

## Beast Master 1191

Chapter 1191: Into The Breach

[We might have to risk it. I can heal us, and use Divine Power to supplement your life.] Tian suggested.

Cara nodded. [That sounds good. And I will nullify the effects around you as you go down. If it becomes too much when we get close, you can just fly up again.]

Cara had Mythic Rank Nullify, and that should be close to the peak of what anything in this world should be outputting. If Cara couldn't mitigate the damage, they really might need to call for Matilda's assistance.

[Alright, let's get this show on the road. Everyone, prepare to descend.] Karl agreed.

[Ooh, transform. If you're not fully in the world, it might not affect you as much.] Hawk suggested.

[Lord of Destruction] Totem Rank Transformation Skill. Ignores most damage types, incorporeal, Deals fire damage to both physical and metaphysical targets.

Hawk had a point. The Lord of Destruction ignored 'most' types of damage, so it was a good choice for this mission. Plus it was effective on both the physical and metaphysical, so there was a chance it would work on whatever mana suppression effect was killing everything else.

Karl descended through the clouds, and felt the moisture stinging his scales.

[Hawk... does your nearly invincible transformation make you vulnerable to even common water?]

[Water Magic is evil.]

Karl shook his head. He probably should have expected that water was anathema to all that was Hawk. So, he put up [Eternal Lightning] to protect himself from the water. It didn't take any damage, so very little mana was needed to keep it active, and Karl's smooth glide down was no longer met with any resistance.

[I can feel the spell struggling with Nullify. We're good.] Cara announced as they reached a thousand metres in the air.

Then, at five hundred metres, Karl felt a wave of power smash into his mind, before gliding smoothly off his Power Matrix, the twenty-seven focal points that he had arranged to resemble the Chaos Dragon.

The power hit him, glided across his mind, and then seemed to vanish.

But not without a trace.

Karl felt the mana change and shift as it was pulled into the Chaos Plane by the Power Matrix.

That was how Mana could be Manipulated to empower the randomness of Chaos.

He understood now.

{Fundamental Rule Comprehension} Chaos 2%  $\Rightarrow$  8%

Cara whistled in appreciation. One single mental attack had been enough to let Karl understand that much of the truth of Chaos? She should have devoted herself to messing with him more often, instead of slacking off and having fun.

They could have had a Chaos Empowered Karl by now.

Karl landed beside the Dungeon Portal, then hesitated. He could feel the power emanating from the portal, and it felt like undeath. The mana suppression was there, but it had been twisted and perverted.

[I think it's glitched. Just dragon breath it.] Hawk suggested.

Karl didn't actually know how to use dragon breath, though it was presumably a function of the Avatar form. Dragons contained a gland or something that let them use their breath weapon without affecting mana reserves, so it should be biological.

Who knew that middle school science would be useful at Totem Rank?

Karl focused on his mouth, and found that there was some sort of thing there. And when He focused on it, energy built.

So, when the energy peaked, Karl unleashed the wave of dragon breath on the dungeon portal, and instantly the energy signature changed.

From Undeath, it went to vibrant life, but only within the dungeon itself.

Outside, it was still draining every single bit of mana from its environment with the aggressive strength of the mana suppression.

[Well, here goes nothing. Hopefully, it's safer on the inside.] Karl joked, while Cara cheered him on.

Even if it ended badly, it would probably be fine, she decided.

After all, it was virtually impossible to truly kill a creature of chaos.

Her body could be vaporized into nothingness, and she would simply reform using the combination of Void Body and Chaos Beast Constitution in a matter of days. So, logically, the same should be true of the Karl.

Probably.

Dragons weren't quite as cool as badgers, so it might take him a year. But not more than that. After all, he was the Karl.

Karl shook his head in dismay at her twisted logic, then stepped inside the dungeon.

And realized that it wasn't a dungeon at all.

The interior of the space expanded to the horizon, but Karl's senses said that this was actually a [Tiny World], created by someone at the Mythic Rank.

Unholy energy filled the space, along with a miasma of undeath. But starting at the entrance, life was beginning to spread where Karl's breath weapon had poured through the portal.

[World Dragons breathe... life?] Tian asked, confused by what he was seeing.

[Maybe it was intended to Nullify?] Opal suggested.

The aura of undeath didn't feel like it belonged here. So, perhaps Karl's breath just wiped out the extra energy and the space was starting to heal?

Karl focused and tried again.

A wave of golden energy flowed over the space, dispelling the miasma and causing flowers to bloom and grass to grow in its wake. A small bush started to bloom, then sprouted berries, ripening in seconds.

[It really does make things grow. That's a good trick. If you use it on the Dana Mage, could we get baby Dana Mages?] Hawk asked.

[You want baby Dana Mages?] Tian asked, not sure why his older brother was so excited.

[We can teach them all to use fire magic. Fluffy baby foxes with even better magic.] Hawk elaborated.

Tian thought about Hawk's proposal.

No, Holy magic was still definitely superior to fire magic. But if they had both holy and fire magic...

[Cut it out. You're distracting me. Help look for whatever is causing the suppression effect. It's just as strong here as it was outside.] Karl warned.

[Fine. But we're petitioning for baby Dana mages as soon as possible.]

## Chapter 1192: Lost World

The World Dragon breath spread through the space like a morning fog, dispersing the corrupt energy, and leaving only pure Unholy Energy along with the suppression effect.

Now, it wasn't trying to kill Karl, which was an improvement. But the space still felt wrong, and there was no sign of the creator.

There was no way that he would have missed the fact that strangers had entered his space, but he hadn't taken any action to try to eject Karl from the space.

Cara flew out of her space, exploring the new environment, and then called for Karl to join her.

[Hey, fly over here. I found a guy.]

That was promising.

Karl flew over to where Cara was circling a stone platform on a mountaintop, which had been created from precisely cut stones, carved with layer upon layer of runes.

The stone of the mountain wasn't actually one piece. It had been stacked, each slice of stone as thin as a wafer and inscribed with protective runes, and spells.

Some of them Karl knew. Some he didn't recognize.

But there were a few things that he could say for sure.

First, the man in the middle was a four-armed Giant of the Titan Clan who had failed an attempt to ascend to immortality.

Second, the other bodies had been Giants, but also Lich Lords when they were alive. The undead aura was unmistakable, and their shattered phylacteries were still sitting in front of them.

What exactly had transpired during the failed ascension, Karl couldn't say for sure. But it appeared that they had tried to do it while the mana of the world was too thin, and their preparations had proven too weak to handle the tribulation lightning.

The scorch marks from repeated lightning bolts had shattered most of the top layers of stone, and left the man in the centre as nothing more than charred bones in a pile.

"Well, that explains most of the issues in the aura of this place.

Now, where did they leave the item that is causing the suppression? Once we find that, we can work on disabling it." Karl muttered to himself.

Cara looked up from where she was rifling through the pockets of the deceased.

Right, they had come here for a specific shiny thing.

Oh, it was probably that stick in the cloth pile.

Victorious, Cara held up the sceptre that the failed Immortal had been holding, then frowned when she realized that it was melted on the end.

It had taken a direct hit with tribulation lightning, and it was complete scrap, with the top nearly melted off.

Not her problem.

Karl took the damaged Immortal Rank magical item, and sighed. That thing was completely useless now, and it was stuck at full output, with the control portion of the inscriptions melted.

The best that they could hope to do was to destroy it and wait for the effect to fade.

Karl examined the runes on the sceptre, trying to work out a method to deactivate it, as destroying it would not be easy.

The damage didn't make it easy, but after a few minutes of work, Karl came across a partially intact phrase that only made things more concerning.

{Control wand... Runic Array... Link to the Divine... Call down the Ascended}

Once again, Karl sent his mind to probe the mountain.

The item wasn't causing the suppression effect. It was the controller for the effect, and presumably had come with instructions on how to make the suppression array.

The top layers of the array had been shattered by the Tribulation Lightning, leaving it only partially functional, but Opal was developing a great mental image of how things must have gone down.

She wasn't sure why they had thought that the array was intended to mitigate the damage from the Tribulation Lightning. But it had certainly failed at that.

Or, perhaps it had done that as well, before it was broken?

No, the Bronze Dragon said that the Giants knew what they were doing when the suppression effect started. So, this person had obtained it later, intending to use it as a way to become Immortal.

There was too much dumb in one spot.

This show would have to be a comedy.

[Karl, was this his space?] She asked, trying to form a proper setting for when she performed the play for others.

Now that the miasma was clearing, Karl was able to focus on the lingering mana that wasn't coming from the damaged sceptre and the mountain.

The magic of the mountain was different from the magic of the rest of the Tiny World, and there were multiple layers of spells cast over the landscape. This place had been used by generations of Giants after it was created.

Possibly by a Clan or Sect?

"No, he didn't make this place, and he didn't make the mountain. Assuming that the dead Titan who was holding the sceptre was the last one to use it.

It might be possible that a new leader took over and misunderstood the nature of the artifact.

You should never try to ascend while sitting on a suppression artifact. If anything, you would want something that enhances your own strength and regeneration.

There is some brilliant rune work here, though. Look at how these layers of protective runes are used to link the other effects together so that they serve as a buffer that keeps mana in a form that is nearly inaccessible, instead of targeting living things in range.

It would be too easy for the powerful to simply shrug off the effect completely if it targeted them. But in this way, they altered the mana of the continent in a fundamental way." Karl explained.

[He's having a nerd moment. Let him think, and he will realize something about mana manipulation.]  
Cara guessed with an air of authority, as if she had foreseen the outcome.

Karl chuckled at the thought of Cara acting like the responsible elder to her little brother and sister. But Hawk did not understand the concept, and didn't care about it, so he didn't stop her from 'helping'.

### Chapter 1193: Understanding Mana

Karl curled his enormous draconic body around the platform as he meditated about the different ways that the mana of this continent had been altered to become more suitable to the Giants' goals.

Before the whole process had gone haywire after the mountain was damaged by tribulation lightning, that was.

Seeing that he was going to be delayed, the Epic Guard went to warn Dana that she could keep playing with Button for the night. Karl was in the middle of meditating to understand something, and he was guaranteed to forget to go to bed.

That made both Dana and the little dragon laugh.

It was easy to lose track of time while meditating. But she would drag him to bed in a day or two if he hadn't finished what he was doing.

Usually, it didn't take too long before he understood what he was working on and returned to the present. But she had only the vague description from the Epic Guard to tell her what was going on outside.

Karl had sealed the Tiny World as he travelled so that they weren't subjected to the suppression.

That would damage the crops at the very least, and might seriously injure some of the residents at worst.

Cara flopped down on Karl's head as he worked out how to fix what had been done with the mana, or at least enough of the damaged runes of the mountain to turn the effect off.

Maybe Cara's plan of "Just yeet it into another reality and make it someone else's problem" wasn't a terrible idea.

Even if Karl altered the entrance to this Tiny World and closed it tight, the effect should remain contained. The issue would be that if he closed it from outside, and the effect wasn't contained, it would be nearly impossible to get back inside to try again.

He was lost in the runic layers of the mountain, but Karl was slowly understanding more of the fundamental laws of mana manipulation, and where the person who had created this array had failed.

They hadn't failed to become an Immortal because they hadn't prepared properly, or because they had been too weak.

They had failed because they didn't understand.

According to the Immortal Regent and Matilda, you needed to fully comprehend a fundamental rule of reality before you could become an Immortal. And whoever had created this mountain had not.

There were clear flaws in the design that were visible someone with even the limited knowledge that Karl possessed.

So, he started to rebuild the array in his mind. Layer by layer, he fixed the flaws, as if he were editing a Skill Book that had been written incorrectly. For nearly an entire day, he studied the layers, leaving only the damaged portions at the top for him to fill in.

By that point, the answers were obvious, as the top layers were only the control layers of the spell.

Karl rebuilt them in the way that he thought would be best, if he were the one creating the spell, and then the System flashed a notice in his mind.

{Spell Learned: Mana Suppression} Artifact Grade. Increases mana needed to cast spells or use abilities by a rate set by the user.

Karl smiled, and then began to remake a control wand for the spell using a staff that he was supposed to be enchanting ages ago, but had forgotten about.

He had to add the damaged layers of the spell to it, but when he was finished, the staff linked to the mountain's magic as intended, and Karl cranked the effect to one percent.

Leaving the spell active reduced the chances that everything around him would destabilize, but it would also reduce the damaging effect of the spell on the surrounding area.

He had done what they came here for. And now he could rest.

But first, he should explore this Tiny World. There might be more valuables and ancient relics hiding here. They would be accessible now that the spell effect and deadly miasma of undead energy were fading.

Cara spread her wings, immediately going from sprawled on her back on top of Karl's draconic head to crouched and ready to pounce, then she raced off to explore.

On his behalf, of course.

Not even Tian bought that line.

The little Divine Fox did come out to explore this strange place, though. His big sister had already checked it for hidden dangers, and it had strange mana in it that might help him understand something about what it took to reach the Mythic Rank.

Unlike humans and most other species, an innately Divine Beast would naturally understand the Fundamental Rule that they had highest affinity for as they grew and approached the Immortal Rank.

So, Tian didn't see much need to study.

But, the Karl was doing it, and Sister Cara was doing it. Even Hawk and Opal did it in their own ways. So he felt that he should too, or he might get stuck waiting for his tiny body to mature.

He didn't need to be big. Being powerful while still small and adorable was good, too.

There was no holy energy here at all. Not even a flicker of the divine existed.

But the Unholy Energy was strong, and by analyzing what it was not, he could determine a bit more about the nature of what holy energy was.

So, there was no responsible person present to remind Karl that he was supposed to be joining Dana for the evening, or even that an entire day had passed with him and the beasts simply meditating on the truths of the Universe.

The only reason that he did finally snap out of his deeply focused state was that a hunger pang hit, and he was reminded that he hadn't eaten in some time.

There should be food in the Tiny World house's pantry, and now that he was paying attention to the time, he was quite sure that he had been neglecting his bride.

#### Chapter 1194: Good Morning Darling

Karl moved from the Tiny World of the Titan Clan's failed Immortal to his own, just in time to find Dana waking up for the morning.

"Good morning darling. I hope that I didn't make you wait too long?" Karl greeted her, then saw the tiny dragon girl behind her.

"Karl, this is Button. She said that you didn't have an opportunity to do a full round of greetings when they first arrived." Dana replied, then placed a kiss on his cheek.

"Good morning Button. What would you both like for breakfast?"

The little dragon hugged his leg, then grabbed them both by one hand.

"It's the lake team's turn to cook breakfast. They're making breakfast burritos." She announced.

"Everyone who isn't involved in a project first thing in the morning gathers for breakfast, so that they don't lose their sense of community now that they're spread out to a half dozen different locations." Dana explained.

Button nodded eagerly. "Not everyone works all day every day. I'm usually on egg duty, but I've got three whole days off. Forest Dragons are good with chickens, so I volunteer to collect the eggs all the time.

The chicken coops are over by the grain and potato fields. The ones by the Yellow Striped Divine Grass."

Karl knew where she meant, and nodded in agreement.

"I bet that you're wonderful with the chickens. Now, did you want to fly over or walk? It's a fairly long walk." Karl asked.

Nearly two kilometres, to be exact.

Button took a twig out of her pocket and mumbled for a second, then smiled.

"We can walk. They're still cooking tortillas, so it will be half an hour before breakfast is ready.

You smell funny. Did you cuddle a black dragon last night? The Dana Mage is very soft in fox form. Good to sleep next to." She asked.

Karl laughed. "There was a troublesome place where someone failed to reach immortality, and I had to clean the broken magic from it. That's why I smell like death magic."

Dana hadn't gotten that part of the message from him, and she gave him a suspicious frown, but let the little dragon lead them out onto the pathway that led from the house down to the lake.

They were far from the only ones that were headed in that direction, the residents were coming from every corner of the Tiny World to gather for breakfast before going back to their duties.

"This is quite the place you've set up while we were busy. Did you do all this while we were planning the wedding?" Dana asked as they walked, swinging Button between them as the tiny transformed dragon laughed.

"Yeah, everything kind of happened at the same time, and I added the expansion to the Drodh workshop, the extra space in the Tiny World, and the caretakers all within a few days.

It's working out pretty well, though. Look how well the Spirit Grass is growing." Karl explained.

"That might be because Thor isn't here to snack on it." Dana reminded him.

"Still, it's growing very well, and the stuff in his space is too. By the time that we get back, he'll have a massive stockpile of the good stuff to snack on." Karl joked.

Button giggled. "This place has so much good stuff. Did you make it just to supply everyone's favourite things?"

Karl winked at her. "Not quite. Some of the things here are not edible, they're for making potions."

Button shrugged. "Forest Dragons can eat almost anything. There are few things that are toxic to us. At most, they might be super spicy."

Karl smirked at the little dragon. "You look like the sort that likes super spicy things. And the sort that taste tested all the plants to find out which ones were spicy."

Button laughed as she lifted her legs to swing by her arms between Karl and Dana.

"Not all of them. My big sister told me about lots of plants and what ones don't taste good."

Then, she pointed out every new plant that they walked past, and the merits of its flavour, nutrition, and the value that it provided to the ecosystem that it was growing in.

Forest Dragons instinctively knew an immense amount about the world, especially plants. But also the wildlife that should be in a region.

"It's a good thing that we brought rabbits with us. Not just because they're fun to chase around, but they're also good at keeping the plant growth under control.

I know the goal is to grow as much as possible in the fields, but they aren't the only part of the space that grows too fast.

I swear, we're going to have to start giving them away soon. Bunnies breed so fast, and I can only eat so many of them in one year. But the Elves know lots of good recipes for them." She elaborated.

"The Elves do?" Karl asked, not sure if he believed her.

Button giggled. "Right? They won't eat them, but they know how to cook them really well.

But our Elves here are much more open-minded than most. Did you know that the leader will actually eat eggs? An Elf that eats eggs."

She let go of their hands as they approached the picnic area at the beach, where the ladies had four large grills set up frying sausage and eggs for the breakfast burritos, while another pair of druids conjured buckets full of what smelled like salsa, and a pair of grills in the back made pancakes with fruit in them.

That would likely be for their vegetarian members.

Well, the vegetarians and the children because as much praise as she had given the breakfast burritos, the first place Button went was to the stack of cooked pancakes to roll one up and pop it in her mouth like a cigar as she tried to get between the cooks and the grills to see what else was cooking.

Forest Dragons and Lotus had more in common than even they knew.

#### Chapter 1195: Breakfast At The Beach

"Sir, Madam, welcome. We're just finishing the first round of breakfast for those who need to get through their morning tasks before the morning sun gets too warm. You don't mind waiting a moment, do you?" The Orcish woman cooking asked.

"No problem at all. Let me go collect Button, and we will keep her out from underfoot until the food is ready." Dana agreed.

The Orc laughed, and gestured to the small stack of pancakes beside the other grill.

"If she becomes a handful, just give her one in a different flavour. Having food in both hands short circuits her brain, and she doesn't know what to do."

Button laughed, but Karl noticed that she didn't deny it.

Dana led them to a blanket laid out on the sand, and sat down with the young dragon in her arms as Button prattled on about the varieties of fish that lived in the lake, and the relative merits of the flavour of each of them.

"The only one that I wouldn't eat is Bob. Bob ate one of the water elemental stones that are forming at the bottom of the lake, and I think that he's going to evolve into a proper magical beast soon.

I hope nobody fishes him up before then." Button finished.

"Oh? Actual magical beasts living in the Tiny World would be quite something. You know, before we left our hometown, Karl paid someone to start a farm to raise magical beasts so that they could be bonded partners and friends to people." Dana informed her.

Button's eyes lit up with excitement.

Literally.

"You started a petting zoo? But where you can take them home? That is awesome. I asked the others, but they said that it would never work out. Something about magical beasts not being able to become a Druid's partner."

Karl nodded. "They're not wrong. Druids can't bond them as partners. But there are some classes that can. Mine is one of them, and I have a skill for Druids and Rangers who have reached the bottleneck of their class that will let a magical or divine beast to choose to bond with them."

"The beast gets to choose?" Button asked, confused by the concept.

"I am a Beast Master, you see. Well, a Beast Master Champion now. My class is focused on the beasts, so instead of a skill that forces them to bond with someone who has a class, it works the other way around.

The skill is used on the beast, and then they get to pick their partner." Karl explained.

Button smirked. "I'm a magical beast. Does that mean that you could use the skill on me and let me adopt someone?"

Dana poked her on the nose. "No causing trouble for others. You've already been adopted by the whole village, you don't need a skill for that."

"But I talked to Cara the other day, and she gets her own spot for naps where nobody can come wake her up and make her work." Button pouted.

"Karl can wake her up at any time when she's in her space. If you got the new nap spot, whoever it was bonded to would be responsible for making sure that you didn't miss your shifts. But when you grow up, you might have different priorities." Dana reminded the little dragon.

Button frowned at her. "How could something be more important than having a friend that you can bother forever?"

Dana smirked at Karl. "You know, her methodology might be flawed, but I do believe that she has ended up at the right conclusion anyhow."

A teenaged Elf set down a stack of breakfast burritos next to them, and then a pitcher of iced tea on the sand beside the blanket.

"Don't go corrupting our button. Her innocence is one of her selling points." She warned.

Dana ruffled the little dragon's hair, making the branches shake.

"Of course not. Did you want to join us for breakfast, or did you have work to do?" She asked.

"Sure, I'll join you. I'm on the same schedule as Button, so I'm off all day today."

It didn't take Dana long to realize the situation. She was the group's babysitter, for the lack of a better word.

While the only relative that Button had in the group was her older sister, the elder Forest Dragon had duties to attend to that kept her busy for most of the day, so someone needed to keep Button out of trouble.

She was the youngest of the group, with the appearance of a girl no more than five, as there were no men in the village that had transferred here. Though, with the speed Dragons naturally aged at, she should be at least ten or fifteen years old.

Still very much a child, but one with enough power and capability to fetch eggs in the morning.

A lot of eggs, it seemed.

"Exactly how many chickens do you have?" Karl asked as he watched the cooks pour another pitcher of mixed eggs onto the oiled grill.

"More than twenty." Button announced confidently.

The Elf rolled her eyes. "While she is not wrong, I can't say that she's right.

There are four hundred chickens in the space, spread between four zones. Mostly they are present for pest control, but they also tear up the dirt and help improve soil quality.

The eggs are a bonus."

Karl spread his mind through the space, and found what they meant. The chickens weren't exactly free-range, they had erected magical barriers to keep them in a few acres worth of space.

But they were otherwise just roaming free, doing chicken things.

And it was helping both the soil and the plant life, as they had said.

"You know, we're supposed to be on vacation, a pre wedding honeymoon, as we're expecting to be busy afterward. So, why don't we enjoy the day here?

Cara and Tian are both outside exploring the other space, but they can return at will." Karl suggested.

He knew that they could because Cara had already been in and out of her space a few times, collecting items, and then taking items out.

Her thoughts said that she was preparing a treasure hunt, like a proper Trial Ground, for whoever came next, but she was keeping all the good rewards for herself and swapping them with stuff from her loot pile.

## Chapter 1196: Cara's Obstacle Course

Button's smile turned calculating, and the Elf sighed.

"You know that you just volunteered for an entire day of playing whatever strange games she can come up with, right?"

Karl winked at the caretaker. "It's not a problem. We're here to relax, have fun, and perhaps build a bit more spiritual strength to help reach the Mythic Rank more quickly.

That is all that we've got planned for the day.

Even if we spend hours playing in the water, or running through the woods, it's not a problem."

The Elf laughed. "When Ophelia and Sister Lotus come to visit, it's so much easier. That bear is spectacular at keeping them both in line. Do you know when they'll be able to visit again?"

"Not much longer. The Tiny World is tied to my location, right now. And I had to head to another continent, so they're home taking care of business right now. Once we return, I'm certain that Lotus will demand to come back and see everyone here.

They have Thor and Tessa to keep them entertained, plus all the crafting specialists at the house." Karl explained.

Button nodded eagerly. "Sister Lotus told us all about the bunnies, and the fluffy Gargoyles. Maybe the next time that I have days off, I can go visit?"

Her pleading eyes immediately made Dana soften, and Karl petted the little dragon's head.

"If we're around the house in Zilaz, where the bunnies and the fluffy Gargoyles are, it shouldn't be a problem. But if you're going to go visit them, you might get snapped up for lessons.

We've got dozens of blue dragons at the Guild Houses now, and they do daily school lessons for all our younger members.

Don't think that just because you're visiting, you won't have to learn." Karl teased.

Button extracted a stick from her hair, and Karl realized that she had tucked a pencil into a braided section that he had assumed was just tangled.

"I am always ready to learn. My sister taught me.

But, do you know what we should do today? Cliff diving!

There is a great spot over there, where we can jump off and then swim." Button suggested.

Karl was about to respond when Tian came into the Tiny World, looked around, and then settled down on Dana's lap.

"Did you find out what you wanted to know?" Karl asked the baby fox.

Tian nodded happily. [Yes, I understand what it is that sets holy and Unholy Magic apart. My work there is done, and Cara is nearly finished. She's just making a list of traps and obstacles that she wants you to make for the treasure hunt.]

Cara poked at Karl's mind. [It's going to be glorious. But we don't have much time. Now that the killing effect is beginning to fade, the Giants are on their way here. I felt their magic probing the entrance to the space, so they know for sure that the effect was in this area.

I don't think that they found the separate space yet, but you can see it just standing there, so we might have to move right quick before they arrive.

But not before you finish making this stuff.]

If the Giants were coming to investigate the loss of the suppression effect, they would surely send Mythic Ranked Titan Clan members, so Karl wasn't sure what Cara thought that they could accomplish with an obstacle course type trial.

Karl used [Earth Manipulation] to carve stones to make the requested effects, and then chuckled as he saw that the last item on the list was a self recharging mana crystal to cause the effects to reappear on a timer.

Tian and Button were chasing each other around the beach as Karl finished working, and Dana relaxed in the sun, letting breakfast settle before they got active for the morning.

Karl passed the completed items into Cara's space, and the Chaos Badger began to place everything to her satisfaction.

[Alright, one more spell and we're all done. You need to come outside for a minute, so that your Tiny World doesn't interfere with my plans.] Cara insisted.

"I will be right back. Cara needs assistance." Karl whispered, then shifted back to the other world to see what Cara had done.

There were twenty different kinds of Golems, all sorts of magical plants, a hundred or so random magical items, and a bunch of illusionary monsters. The world was filled with dangers and rewards, but Cara was waiting by the exit for Karl to step outside.

"Alright, what is your plan?" Karl asked.

[Well, if I'm right, then once I use this skill, your contribution will make rewards respawn one day after they're claimed. But as a random new reward. The same with the monsters and Golems.

It's a good thing that you got that Epic Golem Spell, it wouldn't be the same without it.] Cara explained.

{New Racial Skill Learned} [Chaotic Zone] Creates a System Linked training ground for a maximum of one hour per caster Rank.

That skill sounded suspiciously simple for what Karl knew that the Badger had in mind.

Then, she smirked at him and cast the spell on the entrance to the Failed Immortal's Tiny World.

The portal narrowed to a pinprick for a moment, then reopened as a shimmering blue Trial Instance entrance.

[VICTORY! I taught the new place the rule of Chaos, and with all that Undead Energy and the Unholy Rule already there, it really did make a new space.

This will be so much fun. We can make Trial Towers, and Dungeons, and sparring spaces, and self replenishing gardens, and an infinite source of baby dragons...] Cara rambled.

That sounded like it might actually get him in real trouble.

Where did she plan to get enough dragon eggs to stock an instance?

She couldn't have the ones from the Tiny World, at least not all of them.

But Karl had other concerns of a more immediate variety. They were not going to be alone for long, as either the change to the space or the reduction in the Suppression Effect had drawn a huge number of Mythic Ranked Titan Clan Giants to their location, and they had brought an entire army of Totems with them.

Chapter 1197: Sure, You Can Enter

Karl simply waited as the Giants approached. If they were going to attack, he would jump back in the separate space to buy time to teleport away. If things went the way that he thought that they should, now that the space had reformed with Cara's changes, he should be put in a separate instance.

A massive Titan with six arms, the first Karl had ever seen like him, held up his hand to stop the others as he approached to just under a kilometre from Karl.

Out of comfortable attack range, but close enough that sensitive ears would hear each other.

"Demon. Do you know what happened to the Suppression Artifact?" He asked, in what Karl assumed was the Giants' version of a polite tone.

Karl nodded. "It failed. The artifact is still in there, but inactive. I cleansed the killing curse from the area to explore, but as you can see, it is a Trial instance. No matter what I do, it will just reset in a day."

The big giant frowned.

The Demon had a point. Even if they reactivated the artifact, whatever idiot had lost it in a Trial Instance had doomed it to a slow death as the effect aged.

"What did you find inside?" The Titan asked.

"It's the site of a failed attempt to reach the Immortal Rank. Perhaps they thought that the space would protect them from Tribulation Lightning, but it did not. That was the cause of the Undead Energy that was killing everyone who got nearby.

The body was that of a four-armed member of the Titan Clan, but I couldn't tell when they might have entered. Some time since the last resurgence, obviously. But other than that, I was unable to tell."

[You did leave the corpse there, right?] Karl asked Cara.

[All of them. I don't need old cloth and bones. I only took the good stuff and replaced it.]

The Giant was silent for an entire minute as he considered Karl's answer.

"Where did you come here from?" He finally asked.

"Cyhosasa. The Supreme Lady asked me to look into the issue." Karl explained.

The Titan growled, an annoyed noise, not a threat.

"Then you should be free to leave now that your work is done."

Karl nodded. "I will return to the west, and leave your armies to explore the anomaly. It should be relatively safe. You're all powerful sorts, after all."

[Cara, do you sense anything like another world in their scents or auras?]

[Nope, they're all from near here. I can smell the spell from inside the space on them. But that big Titan, I think that he's originally from somewhere else. Or his parents were?]

He's too powerful to belong to the same Clan as the others. Like Big Sister Matilda, his species is meant to be Immortal.] Cara replied.

That was valuable information, for certain.

Karl examined the Titan's aura for a little longer while the leader conferred with his people. Once he was sure that he had it memorized, he turned and opened a portal to the Glatt region, as there were no more refugees there.

Even if the Titans followed him, they would end up in the middle of nowhere.

Once he stepped through the portal, Karl opened another portal, this time to the sky above Zilaz. Titans likely couldn't fly, and the residents of Zilaz could take care of themselves if the Giants were crazy enough to try to launch an invasion.

A short flight brought him to the Alliance house, where Karl returned to the Tiny World.

He still had vacation days to take before anyone realized that he was finished with his other work.

However, the Titan Clan was left utterly baffled.

The Suppression effect had not faded that much, even though it was no longer actively increasing. Karl had set it to one percent of maximum output, but the effect was more like stacked layers than a variable barrier.

Every hour of every day, it put out a little more, and some older layers naturally dissipated.

So, while the effect had faded by a marginal amount, and the intensity no longer tried to kill anything that approached, there was still a massive amount of mana suppression in the region.

They had needed an entire ritual and a Portal Stone array to get the armies here.

But the Demon had simply opened a portal with a wave of his hand and walked away.

They would blame the Chaos Dragon for that. When Chaos got involved, common sense no longer applied.

There was no way for them to know that Karl was simply able to spend hundreds of times the normal amount of mana to activate the spell.

"Immortal Lord, what do we do now?" The Commander at the Titan's right side asked.

"Send in a team and see what is inside that Trial. If we can get answers, we might find the secret to true Immortality. The Demon said that the last one to enter failed, but that might not be entirely true. You can never take the words of a Cat Demon at face value."

The Commander motioned for a team to move forward, and the first Giant proudly stomped through the portal, sword in hand.

Then came flying back out.

"Damnation. The Demon lured a massive Dire Bear to the entrance when he left. Totem Rank." He explained.

The other Titans chuckled at his misfortune.

He might be a Mythic-Ranked Giant, but he had just been forcibly hurled from the trial instance by the first guardian standing at the door.

The next time, they entered in a group of three, and realized that there was not just one, but two massive bears standing guard by the entrance.

"Whoever set this trial was a cruel bastard." The team leader complained as he sent a System Message to call the rest of his team inside.

"Perhaps they didn't know that Skills were going to be suppressed here? If we could freely use skills within this nightmare zone, it wouldn't be a problem to beat down a pair of Totem Ranked bears, no matter how fast they heal." His companion suggested.

"What I want to know is how that Demon dealt with this. He must have stealth abilities of some sort." The Team Leader agreed.

The door guardians fell, and the Giants got their first good look at the instance.

It was massive, hundreds of kilometres across.

They were going to need more people.

Chapter 1198: Day Off

Cara mumbled in satisfaction as she dreamed about all the lovely things that were going to happen to the Giants when they entered the space, and then the fun they were going to have when they got ejected after just one day of exploration and the dungeon reset.

She just wished that she knew for sure whether it would let lots of them in, or just five at a time.

If she knew that, she could have made a better design for them.

Dana and the Elf were waiting for Karl to return, while Button was in dragon form, swimming in the lake.

“Sorry I took so long. I’ve got everything sorted out now, and we’re back at the Alliance House.

Matilda’s assignment should be finished, we just need to report it to her.” Karl explained.

“And did Cara get everything that she wanted?” Dana asked.

“All that and more. The issue with the other space should be all sorted out now, and the Titan Clan came to investigate, but didn’t start any trouble before I left.

They’ll decide if the space is worth messing with, but I altered the array that was creating the effect enough that they shouldn’t be able to change the output again.

Given a few years, the effect should fade enough that System Activations start like normal. Perhaps sooner, as the mana on that continent is so dense.”

“Then what is the plan for today?” Dana asked.

“Well, I think that Button is voting that we splash around naked in the lake for a few hours, then maybe a nice lunch on the mountain? Cuddle and meditate on the truths of the universe for a while, then join the ladies for a dinner?” Karl suggested.

Dana tried not to laugh at Button's enthusiastic cheering.

The little dragon wasn't sure what meditation was, but if it was used in the same sentence as cuddling, it should be a form of nap. After swimming all morning, she could always use a nap, even if she was still supposed to pick up the afternoon chicken eggs.

Once they realized that Karl and Dana weren't busy with anything important, more of the caretakers who had the day off came to join the party. They set out blankets, brought snacks and tea, and generally doted on Button and the young Elf, who Karl had just learned was named Lyric.

Karl changed into swim trunks, and Button came splashing out of the water in dragon form.

{I want cute swim clothes too.} She complained.

Karl checked Rae's space quickly, and found a ruffle trimmed black one-piece bathing suit among the piles of swimwear.

That should do for Button.

"Here, equip this, it will look good on you."

Button looked confused for a second after she transformed back to human, she had never equipped an item before. But once she held the swimsuit and focused on wearing it, everything happened smoothly.

"Oh, that is cute. If you have one in forest green, that would be even better." One of the ladies suggested.

Karl nodded. "I will see if I can get one made later. I only had black in that style available, but stock is fairly low right now, and most of the swimsuits are made for adult bodies."

"That could be an issue. We only have a few children here, so I hadn't thought about needing children's fashion. Now, Lyric would be fine in a bikini. But it would just look wrong on Button."

The older woman simply smiled and stepped into the water up to her neck before removing her dress and throwing it to Lyric on the shore.

The Elf hung it from a branch, so the 'freshly washed' dress could dry out, and Button ran back into the water in her new swimsuit to join the fun.

That started a mass exodus from the shore, with clothes left on blankets or hung over branches, depending on whether the wearer decided to rinse them in the lake first.

It was the perfect change of pace.

Nobody needed to get anything done today, just play at the beach. After an hour or so, one of the Druids made a waterslide, with water magically created at the top. That appeared to be a favourite game for the caretakers, as Lyric immediately brought out a bunch of painted wooden hoops for the one coming down the slide to try to gather before they came to a stop.

Unfortunately for Button's big plans, her energy level did not last until lunch, and she was already beginning to nod off when the sandwiches were brought out.

"I'm not asleep. I swear I'm awake. Can we fly up to the mountain for our nap?" She pleaded, right before her eyes drooped closed again.

Karl laughed, and held out an arm to Lyric as he picked up the sleeping dragon.

"Do you want me to give you a ride? It's faster to fly. If you don't, it's a long walk up the mountain."

Dana had an odd smile on her face as she watched Karl carry the pair up into the air, but she didn't say anything, and instead decided to play rock paper scissors with Lyric, to keep the Elf from panicking about the heights.

Lyric was a Druid, but she didn't have a skill that would let her fly. At least not yet.

[We should find a way for them to gain experience. Something that will give them skill points so that they can fill out the Druid skill tree faster than just taking care of plants.

Elves might live a long time, but I heard the others mention that they're getting about one skill point a year. That's much too slow.] Dana messaged Karl.

Karl nodded. [I think that I have the right spell for that. Or I can make one. Like a smaller Trial Tower for them to practice inside.]

That would also be a wonderful addition to the Tiny World for other visitors.

But before he started on a constructing a trial tower, they had a whole day of relaxation planned, and a sleepy dragon to put down for her nap.

#### Chapter 1199: 72 Point Matrix

Karl placed blankets in a pile for Button, while Lyric tried not to laugh.

"You know, they told me that you are a Beast Master by System Class. But you really do have an affinity for young beasts." The Elf joked.

"Or, they have an affinity for me. But I've lost my nap spot." Karl joked, with a gesture to Dana's lap, where Button had curled up in dragon form, with her head propped on a pillow to keep it from dangling off the side.

Lyric giggled, and gently stroked Button's head, making the sleeping dragon purr.

"What are you meditating about?" She asked quietly.

"We're working on developing the mental power matrix. It helps your energy and mental strength growth. Are you familiar with the idea?" Karl asked.

Lyric shook her head.

“Alright, if you want to join us, we can start with the basics. Focus on a simple image, something meaningful to you. A leaf, a berry, not something complex like a face. Focus on forming that image in your mind, and then pulling power into that image.

It will help focus your energy flows, so you can move mana more effectively.” Karl explained.

Lyric nodded, and began to focus. Karl didn’t know what she was using as a focal point, but he could feel her energy shift and a trickle of outside energy begin to enter her body.

That was success, at least in the early steps. So, he left her to it, and began to focus on his own advancement.

The next step in his progression was to adjust his power matrix to the 72 point formation that would be the next proper visualization of Matilda’s form.

It was possible that he could pick another visualization and go for a 36 or 48 pointed matrix, but nothing that he had come across so far would make a better base than the Chaos Dragon.

But Karl was confident. His mental strength had been optimized and improved not only by skills, but also by System Trials. If anyone could make the adjustment at Totem Rank, it should be him.

Plus, Azov had suggested that the stage he was at was just the bare minimum for a Myth to make it to Immortality, so surely just one step beyond shouldn’t be impossible.

Mapping out the new points took time, but proved to be surprisingly simple. The image just settled into his mind as if it had always been there, and Karl went straight to work rearranging the existing points to fit the new matrix, then energizing the new points so that they could balance.

He vaguely noticed when a warm weight moved to his lap, but it was scaly, not furry. So, it had to be Button and not Dana.

When you meditated and surrounded yourself with mana, especially in the Tiny World, with its mana crystal reserves and innate attunement to Karl's aura, the process radiated body temperature magical energy.

Dragons weren't cold-blooded. But like cats, they tended to congregate in warm and sunny spots to rest.

Using some of the stored energy of the Tiny World, and emptying his own internal mana reserves, Karl finalized the new Power Matrix, and then began to circulate power through it.

{Ding!}

The chiming sound sounded in Karl's mind like someone had rung a church bell beside his ear, making his whole sense of self vibrate.

He was vaguely aware that his body was not moving, but his soul and metaphysical self were shaking from the vibration, and he didn't know why.

As the vibration settled, Karl tentatively pulled at the power matrix again, using it to refine power to a higher standard than what he had before.

The power flooded through him like a raging torrent, and then circulated again as the matrix continued to purify and improve it.

His personal mana had been depleted, but now that the standard was higher, he had to change all the mana stored in the beast spaces, and that was going to take hours, at the very least.

Fortunately, nobody was in a hurry to move.

Only when the shifting sun put his lap out of the direct light did Button begin to stir, and the others started to get hungry.

“That was productive. Lyric, how did it go for you?” Karl asked as he opened his eyes to find Button staring at his face from centimetres away, the same way that Cara liked to.

“Amazing. I think I understand how the focal point works now, and my power is so much more vibrant, if that’s the right word.

If I practice it long enough, I’m sure that I can advance.”

Karl nodded. “I will find a study guide so that you can start to form the matrix after you have mastered the first point. I just don’t know what version Elves and Druids would want to use.

I use one attuned to Chaos. Dana uses one attuned to the God of Magic.

But I think that for you, it should be something more like a nature god.”

Lyric nodded. “That makes sense. I used a Lotus flower as my focus, it just felt right. So, one of the nature Gods, perhaps even the Green Dragon’s path would be appropriate? I don’t know how it works, but that sounds like it should be okay.”

Button just looked back and forth between them, with no clue what they were talking about.

If it was important, someone would explain later.

“Are we going down for dinner? There should be food soon. The sun is in the food spot,” the little dragon asked.

“Now that you’ve had your nap, why don’t we fly over? I will transform, so Dana and Lyric can ride on my back, and we will fly around until dinner is ready.”

That would also give him a chance to look in on how all the dragon eggs were doing, and make sure that none of the crops had been missed or ignored.

Some of the most valuable plants only had a few specimens in the whole Tiny World, but they were vital to Remi's work.

#### Chapter 1200: Energetic Button

Karl transformed, and Button immediately crawled on top of his neck, defeating the whole purpose of flying around to wear her out, instead of letting a freshly rested baby dragon drive everyone insane after an all afternoon nap.

Dana poked her once Karl launched himself into the air.

"You're supposed to be his flying buddy, not just sightseeing." She reminded Button.

{Right. He's so fast, though. But the Karl will slow down, so I can keep up, I'm sure.} Button reluctantly agreed as she flapped her wings to take flight.

Karl laughed, and activated [Behemoth] on her, which still only made the dragon three metres long.

But the extra wingspan made it much easier to keep up with Karl's casual cruising speed as he toured the major areas of the Tiny World.

{Oh, there are the swamp camp workers, and the new eggs. There's a big one there that I'm pretty sure will be an Earth Dragon.

And there are the juniper bushes.

And the ghost tree stand. Those trees are kind of creepy in the dark. The glowing spots look like ghosts.}

They flew a full loop around the Tiny World, until Button's wings started to flap out of sync, and her constant descriptions began to lag.

{Just ride on my back the rest of the way. I will drop you in the lake for a nice cool swim before dinner.} Karl suggested.

Those were magic words, and Button quickly settled in on his head, watching the ground fly by under them as Karl returned to the beach.

As they got close, Dana grabbed Lyric and jumped off his back, flying back toward the group, so that Karl could turn and dive, dunking Button into the lake.

Button laughed as she flapped her wings to swim through the clear water, and then burst into the air, splashing water as she shook herself off before landing and transforming to human for dinner.

Karl walked to the edge of the lake in dragon form, then transformed and put on swim shorts.

"Oh, you have a human form too? That's pretty cool." Lyric noted.

Karl patted her on the head. "This is what I looked like when I was younger. Now, I've got plenty of appearances to pick from."

Button gave him an awestruck look, while the older Druids tried not to laugh. It was just a human, a beast and a dragon form. If Button followed that path in her skill tree, she would also learn to transform into either an animal or were-beast form soon.

But Karl had successfully kept her entertained all day, which made it much easier to get everything done, and for the sake of their peace of mind, they wouldn't call him out.

"Did you have plans for tomorrow?" The Elf on kitchen duty asked instead.

"Not big ones. I'm almost done adjusting the Power Matrix, I just need to balance the power of all the points, and then I should be ready to start trying to improve my strength again.

Then, we've got our wedding coming up in a few days.

I'm sure that I sent out the invitations already. I just don't recall who all was able to come." Karl replied.

The Elf chuckled. "Well, we were going to send Button and Lyric, plus Joanna and Chrysanna."

Button cheered at the news that she would be invited to a big fancy event, and Cara woke up, wondering what the good news was.

[Just Button celebrating her invitation to the wedding.] Karl informed her.

[Oh, the baby dragon. We should eat, and then I will take her to play.]

If that didn't wear the dragon out for the night, nothing would.

It was a regular thing, however. The moment that Cara appeared, everyone waved to her, and Button ran up to give the Badger a hug.

"We have the good dinner today. They're making the super spicy tofu and onion stuff." Button explained.

Cara gave her two enthusiastic thumbs up, and then flopped on her back, so the dragon could rub her belly.

Just living her best life.

The caretakers brought out a low table for Cara and Button, while Karl led Dana to the arranged picnic tables to eat with the others who were working in the area.

"You've got a pretty good arrangement going here." Karl noted as the dishes were placed out on the tables.

"Yes, thank you for the opportunity. This space is practically perfect. There's just so much of everything, and nobody threatening us or stealing our crops.

Even the little ones have been better behaved since we arrived.

You might not believe it, but Button used to be a little troublemaker, always angry and starting arguments with others. But now that she's got the lake and the mountain, plus all that forest, instead of open grassland, she's been so much happier.

I would like to say that Cara is helping, but she just encourages Button to come up with new pranks." The Elf who had been cooking replied with a deep sigh.

"Well, she is a Chaos Badger. Pranks are as necessary to her as food and water."

As much as they hated to admit it, Karl had a point. It was only natural that a Chaos Badger required Chaos to survive, and that a young Forest Dragon, the closest of the dragons to the Fae species, would be drawn to them.

Forest Dragons were once known to play with nymphs, sprites and other creatures of the forest, during the last resurgence when such creatures were more common.

Now, both were rare to see, and most of the ancient forests had been cut down or destroyed by battles.

"Should we do something about those two?" Dana whispered as Cara and Button began to draw pictures in the sand, plotting their evening shenanigans.

"We could invite Lotus in." Karl offered.

Dana paused. Would that be better or worse?

If they brought Lotus, she would likely bring Ophelia, who might help keep order. But she might also just let them run wild until they were tired so that she could have a good nap with an exhausted priestess.