

Beast Master 1171

Chapter 1171: Why Not Him?

“He has the System now too. I can see it. Can others see it?” The Innkeeper asked.

Karl nodded. “Anyone with a System assigned class should be able to see his. But for some reason, yours is hidden. I think it’s something to do with the backlash. But we don’t know why that happened to you, but not to him.”

“Maybe because I’m a Demon, and he’s an Orc? The Orcs follow any and every war and battle god they learn about, so one of them likely approves of him gaining power.”

“That is a possibility. It looks like we just gained more questions than we answered. However, we can think about that later. Let’s have a celebratory dinner first. If this silver is good here, then bring out the good rum, and we can celebrate properly.” Karl offered, and put a few coins on the table.

The Innkeeper scooped them up. “We take foreign silver at weight. We can’t expect everyone to use our clan’s coins, after all. Most cities are like that.”

“Is there no national currency?” Dana asked.

“National currency? There aren’t even reliable peace treaties between most villages, much less a unified currency. As long as your coins aren’t shaved, you’ll get a good price for them anywhere that you go.”

Karl sighed. “So much has changed since I was here last.”

The Innkeeper looked confused. “How long has it been since you were here? I can’t really tell your species’ ages.”

Karl chuckled. “It’s been a few thousand years. Don’t take it personally, there was some time travelling involved. But at the time, things were fairly well organized, and they even had patrols on all the major roads, hunting bandits.”

The Demon laughed, drawing confused glances from the tired sailors and locals in the tavern.

“That really must have been a long time ago. We don’t even say that there are bandits anymore. Just nomadic Clans, which are the same thing. If you come across them, you either beat them into submission or you get robbed.” The Innkeeper explained.

Dana sighed. “We might have to fly. If you let the Karl pick fights with every group of nomadic Orcs he comes across, we will never get anything done but drinking and fighting. Karl and the Orcs were made for each other.”

An Orc in the back of the room burst out laughing, and the mirth slowly spread around the room.

“That’s why we like living in cities full of Wrath Demons. They just get us, you know?” The Orc joked.

Karl chuckled and placed a few more coins on the table.

“Waitress, I think we need a party tonight. Let the house drink until those coins run out.”

The Innkeeper chuckled as she pocketed one of the coins and put the other two into the safe behind the bar. It would take effort for the patrons to get through that much liquor, and it wasn’t busy in here tonight.

Plus, they had food coming.

The tavern remained quiet for the evening, or at least the part of it that Karl and Dana were around for.

Because they only made it three drinks past dinner before he was carrying her up the stairs to their room.

“Do you know what I’m thinking?” Karl asked as he kicked the door closed behind them.

“What?”

“That you have entirely too many clothes on.”

Now, Karl had forgotten one essential factor before they were too distracted to worry about interference that evening.

He was the one who was supposed to put up the soundproofing ward.

So, when they went downstairs for breakfast in the morning, with Dana back in Fox form, not a single patron of the Inn, including the barmaid, could look them straight in the eye without blushing.

“Will you be staying for another night?” The morning shift barmaid asked.

Karl shook his head. “No, we have business in Bunga, so we will be heading out after breakfast. Give my compliments to the chef, this morning’s bread is incredible. I hadn’t expected to be so hungry, but I’ve got quite the appetite this morning.”

The waitress turned away, muttering something that sounded like ‘Goddess give me strength’, and Dana frowned at Karl in confusion.

But whatever the waitress was on about wasn’t enough to concern her. They were going to leave the city in just a few minutes, and she would convince Karl to transform back into a dragon so that they didn’t have to walk the entire distance, or ride a Golem.

They made their way through the streets after breakfast, as Karl didn’t want to transform in the middle of town and freak everyone out.

Hawk was circling overhead, napping as he floated on the air currents. Karl sent a mental poke to wake him up, and then transformed to let Dana hop on his back.

“Fuck me, that’s a big dragon.” The Gate Guard muttered.

“You’re not joking. Only something that scary could think that a Cat Demon transformation is a less threatening public face to put on.” The Demon on the other side of the gate agreed.

“Do you think that he might actually be Totem Ranked? I’ve never seen a dragon that size before.” The first guard asked.

“At least Totem. He smacked around the boss when he arrived, just for the sake of a good fight. No Overlord is doing that.”

{Freak them out a little.} Dana joked as Karl prepared to leap into the air.

[Behemoth] and [Brutality] combined to nearly triple Karl’s size, bringing his dragon form from just over twenty metres long to sixty.

Trees bowed under the force of the wind as he spread his wings and hurled his massive body into the air. Fortunately, Cara granted them [Agile Flyer], or Karl was certain that a dragon this large would need half a country just to turn around at cruising speed.

Once they were up above the clouds, Karl returned his size to normal and joined Hawk on their way east to Bunga.

First order of business? Find out what happened when he visited the abandoned Guild House.

Chapter 1172: Return to Bunga

It was under two hundred kilometres to Bunga, not even two hours of flight time, even though they detoured once because Hawk thought that he saw giant mice, which turned out to be an oddly shaped species of sheep.

Hawk returned to his space this time, and Karl landed within sight of the walls so that the guards could see him transform and escort Dana to the gates.

The gate guards bowed politely as they approached, and motioned for them to place their hand on a round plinth.

"Please attempt to activate the plinth, and then place any weapons you are carrying into storage." The guard declared in the bored tone of wageworkers everywhere.

Dana put her blades into her inventory, then placed her hand on the plinth, and shrugged as nothing happened.

Karl wasn't wearing anything but slacks and a shirt with the sleeves rolled to his elbows, so he just placed his hand on the plinth and inserted some mana.

[Welcome back, former City Lord.]

{City Functions initializing.}

{Please Wait}

The guards were about to motion them into the city, then they noticed the glowing words on the surface of the plinth.

"Former... City Lord? Uh, I think we need a supervisor. Definitely a supervisor. Maybe the Captain. The Captain will know what to do when something actually happens." The guard stammered.

Dana silently stared at Karl, who only shrugged in response.

"How was I supposed to know that worn stone plinth was the city stone? It didn't look like that the last time I was here. At least, I'm pretty sure it didn't.

But maybe we will get answers about what has gone wrong with the activations here.

So, it's a win, right?" He asked.

"A win for sure, until the point where some Mythic Warrior with a grudge comes out with a sword in his hand." Dana reminded him.

"Part of the last time that happened was because you're just too sexy." Karl corrected.

The Bunga City Guards stared at this odd couple. They were clearly powerful, but they might be a bit crazy. The Monster Man was definitely not normal. But that was common with ancient dragons.

Karl wrapped an arm around Dana's waist and lifted her up to sit on his hip. The mage rolled her eyes at him and whispered in his ear.

"Do you think that it makes you look less threatening to have a cute fox in your arms?"

"It can't hurt, right?"

The Guards had a very different take on the situation. They weren't sure if the dragon in cat demon form considered the Divine Fox girl to be his wife or his pet. But the plinth called him a 'Former City Lord', but the plinth had been inactive for over six thousand years.

So, he had to have been the City Lord at some point before that.

Also, it looked like they were both wearing Demonic Spider Silk of Overlord or higher Quality. The guards could feel the magic radiating from the pair, and they weren't even casting any spells.

It had to be entirely their outfits.

Karl inspected the guards, who were wearing leather armour, and holding spears with sharpened bone tips. They were telling the truth in Kapchor, these people really did only use products that used to be alive.

There was no metal armour or weaponry to be found.

A large Orc rushed out of the gates, and then stopped when he saw Karl.

"Uh... I will be back."

Then he turned and ran back into the city.

The guards turned to each other, looking for answers, but nobody had any idea what was going on.

Then, the Guard Captain came back out with a perplexed and terrified teen bunny kin on his hip, the same way that Karl was carrying Dana.

Karl laughed. "I must say, your choice is adorable. But I wasn't trying to start a contest, I just wanted to hold my wife while I waited."

"So, I can put the bunny down?" The Guard Captain asked reluctantly.

"If you want to."

The Orc thought about it, then decided to keep the bunny.

"Might I ask, how did you activate the stone?" He asked.

"I just placed my hand on it and gave it a bit of mana. Once upon a time, I was the City Lord of Bunga, and the stone remembered even after all this time.

If I'm not mistaken, I've even got a Guild House here in the city that is still partially intact. The Darklight Host Guild House." Karl replied.

"I don't know that name. But there are some ancient and haunted tombs. You might mean one of them. Why don't I lead you inside, and we can go see the Bunga Tribe's Chieftain?" The Guard Captain suggested.

"That works for me. Why don't we let the ladies walk together?" Karl agreed.

The Guard Captain nodded, and set the bunny down when Karl stepped beside him.

Karl put Dana down, and she shrugged as the increasingly confused bunny took her hand. She was just the cleaner, she had no idea why she was dragged out of the barracks and presented to some strangers like a trophy.

She had realized right away that the big guy and the fox were just flirting, but the Guard Captain wasn't a bright man.

A great fighter, yes. But not a smart man.

Even for the notoriously brutish Orcs.

But now she was on an adventure with the pretty lady who smelled like magic and some sort of herbal soap.

It was a good smell, and she wondered where she could get some.

Dana brought out a bag of cookies as they followed the men through the city.

"So, what is it like living in Bunga? We came from another continent to investigate something for the Dragon Church." Dana asked quietly.

"Bunga isn't bad. They treat bunnies better than most places. Bunga is mostly trolls and Orcs, but there are some beastkin as well. Not many powerful ones, but that's alright.

Trolls are messy, though. It makes my job hard." The bunny explained.

Dana chuckled and passed the bunny a cookie. "This could take a while. We're almost at the Darklight Host Guild House, and the Karl is going to want to go inside and look around.

That is never fast."

"As long as they don't add it to my cleaning rotation. That place gives me the creeps."

Chapter 1173: Abandoned Guild House

Karl stepped up to the barrier around the dilapidated stone building, and raised his hand to inspect the surface.

It wasn't a barrier spell that he was familiar with, but it was most likely cast by Orthos before he left. The question was if Karl could enter without damaging it.

The spell had held the house in something close to stasis for thousands of years, and Karl didn't want to do anything that would destroy the historical artifact. Even from here, he could see Dwarven runes carved into the stone, long since inert, but undamaged by time.

If he could spot some of the building's defensive measures already, there had to be more. And if there were more, most of them would be considered lost arts by now.

At least by most people.

"Are you sure that's wise, Sir?" The Bunga City guard asked cautiously as Karl's hand touched the barrier.

"No worries, the house still belongs to the Guild. It won't harm me. I'm more worried about damaging it when I enter, if it was intended to be a stasis spell to preserve the house.

So, I'm trying to determine what it does first."

The Guard nodded slowly as Karl analyzed the barrier, and then tried to use his limited understanding of the Fundamental Rule of Mana Manipulation to trace the spell to its origin.

The spell stones were overgrown with grass, buried under a few centimetres of dirt and plant roots by the ages. But with mana flowing through them, they were easy enough to understand.

It was a preservation spell, the same sort that he had cast on the pantry, though written by a mage and not a Runecrafter, so the spell was somewhat different.

That meant all it was doing was slowing the aging of the building, and keeping unauthorized people out.

That was a feature that the pantry didn't have, but he could see the value if he was making a copy for someone like Deve, who had a whole houseful of curious badger children to keep away from snacks and cleaning supplies.

There wasn't anyone in the Alliance House or Guild House that wasn't allowed to access the food as they pleased, so Karl hadn't thought of it before seeing it in action.

Tentatively, Karl took a step forward, and the barrier offered no resistance to him as he stepped onto the overgrown walkway and headed for the building.

Dana followed him into the yard, but the Guard simply ran into the barrier as if he had walked into a wall.

"Just wait there for a few moments, while we make sure that the building is safe to enter." Karl instructed, with no intentions of letting strangers into this relic of a house.

"That should be a preservation barrier, right? What happened to this place?" Dana asked as she looked around the yard.

"If the spell functions the same as the one that I placed on the pantry, it only slows decay to one percent of its original rate. It doesn't stop it completely. That would be much more difficult without an affinity for time magic.

So, a cake in the cupboard reaches day old status after three months. But this place has been abandoned for thousands of years. Even with the barrier, it has essentially gone decades without maintenance.

That's why the stones are all still perfect, but the yard is a mess and the paint has peeled.

I don't know how well the building was made to begin with, I didn't really inspect it last time I was here. But it should be solid enough to enter." Karl explained.

The front door was open, with another barrier over it to keep out both strangers and the elements, going by the leaves that had been piled against it by the wind. Karl stepped over them and into the house, which looked faded and dusty, but still intact.

When the previous residents of the Guild House had left, they had taken most of the furniture. Karl could see the spots along the wall where large pieces had once stood, and the divots in the floor where something on rollers, likely a grand piano, had once stood.

But in the dining room, the massive Ironwood table remained with one single chair, and a carved stone tablet.

{To whomever should find this tablet.

My name is Orthos, Bronze Dragon of the Order, last living member of the Darklight Host in Bunga, and one of the few to still have any System Functions on this continent.

If the house still stands, and the System Resurgence has begun, please proceed to the basement and touch the Guild Stone to activate the branch house functions.

If I still live, I should feel it.

If the spells have failed, and the house is being visited by looters and not Guild Members, I ask that you not damage the relics left behind when you take them. In time, they will be immeasurably valuable.

Destroying them for sport would deny your family the chance at unfathomable wealth in the next generation.}

Karl and Dana both smiled at the matter of fact message left by the Bronze Dragon.

"Should we go bother the old man?" Karl asked.

"Oh, most definitely. If we didn't, I suspect that Cara would." Dana laughed.

In her space, Cara nodded eagerly. She liked that dragon.

He was fun to tease.

Cara exited her space to lead the way down the stairs, following instinct to the Guild Stones.

{Guild Branch Leader Karl has reactivated the Darklight Host Guild Branch at Bunga}

{Branch Members} 1

{Issue Call To Gather?}

{Portal Open}

Karl sighed as he saw the list of System Notices after Cara reached the System Stones.

The System letting her operate things on his behalf was somewhat problematic. Mostly just because Cara was Cara. If it was Thor who had learned that trick, Karl would have been much less concerned.

"What the, hey! I was teaching a class. Where are you dragging me, you damnable badger? Don't think I forgot about the footprints on my ceiling." Orthos was complaining.

"It looks like you're still best friends." Dana laughed as she entered the open stone basement and found the Dragon facing off against the Chaos Badger.

Orthos glared at her, and Karl began to explain.

"Lady Matilda asked us to find out why nobody on this continent is getting the System, and this is where we started. We saw that the System still listed the house as belonging to the Guild, but inactive. So, we reactivated it to see if the System started to come back online."

Orthos tapped his chin. "Did the old woman forget about the suppression?"

"What suppression?" Karl asked.

"Oh, at the end of the last resurgence, the Titans and Giants allied to cast a suppression barrier over the continent. It's supposed to prevent anyone from advancing, a magical device that the Immortal Realms use to keep slaves in line.

That's the most likely cause for the situation here.

Did you promise her that you would fix it, or just find out the reason for the issue?" Orthos asked.

Dana smirked and shook her head. "Neither really. She insisted, and then sent us here. You know how she is."

Chapter 1174: Bunga Guild Branch

Orthos sighed, then looked around the basement with a sense of nostalgia.

"Well, give me a moment to get my things and I will analyze the situation here. If nothing else, I should be able to pinpoint the origin of any curses, spells or other effects that are preventing the continent from regaining System access."

Cara flapped her wings and flew back through the portal, making sure that the dragon wasn't going to run away on her.

[Making friends, are you?] Karl asked as Cara followed Orthos around the Beast God Temple.

[Yep. He's so... organized. It's like dangling candy in front of Lotus or mice in front of Hawk. I just can't resist messing with him.] The badger agreed.

Karl chuckled. Badgers and Bronze Dragons were polar opposites, order and chaos.

It really wasn't surprising that the Chaos faction saw the disciples of the God of Law and Order as the perfect playmates, they were guaranteed a response to every prank.

Only a few minutes later, the pair were back, and Cara let the portal close behind them.

"Alright, where should we start? Let's begin with the suppression, as I can still feel it weighing on me. But it's not the same, just a similar effect to what was used before.

The original suppression artifact was created and used by an Immortal Rank Titan.

That Titan no longer exists. Matilda ate him.

But the effect is still in place, so I suspect that either someone found the device that he used, or that another Immortal managed to break through from their Realm and put a restriction on the continent so they could harvest it later, without risking any of the residents outgrowing the roles it had chosen for them.

Have you tried to assign classes to anyone? I heard you have a knack for that." Orthos asked.

Karl nodded. "Two of them so far. The attempt to awaken a mage met with intense backlash that Cara had to nullify at the Mythic Rank multiple times. But the attempt to awaken a Warrior didn't give us any trouble."

Orthos tapped his chin as he thought, and tried to ignore the way that Cara twined between his feet like a cat.

He would deal with the badger fur on his socks later.

"I get it. I know what the issue is. It's not targeting the System at all. If it was used by an Immortal from this planet, they would have. As it's the greatest imbalance to the power structure.

Instead of the System, it is suppressing magic, which is traditionally the only way that most species can reach Immortality.

I believe that one or more of the gateways between the Realms have failed, or are being overpowered by something stronger than Matilda.

The Immortals on the other side either linked the gateway to one of their slave pens, or they are casting the spell through as a way to keep the mortals here weakened so that they have time to deal with the problem later." The Dragon insisted.

"So, we just need to find the source of the problem and then close the gateway, or deactivate the item that is causing the problem?" Karl asked.

Orthos nodded. "If we stop the feed for the effect, it will begin to fade. It's not instant, the Immortals solved that vulnerability eons ago. But without anything feeding the effect, it shouldn't be more than a few years before classes other than Warrior start to awaken."

Dana held up her hand. "Wait. The Dragon Isles are massively overpopulated with Warriors, especially in the Northeast. Could that be related?"

Orthos thought about it, then shook his head.

"No, I think that's mostly just because the whole region is filled with brutish louts. The geography doesn't match. The southwestern Islands are closest to this continent, so they should be the most effected if that was the case.

But there is a possibility that the whole world is suffering from it to some degree.

Especially if the User on the other side is a Legend or a Demigod." He informed them with a sigh.

"What are the chances that we can actually do something about it?" Karl asked.

"Very good. Matilda hasn't let an intruder onto this world in ages. If she's blocked the weak point, the four of us should be enough to completely seal it. I don't think that an Immortal would put an item that valuable in our world, but if they did, that would be even easier.

You see, I know the trick to opening portals between Planes, and we could just make it someone else's problem." Orthos explained.

Cara gave him two thumbs up, and the dragon immediately began to work on another plan.

The plan that the Chaos Badger approved of would be Plan B.

"Now that the Guild House is back online, would you like to take a look around, or should we go straight to problem-solving?" Dana asked.

Orthos waved his hand dismissively. "I have all the time in the world to sort out this mess. Plus, there are no other Guild Members here, and I likely can't recruit them until years from now when they actually have a System interface.

So, we can solve the issue now, and then I will come back and deal with Guild matters.

Matilda is already sending me welcome back messages."

That made Dana giggle. It was no secret that Orthos was one of the few Dragons old enough to relate to her in some way. But Matilda's daily activity rate had gone way up from her usual slumbering state once the Drodh Guild Branch had been activated, and even more in the last few weeks with the wedding plans.

Soon, the Supreme Ranked Chaos Dragon wouldn't be known as a hibernating threat, but as an active participant in the life of the Dragon Isles.

"Before we leave the city, we should likely trim the yard and say hello to the current Lord. Who even leads this place nowadays?" Orthos asked.

"The Bunga Clan does. The continent has somehow managed to devolve into disassociated barbarian clans running cities, or living nomadic lives in the wilderness." Karl explained.

Orthos sighed. "Are the City Stones at least still active? The air here smells terrible, and not in the stale pantry way."

Dana giggled and Karl smiled. "In fact, they are. They placed the plinth at the main gate to help vet visitors. You can check in and bring whatever functions you would like online.

I can offer you some mana storage if you need it, in place of the Guild Members who would normally help."

"That would be much appreciated. I can't stand a disorganized city."

Chapter 1175: Welcome Home Orthos

When they walked out of the house with one more person, the City Guard was completely baffled. Had there been someone living in there this whole time?

But, the house was beginning to repair itself, and magical blades were trimming the yard and moving the mulch to a compost pile. If this new person had lived here the entire time, he would have done that more than once in the last thousand years, right?

Karl nodded at the guard. "We need to go back to the gate for a moment. Our new arrival needs to activate the City Stones."

"Oh, certainly. It's not far. Please follow me."

It was easier not to argue with Karl, and it was city policy that everyone checked in by touching the stones.

Cara nearly tripped Orthos a dozen times as she ran in circles around the group, becoming increasingly excited with every step.

Why did the stone have to be so far from the house? This was going to be glorious.

Orthos didn't understand her enthusiasm. If he activated the City Stones, he would bring order to the city, not Chaos.

The Guard led them to the gates, and Orthos sighed as he saw the damaged and worn state of the City Stone.

{Welcome, City Lord Orthos}

{City Functions Now Online}

{Ending Hibernation Mode}

{All functions Operational}

The heavily worn plinth regrew a top platform, covered in gems and writing, and Orthos nodded happily.

"Ah, that is better. Now, Lord Karl, could you spare me just a bit of mana to bring essential services online?" Orthos asked.

Karl nodded, and placed a hand on the Bronze Dragon's shoulder to pass mana directly to him.

Orthos radiated power as he began to work, and a barrier formed over the whole city. Then, it began sending pillars of light toward the ground all over Bunga as the mana draw reached the maximum constant mana flow for an Overlord Ranked Dragon.

At the end of the road in front of them, right in the middle of the city, the ruins of the city hall began to rebuild themselves, and Karl saw Golems, or perhaps Gargoyles, in police uniforms appearing all over the concourse.

[Don't forget to match the new fashion sensibility. They only wear and use things that were living, no metal.] Karl reminded the dragon with a System message.

Orthos nodded, and the guards changed from polished brass buttons on military coats, to burly Dragonkin warriors in leather pants, with scales and tattoos on bare chests.

Dana gave the dragon a curious look and he shrugged. "They're still impressive, right? If I can't have the cool ones, I will at least make the ones the ladies like."

He wasn't joking. He had made hundreds of Overlord Ranked security guard Gargoyles, with magical stone battleaxes, and the ladies of Bunga were already ogling them as they introduced themselves and handed out flyers with basic city rules on them.

"Do you think that we should wait here for the Clan Chief? Or should we go to him?" Karl asked the stunned security guards as Orthos continued to work.

"I, uh, I'm not sure? I think if we wait here, the Clan Chief will come to us. There is no way that he can miss that giant stone building appearing in the park, especially since it's in his back garden.

But I will send someone to tell him what is going on.

What else is he planning to do?" The Guard replied.

Orthos shrugged. "I remade the City Guard, I made new sanitation wagons, and I refreshed the self repair charm on the city walls after I rebuilt the city hall. Other than that, I left things as they were.

The guards aren't setting any new rules right now, just handing out flyers with information about what rules they will enforce."

The guards winced. That was definitely not going to make the Clan Chief happy. His enforcers set the rules based on their mood, and most of them were not Overlords.

The runner from the guard station at the wall didn't have to make it all the way to the centre of the city. The Clan Chief was already coming their way in full battle armour with a retinue of guards.

"Looks like you're about to gain new responsibilities." Karl joked with Orthos.

"Old ones, really. But as a Bronze Dragon, I can't just let them continue going on like savages." He sighed.

Then, his aura pulsed with power, and Karl realized that the dragon was advancing.

He had been Overlord for a long time, bottlenecked by the restricted energy levels of the other continent. But here, that wasn't a problem, and he had just done something that greatly pleased his God.

"Guard, explain." The Clan Chief shouted as he reached the gates.

"Sir, the Dragons of the Darklight Host have returned, and they activated the plinth. This is former City Lord Karl, and City Lord Orthos." The guard informed him.

"What is he doing to my city?" The Clan Chief demanded.

Orthos sighed in relief as he finished all of what he considered the basic work around the city.

"I brought back the necessities of a basic and functional society. How did you manage to let the city degrade so far that not even the running water was functional anymore? No, forget that. How did you let things get so bad that people were dumping their household waste in the gutters?

That's just uncivilized.

So, I fixed the basic services, and over the next week the city will undergo a thorough cleansing.

I do have a few things to take care of, but I am not sure that you can be trusted to not screw it all up in my absence." Orthos explained.

The worst part was that he didn't even see it as an insult, just basic questions and a statement of fact. The Beast God Temples were full of what the people here would consider wild animals, and they were still more sanitary than the people of the Bunga Clan.

Chapter 1176: Does Not Compute

For a moment, The Clan Chief didn't seem to know what to say. He had been insulted many ways, by many different people. But the pure audacity of this dragon to tell him that his people lived like savages, when wild dragons roamed the continent, killing and burning as they pleased, was beyond words.

"What rules are you trying to enforce on my Clan?" The Chief demanded, losing patience with Orthos.

The bronze dragon sighed. "Just the essentials of civilized society, as I see that your clan has devolved somewhat since I departed a few thousand years ago.

My guards will enforce the laws against theft, and prevent violence against others wherever they see it.

That is all. For now.

However, there are other aspects of the city that will require attention and maintenance. For example, I fixed the running water situation, but I see that none of the new homes have been built with access to the lines.

At least the public fountains are flowing now.

Also, the sewer lines are repaired, so liquid waste dumped in the street like primitives discovering a lost civilization will flow out of the city. I will have the sanitation wagons clear the solid debris from the street to be disposed of in the incinerator.

We can discuss educating the people about the newly placed rubbish bins later.

This whole place needs cleaning, so I will return here once we have discovered the source of the disturbance that is limiting the System's activation and resume my role as City Lord."

The Clan Chief roared and charged at Orthos with a spiked club in his hand, but the Bronze Dragon simply transformed and stomped on him, smashing the man into the ground as he glowed with divine light.

Dealing with lawbreakers and troublemakers was the domain of his god, and Orthos was not going to lose a challenge for his city before he even had a chance to clean it or restore order and the rule of law.

The Clan Chief looked baffled as he flailed under Orthos' claw. He had been defeated with a single strike, and the dragon didn't even have to try to keep him pinned down.

Was this the physical advantage between dragons and the rest of the world?

"Perhaps we should continue the search on our own? Your city has a lot of renovations to do, and the Bunga Guild House probably needs a good cleaning before you start to recruit new members.

It's been a few thousand years since the Darklight Host last ruled the city of Bunga, and they do look like they could use a bit of guidance." Karl suggested.

Orthos rumbled in annoyance, then nodded and dropped an item from his inventory at Karl's feet.

{You can use that to find anomalies. One of them must be the source of the problem, so just follow the disruption toward its strongest point, then use that to pinpoint the issue.

But you should at least rest here for one night first. It's still early, but there are no other cities in easy walking distance.

Or were you planning to fly?} Orthos asked.

"I was going to fly, but an overnight stay doesn't seem too bad. Why don't you start on educating the Clan Chief about his responsibilities while I inform the people of the changes that have been made?" Karl suggested.

Orthos transformed back into the unassuming old Cleric he had arrived looking like, and then picked up the Bunga Clan Chief.

"Now, let's head for city hall, and I can fill you in on some of the changes that will be happening here. I am not interested in replacing the Bunga Clan, only in keeping order within the city.

Oh, don't look at me like that. Have you ever seen a feral Bronze Dragon? No. It doesn't happen to us. Now get to walking, I have a schedule to keep." Orthos lectured the sullen Clan Chief.

As they walked away, the gate guard turned to Karl.

"Is he always like that?"

Karl shook his head. "No, he just has zero patience for stupidity and disorder. He spent over a thousand years educating preschool age Divine Beasts, and I suspect that he views the people of Bunga as being at about the same level of civility.

But I might as well start my work here. Can you call out all the guards in this zone? I will explain the changes now so that you don't anger Orthos and make him call for assistance from the Church."

That would be the Beast Gods' Church, most likely. And being lectured in basic civility by a bunch of intelligent beasts probably wouldn't improve the mood of any of the residents of the city.

The Guard who had been manning the plinth blew a series of notes on a whistle hung around his neck, and the guards began to gather.

The man nodded, then went to lean on the plinth and almost fell over when he realized it wasn't there anymore.

"Orthos must have put it back in the control room in City Hall. That would be the rebuilt building in the middle of the city.

But we will start with the essentials. The defences of the city have been partially restored, so you will be safer from outside attacks. The ancient fountains in the city have all been reconstructed, and they flow with fresh, drinkable water.

That water will continue to flow for as long as Orthos is in control of the city.

The street drains, and the septic lines in any relic houses are now repaired, so waste will flow out of the city.

The newly constructed City Guard will maintain order, but Orthos has limited their enforcement so that they're not too busy. I will say that he doesn't have high expectations for the Bunga Clan, but after seeing the conditions in Kapchor, I can assure you that there will be some adjustments to be made.

Now, who has questions?" Karl explained to the gathered guards.

An elderly Wrath Demon stepped forward to speak.

"I have a few. Is it true that the new guards don't allow fighting?"

Karl immediately understood the issue. "Not as a blanket ban on violence. They will only stop violent crime and attacks.

If you both want to fight, that is fine.

But if you sucker punch someone who doesn't want to fight, or try to rob them, then they will get involved."

The Demon smiled in satisfaction. At least the new changes wouldn't change the dominance fights.

But one of the Orcs had a more practical concern.

"What happens when travelling merchants come through with slave caravans?"

That was definitely not going to end well.

Chapter 1177: That Might Be An Issue

That was an excellent question. What would happen if someone brought slaves into the city? The practice had been outlawed the last time that Karl had been here, and the city had sent out guards to hunt the pirates who were still capturing slaves for export.

"I would recommend that they not come into the city. During the last System Resurgence, the practice had been outlawed. If they show up, I can't guarantee that the City Guard won't free any slave that requests it." Karl explained.

The Orc chuckled. "Oh, this is going to be fun.

Bunga Clan doesn't allow slaves in the city, but the Chief lets you buy from the caravans as long as you free them after you pay. They capture many children from the nomadic tribes, and some make good fighters."

A sturdy troll beside him, with skin like drying mud, cracked and mottled, rumbled happily.

"Maybe the new City Lord will let us hunt slavers? They taste good."

Dana laughed, and Karl nodded. "You should discuss that with the Clan Chief. I know that Orthos would let you, but his job is more to provide the rules that keep the city running, while the Clan Chief sets the rules for his tribesmen."

The Troll nodded. "I will inform the other Trolls. Swamp Trolls like the taste of merchants best, but some of the others don't like what they do. Big Demons and Orcs will come with us, for sure. Any chance to smash thieves."

The Orcs in the crowd simply shrugged. The troll might not be a bright man, but he knew what he was talking about. They did love a good fight, and it wasn't a stretch to consider captured nomads as stolen goods.

"So, we don't need to start doing anything new, only keeping the city in order, and explaining the new features to people, so they don't make a mess?" A lanky, blue skinned troll asked.

Karl nodded. "Exactly. Until the big bosses give different orders, all you have to do is keep the city in order. Don't let the brawls break vendor stalls or houses, teach everyone not to make the city more filthy than it has to be. It will also help reduce disease in the city.

Not that Trolls usually have to worry about that, with your regeneration. But for everyone else, that is a good thing.

Also, Orthos can heal, so he might set up some sort of hospital."

The Guards looked lost.

"A hospital is a place where healers gather so that everyone knows where to find them."

Now they understood.

Civilizing these people up to an acceptable standard was going to drive Orthos insane, Karl was certain of it. But he could probably make a few changes that would improve the city for everyone.

For example, healing totem runes engraved on the public fountains would affect everyone who came for a drink, or for water to bring home. That would be an immediate improvement, and it wasn't hard to make them self powered.

"I will take my wife and go spread the word through the city, while I make a few upgrades. Did you need anything else to do your jobs?" Karl asked.

The guards shook their heads, and Karl took a small statue out of his inventory. It wasn't really intended as a healing totem, it was one of the decorative statues that the sculptors had been making as home decor.

But it would do the job, even if it was shaped like a ten centimetre tall Dwarf.

It had a large base on it, so it wasn't easily knocked over, and Karl needed every part of that to carve the [Healing Totem] spell on. He only empowered it to the Royal Rank, enough for common issues, and then looked for somewhere to put it.

The old wooden building that had been at the gate when he was first here was long vanished, but the stone guard barracks inside the wall were still present, and in use.

"I need you to place this somewhere near the gate, so the effect spreads past the doors to reach travellers as they're being questioned." Karl informed the gathered guards, who were all intently watching him work.

"What does it do?" The Swamp Troll asked.

"It's a healing totem. It cures basic diseases and heals injuries."

The Troll nodded, and then took the statue in his thick fingers.

A tendril of mud extended out, and the statue was placed through a hole above the portcullis.

"We don't use the murder holes often. It will be good there." The Troll explained.

Even if they were using the hole, there was a small room up there, and the statue could remain until they were under siege and didn't want to heal the enemy troops at the gate.

"So people just need to walk out and then back in to heal?" One of the Wrath Demons asked.

"They just have to stand nearby. I am planning to put more of them at the water fountains."

The Demon tapped his horn with a claw as he thought. "Yeah, that's a good spot. Put them at the big house too. Everyone goes to the boss when there are problems."

Karl nodded. "That won't be a problem. I will make sure that there are enough spots to go and heal. If my memory is right, the taverns and the market are both near fountains, and that's where most fights and challenges happen, so you can heal right up after.

You know, in case you need a rematch or want to do a best two of three.

Then at the big house, so that you go to see the boss looking and feeling your best."

The Orcs and Wrath Demons laughed. Best two of three format bar fights was an absolutely brilliant idea.

Perhaps these strange foreigners weren't so bad after all.

The guards whistled again, and more men came out of the barracks and the closer portions of the city to be informed of the changes by the guards on gate duty.

Well, some of the details.

Fresh water at all the fountains and the big foreigner taking his wife to make healing spots around the city so they could fight multiple rounds in the same day were the only parts that the guards actually remembered.

Karl was beginning to wonder if their intelligence had devolved with their cultural level.

Chapter 1178: Can't Leave The House Empty

Karl took Dana to the Guild House first, where he created a low stone wall outside the barrier all around the property, as the old one had disintegrated centuries ago, and was currently just a rubble pile in a few spots.

Then, he used Royal Rank Nature Stones to make healing totems at all four corners of the property, with the gems buried deep in the wall using [Earth Manipulation].

[You should add Gargoyles. Oh, and a maid. Orthos would like a maid. We have plenty of stones from the clothing sales.] Tian suggested.

The little fox wasn't wrong. They had hundreds of Overlord Rank and higher elemental stones available, and even more if they opened a portal so they could access the Guild Bank.

"You look like you're talking to someone." Dana asked.

"Tian thinks that we should leave some staff members at the Guild House for Orthos. Perhaps an illusionary cleaning staff and some Gargoyles."

Dana smiled. "What about an upgraded spell? You have a skill that's letting you blend other skills to make some of the strange abilities that your team has, right? What if I give you Greater Golem? Could you make better staff members?"

Karl smiled. "I think that I could. Greater Golems and Gargoyles should make Greater Gargoyles if my guess is right. And the original Gargoyles are already pretty good."

Dana handed him a skill book with a smile, and in his mind, Tian laughed.

[Rae will be so excited about those.] He cheered.

Karl focused on trying to combine [Greater Golem] and [Gargoyle], but the result was not what he expected.

Instead of [Greater Gargoyle], he got [Epic Golem].

{Champion Karl offers Knowledge} Skill [Epic Golem] will be transferred to his lovely Dana Mage.

"That's not what I expected. What does it even summon?" Dana asked.

"I have absolutely no idea." Karl replied with a shrug.

"We probably shouldn't test this within the city." Dana realized.

"Yeah, that's the smart move. I will put Gargoyles in the Guild House, and an illusionary staff member spell. Orthos will know how to properly operate them." Karl agreed.

Gargoyles took some time to engrave into the backside of the new wall, but the solid illusion was created by Opal in a matter of seconds. She had all those slices of low-grade Illusion stone, and if they were just making maids, they didn't need to be powerful.

Just a bunch of Ascended Rank bunnies in maid dresses would be enough to keep the house in working order and the guests entertained.

Nobody didn't like bunnies.

Karl laughed as he made them a bunch of cleaning rings so that they could more effectively maintain the house, and then gave them their first orders to keep the place clean and host authorized guests, or inform the Gargoyles of unauthorized ones.

"Bunnies?" Dana asked as the new staff ran into the house to get to work.

"Opal made them. Everyone likes bunnies." Karl explained with a smirk.

"Yes, that is part of the problem. You know how Orthos feels about strangers with muddy feet in his space." Dana reminded him.

Cara had told everyone the story of the first time that she had been in a Beast God Temple. In a way that made her seem innocent, naturally. And certainly not like she had tracked muddy footprints across the roof just to see if they would chase her.

Cara nodded in agreement, while laying on her back in the Lich Lord's sarcophagus, which was now loaded with gold coins to make the interior into a badger shaped recliner.

The Gargoyles were active now, looking like traditional gargoyles, and Karl decided to call the Guild House finished.

It had healing, guards, and cleaners. Orthos could take care of the rest.

With the Guild House finished, they moved on to the nearest fountain. They were slowly gathering spectators as they walked, due mostly to the quality of the outfits that they were wearing.

It wasn't their fanciest, but it was still more than enough to stand out. Coupled with the obvious power level of the pair of strangers and all the changes made to the city, the residents of Bunga had questions that needed answers.

"Sir, might I ask, do you know what is happening in the city? So many new buildings went up, now there are fountains, and fresh clean water, and new guards scaring the children." An old dragonkin woman pleaded.

"It's not that scary. The guards are just there to keep everyone safe. They will help stop thefts, catch criminals, and stop unwanted violence." Karl offered.

"Who would want violence... no, you mean fights between Demons and Orcs, right? Those are against Clan rules." The old woman replied.

Karl nodded. "But the guards will only stop them if they are going to break something. If they both want to fight, the new guards will let them. They are a relic of the last System Resurgence, brought back to enforce city rules.

The ancient City Lord has returned, and he is starting to bring all the functions of the city back online."

The old woman smiled. "So, the System is real?"

Dana smiled and patted the woman on the shoulder. "Indeed it is. Soon the young ones will start awakening system classes, and the city will return to the state it was in during its peak."

"What is it you're doing now? Your friend is doing something to the fountain, but we already checked, it's clean water." The old woman asked Dana as Karl got to work.

"He's got a rare skill, he's going to create a healing effect around the fountain, so that everyone who comes to get water is also healed of injuries and illnesses.

If everyone comes by every few days, their health will constantly get better.

Once he finishes this one, we will go to the other ones in the city." Dana explained.

The old dragonkin woman seemed completely unconvinced by Dana's words until the first pulse of the spell covered the area, and she gasped, then shifted her weight and shook her leg.

"The knee pain faded. It's really gone!" She mumbled.

"See, just keep standing here. The pulses are some time apart, but just standing near the fountain for a while should have you feeling better in no time.

Now, it's time for us to head out and do the other fountains so that everyone can get the benefit." Dana informed her with a wave, before rejoining Karl to walk through the stunned crowd of onlookers.

Chapter 1179: Healing Waters

The last of the fountains for them to upgrade was the one at the newly rebuilt city hall, where a large crowd had gathered. Whether they were waiting for news, or just enjoying the water park in the gardens was anyone's guess, but nobody tried to stop Karl as he went for the main fountain to start the upgrades.

There were thousands of people gathered in the park, and the first pulse of the spell was a visible change rippling through the crowd.

"Good work. But if that fountain didn't circulate and filter the water, it would have been absolutely disgusting by now." Dana chuckled as Karl came down from the fountain, as he had been writing near the top, where it wouldn't be easily reached.

"Well, now there is no real excuse for the city's residents not to be clean. I am sure that Orthos will institute public baths soon enough. They used to be a thing here, but I didn't see any new buildings that might be them.

He's got enough to do for one day, though." Karl agreed.

"I can still hear him and the Clan Chief arguing in the office upstairs. Why don't we head to the Guild House for the night, and then we can talk to him in the morning when he's gotten things sorted out here?" Dana suggested.

Karl wrapped an arm around her shoulders and was about to lead her back when the dragon in question and the Clan Chief came out to the podium on the front steps of city hall.

[Come up to the stage, so we can tell everyone at once what is going on.] Orthos messaged them both.

Reluctantly, Karl and Dana joined the two city leaders on the stage, while the Clan Chief poked at the microphone, trying to figure out what it was and what it did.

Orthos smiled and activated the device with a bit of mana, then motioned for the Chief to speak.

"My beloved family of the Bunga Clan!" The Chief paused as his magically enhanced voice boomed over the concourse.

"Today is a glorious day for the Bunga Clan, our City Lord has returned, and the ancient ways have begun to restore themselves with his help.

You must have all seen the fresh water in the fountains, or felt the healing. These will remain as long as our City Lord remains in Bunga. The new guards are here to help bring the Bunga Clan back to its glory days, they will not harm anyone but criminals.

I have spoken with the City Lord, and none of the Bunga Clan's rules go against the ancient laws."

He paused as the crowd cheered, and then raised his hand for silence.

"That said, there will be a few changes. The old laws only allow indentured servitude for debts. So, our lowest Ranked Clan members will have their status adjusted. Functionally, little will change. But they will be free to work for any member of the Clan."

There were some cheers and a few roars of outrage at that news, but the Clan Chief wasn't finished.

"Only by following the old laws can we bring back the System. The City Lord has proven this to me, and granted me the power to cleave apart our enemies, which has awakened the System in Bunga Clan's territory.

I can see it, use it, and learn the powers of a true Warrior!" The Clan Chief finished.

The crowd whooped and cheered in satisfaction, while Karl and Dana did their best not to laugh at the fact that Orthos had finally made the Clan Chief agree by giving him the most basic of basic warrior class skill books.

The Clan Chief stepped back, and Orthos took his place at the podium.

"Greetings everyone. I am City Lord Orthos, returned now that the City Stones are back online. I know that this will be a big change for everyone, but I can assure you that it is all for the betterment of the Bunga Clan.

There have been a few new buildings constructed already, including the fountain network, which I see many are enjoying.

But there will be more of them added soon.

Public baths, upgraded smoke houses and storage buildings to keep food fresh longer. Also, there will be upgrades to the city's defences, so that the Bunga Clan will not need to fear invasion, even by feral dragons." Orthos explained.

That was the sort of news that generations of the local residents had been waiting to hear. Safety within the city was never guaranteed, but if they could eliminate the threat of invasion, and just keep it to local crime, then the lowest ranking Clan members saw a real chance to maybe earn enough to upgrade their living conditions.

Of course, they had no idea that Orthos was planning that already, as he was deeply disgusted by the decay in his city's infrastructure.

But for the moment, his words were a shining beacon of hope.

Orthos smiled at the cheering crowd as he continued. "These two fine visitors, members of my Guild, have placed healing magic on all of the fountains in town, including the water park at the fountain here at city hall.

If a member of your family falls ill or is injured, the first place you should take them is to one of the fountains. Half an hour there will cure most illnesses and injuries. If they have broken bones, set them straight first, so they don't heal improperly.

The hope is that we can lessen the burden on the midwives and healers in the city, and prevent the spread of plagues through the Clan."

Orthos stepped back while Karl and Dana waved at the crowd, and the Orcs began setting up grills.

It wasn't a proper party without something on the grill.

Karl patted the Clan Chief on the shoulder. "Good work, it looks like your people are going to adjust quickly to the changes City Lord Orthos needs to make to bring Bunga back up to his standards."

The Clan Chief grumbled in annoyance, then nodded. "Yes, it is all good news. Just hard to accept that things can change so quickly and easily when I couldn't make any of those changes myself."

So that's what the problem was.

Chapter 1180: Bunga Party

Now that there was a properly Orcish party going on in the City Hall gardens, Karl knew that they weren't going to get back to the Guild House to sleep any time soon, so he led Dana over to where a group of demon women were setting up drums and cleaning wooden flutes.

"Oh, welcome! I don't know what to call you, and it seems rude to call you by name." The Demoness closest to them giggled.

"You can use our names, we don't mind. Or pick a title you like.

We've got some time before the food, so we thought that we might dance. I'm eager to find out what Bunga Clan's musical taste is like." Karl replied.

Dana nodded in agreement. "If we stand too far away, it's hard to sort it all out. My ears are sensitive, and there are many people singing and playing."

"In that case, let's start with some classics for the visitors." The singer declared as the rest of the group finished setting up.

The drums started a fast and cheerful beat, then the flutes joined in, and the singer began a wordless animalistic cry that the nearby revellers joined in, and then began to bounce in spot.

"It's a mosh pit." Dana realized with a laugh.

She was right, it was not some sort of organized formal dance, it was an ancient dance tune that they had forgotten the words to, and now just mimicked with a wordless chanting.

So, Karl pulled Dana into the crowd to join the dancing, which was spreading further and further from the initial group as more musicians joined in on the song.

Then, a deep roaring voice joined in, and Karl realized that the reason nobody remembered the words was because the song was originally in Dragon, and nobody here spoke the language, they just liked the song.

Orthos had transformed, and he was singing along with the music, which turned out to be a children's tune about flying, and the rhythmic thumping of the drums was intended to teach them the proper beat to flap their wings.

Somehow, that made it even funnier, and Karl sang along as they danced through the crowd until a great cheer from one side of the park brought the dance to an end.

The food was ready, and the people of Bunga were ready to properly welcome their City Lord home.

"Welcome visitor! Did you have a preference? We've got many meats roasting." The Orc slicing up servings of food declared.

"Something herb seasoned, I think." Karl decided.

"Same." Dana agreed.

"In that case, we have just the right thing for you. It's a river fish that goes well with the dried herbs and fresh lemon." He declared, then handed them each a plate with a small fish and some sort of purple roast potato on it.

"Cheers. Actually, do you have more grill space? I have a donation that I'm sure the Orcs will like." Karl suggested.

Hawk nodded in agreement. He had many things that the Orcs liked. But he had far too many Crocolisks and Crabs. Both were excellent. But he may have, just possibly, went overboard while collecting them.

Hawk pointed to an Overlord Ranked Crocolisk, and Karl prepared to pull it out when the Orc nodded.

"There is a roasting pit just behind me. How big is your donation?" The cook replied.

"I was going to give you a whole Crocolisk. I stored it without portioning it, and it's too much." Karl explained.

The Orc's eyes lit up. "I haven't had Crocolisk forever! They live to the south in the swamps, but we don't go there often, the Naga Tribes are territorial."

Karl found an open spot near the roasting pits and dropped the Crocolisk on the ground for the cooks to prepare.

"There you go, ladies and gentlemen. It might take some time to fully roast, but it's a lot of meat."

The Orcs cheered and pulled him into careful hugs so they didn't spill his plate.

"You're pretty decent, for an outsider. Don't worry, we can slice strips as it cooks, so there will be Crocolisk all night long. You're new to Bunga, but this party will probably last for at least two days, so just go to wherever you're staying and sleep when you need." The cook explained.

An old troll with white hair and wrinkled blue skin laughed. "With a new wife, it can be hard to get out of bed, but the party will be here waiting for you until we run out of food and drink."

Karl waved goodbye as he followed Dana to the base of a tree to sit and eat, out of the way of the dancers.

Every so often, someone would stagger across the park, either limping or staggering drunk, and splash into the pool by the main fountain. They would stay there for a few minutes, letting the healing totem work, and then rejoin the party, refreshed and good to go.

"Maybe the healing pools were a bad idea. If they can just heal their sore feet, the Demons and Orcs will never stop dancing." Dana laughed as she realized what was happening.

"They said they'd quit when they ran out of food that had been prepared for the party, and the Orcs aren't known for being wasteful. I'm sure that it will be fine eventually.

Plus, look how happy all the kids are with the new water park." Karl joked.

The kiddy pool had been repurposed for a preteen wrestling tournament, where the Orcs and Demons could show off for each other. The matches were currently being dominated by a Wrath Demon Girl with oversized leathery wings and alabaster pale skin.

Despite being one of the smaller contestants, she had immense physical strength and had managed to body slam an Orcish boy twice her size to eliminate him.

The boy didn't look happy about it, but the rest of the contestants were cheering her on as the next little boy came up to challenge her leadership.

It reminded Karl of the Wrath Demons in Drodh when he had first brought them the fertility charms. The female of the group were definitely not any physically weaker than their male counterparts.