. Adds 1400 points of Damage Reduction, Reduces Damage Taken by 2 percent, 10 percent bonus to Movement Speed, 20 Percent Resistance to Poison and Fire Element attacks. [Additional Effects] Self Repair Level 7, [Earth Shield] Elemental barrier Skill

Raj ran his fingers over the much flashier decorations of the set that Ashbringer had made.

"So, wearing this, we will all be able to use a new skill?" He verified.

Karl nodded. "Yes, an Earth Barrier. It's quite useful in combat as you can not only use it like your existing [Guard] skill, but you can also use it as a flexible barrier over your armour.

It should activate at your own Rank, though it may not gain the effects of the Mythic Blessing, so it might take full damage from Totem Ranked targets. I haven't had a chance to verify that yet, as the Totem and Mythic Blessings are new to me."

Raj shook his head. "That won't be a problem. Even when we use items or skills at a lower output level, our blessing still applies. It's more of a secondary effect added to our actions than one that has to be part of every skill we use."

"Are you sure that you need to be even more flashy?" The warrior with tattoos all down his arms asked, as Guild Master Raj didn't take his hand off the armour set that Ashbringer had made.

"You know me. I like to make an impression. Besides, the stats on the armour are all equal." Raj replied with a shrug.

He had a point. But he wasn't the only one who liked to make an impression when he entered a room.

"If you want to wait for fancier suits, I can order them now, and reassign these to other Warriors on the Mythic Teams. I intended to make the three of them identical for the main tanks, then give the other armour sets a damage buffing skill instead.

Tell me, do any of your people use blunt weapons? Sharpness adds significant damage to blade strikes, but I have other options if they're not edged weapon users." Karl suggested.

Raj nodded. "We have a few who use axes, and one who uses an Epic Grade Dwarven war pick. Normally, that is considered a blunt weapon, though you can use the back side."

Karl nodded in understanding. Few used the back-side other than the Dwarves. The design was a modified mining tool, with a spike for pulling rocks, and a blunt side to hammer rods into soft stone seams to create blasting holes.

"In that case, I can make most with sharpness, and I will make him a special one." Karl agreed.

Chapter 1098: Tankier Tanks

The other two Guild Leaders stepped to the table and picked up the Dwarven made suits, then equipped them, so they could see what the armour looked like bonded.

"This isn't bad. Plus, it goes well with the Guild Tabard. I should wear that more often. Seeing Guild Leader Karl in his with the Golden Rings was pretty impressive." Ivan, the tattooed Guild Leader, joked.

With a thought, he equipped his Guild Tabard, which was black with silver emblems, and two silver knotted rings around the outside, similar to the inner Golden ring on Karl's. That would symbolize two Guild Champion victories as a Totem, against other Totems.

"So, you had to earn your spot as Guild Leader." Karl noted.

"We all did. Around here, you don't get to be part of a major Alliance without at least one Challenge under your belt. A golden challenge is rare, given that almost all the Guild Challenges are at Totem and Mythic.

But every Guild Leader has at least one before they're nominated."

Each of them took out their chosen weapon and moved through a few combat motions, checking that the armour didn't impede their flexibility. But, it was all designed by a master, and there was little to no binding at all.

However, the hard stops of the armour's mobility were not so far back that an arm forced to extend to its limits would tear major tendons without having to destroy the armour first.

Raj sighed, but his eyes were excited. "I like it. We're going to have to test this out later. But we should let you get to your work because I know that we have a lot of members waiting on new equipment."

Karl chuckled as the warriors rushed out. They were definitely going to try to arrange an extra run through the dungeon today to test out their new armour.

But they weren't wrong. He had a lot of work to do, and without another Totem Ranked crafter, there wasn't much that Karl could do to push the responsibility onto others.

They were already making all the gear for him, and he just had to write the runes and empower them.

He might be able to trick Loros and Wendy into writing out the runic phrases for him, and then he would empower them, but that would almost certainly end up with worse results, or a lower maximum Rank, as intent and skill proficiency mattered, not just the perfect writing of the runes.

So, he got right to work on the other seven sets of plate armour that Ashbringer had provided for the day.

{Item Created} Totem Rank, Totem Grade, [Agile Plate of Flickering Blades] Adds 300 points of Damage Reduction, Increases All Damage done by 2 Percent per Rank, 20% bonus to Attack Speed and Skill Activation Speed. [Additional Effects] Self Repair Level 2, [Sharpness] (Slashing, Stabbing and Disintegration type abilities increase in damage by 10 percent per Rank.)

Karl nodded in satisfaction. Self Repair level 2 should reduce the frequency that they would need to have the armour repaired. If they took a lot of damage, they would have to wear it around for a month to have it fully self repair. But if the armour only took minor damage during battle, they should be able to wear it indefinitely.

That should cover the majority of the warriors in the Mythic Team, so Karl sent a message to the five Guild leaders, informing him that he had six more sets of warrior armour for blade users, and that he would start on the one for the mace user now.

It would be identical, except that it would have [Shatter] on it, as Crushing Blows was a more common Warrior Class skill, and he might already have it at Mythic Rank.

Deve did, and he was a Druid.

With practice, Karl only needed a third of the time to finish the last one, as he had the first of the pattern. Like copying notes off the chalkboard when he was in school, repetition was the key to efficiency.

"Are we just bringing every famous person in the fortress to the house today?" One of the bunnies asked as she worked to add runes to another bracelet.

"I promised them that I would make armour for their Mythic Raiding team right away. I got the mages and most of the Rogues earlier, so now we're on to the warriors."

The crafter nodded, then gestured to her pile of practice items. "What are we even going to do with all of these?"

Karl laughed. They were all Royal Rank bracelets with Increased Skill Power and Mana Storage inscribed on them. Simple, but devastatingly effective for general use.

"We're going to put them up in the Guild Alliance shop at the end of the day, of course. It's your first day at work, but look at all the progress you've made. So, keep the best one for yourself as a memento of the day you learned a trade, and then the rest will earn you commission when they sell."

The bunny smiled. "Do you think it will be enough to redecorate our rooms? I always wanted a fancy room with a Princess canopy bed."

Karl chuckled. The amount they would get from twenty or thirty of those bracelets each would do more than simply redecorate their rooms if they went shopping in Drodh.

"I will send you shopping with the apprentices from our Guild House on your day off this week. Then you can fully redecorate your spaces. It's only two more days away." Karl offered.

That put them in a much better mood, and Karl began planning the other items that they were going to need for the store so that they didn't overload it with these ones.

When they only had a few people working in Drodh, it was just enough to comfortably keep up with the demand for basic useful items for the city, and for the trade caravans. Now that they had a thousand new Alliance members, they would have an initial surge of purchases, but after that, Karl would have to consider what they should sell to other Guilds.

These items would be in great demand, simply because they were useful. But not for the most powerful members. However, that didn't mean that other Guilds wouldn't want to buy them in bulk.

Chapter 1099: Regular Stock Changes

The rest of the day was a steady stream of Mythic guests being escorted down by Dana or Lotus, who took it as an excuse to play with the Gargoyles.

Who were beating her at Chess.

But by dinner time, Karl had everyone's armour passed out. That should have been everyone on the Mythic teams, all sixty some of them, including the mages, clerics and rogues, who had gotten their armour at the party.

Now, he could relax a little, and start making armour at the Epic Grade again, which was much faster to write.

It felt wrong to think of Totem Ranked armour as a regular stock item for the store, especially after the limitations that Drodh had placed on them selling military equipment in the city.

But here, it really was regular stock, as the majority of the Dungeons in the region dropped Overlord and Totem ranked gear, so Epic Grade Totem Ranked gear was among the finest items they could possibly get, but purchasing it would save them years of visits to the Dungeons, given the terrible drop rates.

Rae was thinking the same thing, so she was making cute outfits for everyone. She had new Totem Gear for her girls, but she had also spun up hundreds of outfits for the store.

Rae had a plan for these as well.

They didn't need to be Epic grade fabric for strangers. They just had to be better than what they already had when the piece was finished. So, if she made them Rare Grade, and then had Karl draw a few Runes into them, they would bump up to just barely Epic Grade, and everyone would be happy with minimal effort.

Karl wouldn't even need to do a full inscription on them. All he had to do was add more Spell Power and Skill Power to the clothes, and they would improve. She had tested the boundary, and having him add those bonuses with runes was way easier than improving the items on her own.

Rare Grade could be spun as she wove her silk, so she only had to make the outfit. At this point, that took under a minute to weave an outfit, and she could do it right up to her own Rank, so Totem Ranked clothing was cheap and easy to mass produce.

She wasn't sure how Karl was going to respond to being asked to upgrade three hundred outfits when he woke up in the morning, but surely, everyone watching the Guild Store would be happy with her.

Happy giggles, only half stifled, caught Karl's attention when he came down to the main floor the next morning. Rae had piled all the clothing she wanted him to work on today on the side table in the main room, and the crafters were the first ones out of bed, other than Tessa, who was making breakfast.

She seemed extra happy this morning, almost glowing with holy energy.

Karl wondered if it was because they had taken a bunch of orphaned craftsmen into the guild, or if the excited holy energy was because the ladies would be off to an Overlord Ranked Dungeon today.

Given the nature of the Red Dragon, it could be either.

The staff looked longingly at the pile of clothes as they ate. Then Rae came downstairs, and handed them each a small paper wrapped parcel.

"New uniforms for the crafters. I gave them to the other staff half an hour ago." She explained.

Everyone opened their parcels, and Karl tried not to laugh.

[Rae, make something pretty for Dana when you get a chance. I have a big idea once we get the first rush of crafting settled here.] Karl informed Rae while his mind was on clothing.

Rae had made the new crafters all matching black pants with white shirts, but the bunnies had short sleeves and cute frilly fronts on them and buttoned up the front, where the men's shirts were all laced tunic shirts, with ties to keep the sleeves rolled up.

The dragonkin boys looked at their outfits with deep appreciation. It was sturdy, practical, and it had the Darklight Host Guild Logo on the chest, so that everyone they met would know that they were real Guild members, even without checking the interface.

Lotus gave Rae a very obvious double thumbs-up of approval when she saw the new Bunny outfits. They were just frilly enough to enhance the cuteness factor, but not so overboard that they would be likely to change to go outside, or hindered in their work.

A knock at the door caught everyone's attention, and one of the Gargoyles escorted Quinn into the house, nudging him in the back of the legs to keep him moving in the right direction.

"Good morning everyone. I came to see if you were still in for the Dungeon today, and to see if you wanted to hold a strategy meeting before we go. It's better if we go over everything before we bring new members in the first time." He explained.

Dana motioned for him to wait a moment while she inspected the new uniforms.

"I don't see why not. We've got some time before the scheduled Dungeon run, and we didn't plan any other major events for the morning. Karl will be working on equipment all morning anyhow." She agreed.

Karl stared at the pile of clothing for a moment and then sighed.

"I would join you, just for the information about the dungeon, but I will get it from them after. It looks like I've got a lot of work to do today, and it's going to take all the mana and energy that I can spare."

Rae laughed silently as Karl wondered how to even begin with this pile of clothing. There was simply so much of it that he wasn't sure what he should even be trying to put on it.

If he made it all the same, it would seem like he couldn't actually do much. But the more that he varied the effects, the less likely that it was to be useful for the classes that would want it.

So, he eventually decided that he would sort it into three piles. Spell power and Mana Cost Reduction. Skill Power and Mana Regeneration, which was useful to cloth wearing combat classes and effects that weren't considered spells. And finally, Mana Cost Reduction and Mana Storage.

With those three basic categories of Epic Grade Totem Ranked items, he should cover the shortcomings of most cloth wearing classes.

If they wanted something more specific, they could custom order it because Karl only planned to upgrade half this pile today. Fifty outfits for each group.

The rest could wait for someone to come looking. It would all be for outsiders and wealthy Overlords anyhow, as he had already equipped the Totem Ranked mages in the Alliance. There weren't many of them, with only sixty some total Totems in the Alliance.

Chapter 1100: Remarkably Reasonable Rae

Rae realized as Karl started to work that she could have just made them all Overlord Ranked, and then they would sell faster, and she could decorate more of the people in the fortress.

She had taken a brief trip last night to see what she had to work with while they slept. But with the Mythic members on guard, she had decided it was better not to sneak right inside, even while incorporeal.

They might misunderstand.

The mix of clothing was fairly well suited to the members, and had much more male clothing than she would have preferred. But Rae had simply extrapolated this Guild's information and assumed that the rest of the city was likely to be balanced the same way, with most of the stronger members being males.

If that wasn't true, then she could make more pretty things next time.

She needed to ask how big the city was.

So, she Shadow Stepped out of the house and down the street, looking for someone who looked like they left the fortress a lot, and would know the answer. Going up on the roof hadn't given any good answers because everyone lived in fortresses, unless they were living in servant hovels.

There was a lot of trade, though. It appeared that there were ten times as many transient visitors to the Dungeons as there were actual people living here, and that would be a great source of income.

Plus, it would spread her fashion.

Rae returned to the roof and looked around at the market area at the edge of town. There was a whole group of Spider Priests and associated warriors like the ones that had attacked Karl. But these ones were setting up camp among the visitors, so they shouldn't be assassins.

Perhaps she should ask them?

If they followed the Spider Goddess, they should understand that she would happily kill and eat them if they were rude.

That would make it much easier to talk to them.

She didn't bother to transform, and simply moved herself so she was standing under one of their tent awnings before assuming a humanoid form to speak to them.

"Madam, might we help you with something?" A black robed cleric asked suspiciously.

"Yes. I just moved to the city, and I am doing market research. I wish to sell things like this. How many people do you think will buy them." Rae explained as she held up a dress Karl had just finished upgrading.

It was similar to the ones that Morgana liked. Black, floor length with long sleeves and lace at the hems, and a corseted waist.

"That is beautiful. Do you make them yourself?" The cleric asked.

Rae nodded in agreement. "If you were a spider, you would be able to smell that it is my silk."

As she said those words, one of their group's women turned around, revealing four eyes on a chitinous face.

"It is her silk. She is a Blood Destruction Demonic Spider. But she smells a bit off. I think she might have been using divine beast blood in her advancements." The beastkin mage woman informed the Cleric.

"Oh, that makes sense. The red patterning made me wonder what sort of spider she was. But the Goddess is generous with her children, it could have been a blessing." The Cleric replied.

Rae smiled. The man wasn't wrong. But he hadn't answered yet.

Rae shook the dress slightly, and the Cleric smiled at her.

"If you can reliably make Totem Rank, Epic Grade cloth armour, I would say that you could likely sell a few hundred or a thousand a month to those with the resources. Not everyone gets lucky in the Dungeon, and most who come here arrive very low on funds, as the city is expensive to buy access to." The Cleric explained.

Rae realized that she had miscalculated. She thought that these visitors were wealthy people, not poor people hoping to make it big in one of the many Dungeons.

"What if I made them Overlord Ranked? Would that be more affordable?" She asked.

The mage nodded in agreement. "Overlord Ranked items sell for less than a tenth of what a Totem Ranked item does. Most Totems could afford a single upgrade every visit to the Dungeon if they stayed with Overlord Ranked gear."

Rae smiled, and the Mage giggled.

"You really do want to cover everyone in your silk, don't you?" She asked.

"It's nice. They're almost cocooned, and it makes them smell like mine."

Now the Cleric was laughing as well. They had wondered why a Totem Ranked Demonic Beast would take up a trade skill, but it made perfect sense now. She was staking her claim on the world and asserting her dominance in her own field.

There weren't many craftsmen who could make their own raw materials to that extent, and with the distinctive fashion of the dress she had on display, it would be hard not to recognize her work.

Even if she hadn't discretely hidden an embroidered image of herself on the lapel.

From the next camp over, a hesitant Obsession Demon approached.

"Pardon my intrusion. Did I hear that dress is for sale?" She asked.

She had examined it, and as a Shaman, it was precisely what she had been hoping for.

Skill Power and Mana Cost Reduction would make all her abilities more powerful, including her healing spells and totem constructs, as well as her Spirit Warriors. It was an all-around improvement on what she already had, and the group could stop complaining that Shamans weren't great healers.

Rae examined the Demoness, who had light violet skin, as was common for Obsession Demons, including Loros, their sculptor at the Guild House.

Black would look good on her.

"Yes, this dress is for sale. What can you offer me for it?" Rae asked.

The mage and cleric stepped back to see how the spider would do in negotiations. The species was notoriously volatile, and even a wrong answer could lead to a massacre.

There was a good reason there weren't any others doing what Rae planned.

The Shaman held open a small bag of magical stones and raw metals from the Dungeons, then set a stack of raw Fae Hound hides on the grass beside her.

Totem Ranked fur and leather would help Rae's projects immensely, and the woman had offered her twenty pelts, plus a bag of rocks for Karl. That was a good price.

"I like your offer. Here is your new dress. Try it on, and I will alter it if it doesn't quite suit you." She insisted.

The Obsession Demon equipped the dress, and the Cleric noted that it actually had clear threads woven into it that flickered with mana like ghosts in the dark when the effects on the dress were activated.

It was stunning.

Rae nodded in satisfaction as she took her payment.

"You look good. It was a pleasure doing business with you." She informed the Shaman, then returned to the Fortress to go gather more items from Karl.

She had sales to make.