

Beast Master 781

Chapter 781 Custom Order

The base layer of the armour was just quilted cloth padding, in this case Monarch Rank silk, that had dozens of ties all over it to attach the enchanted wooden armour plates.

Once they were layered, they would make a nearly complete defensive barrier that maintained extreme flexibility.

This style of armour was originally an Orcish invention, so the plates should have been enchanted by a Shaman. But Runecrafting would be close enough for the purpose. Not authentic, but close enough. Especially if he gave the armour some sort of spell effect.

Loros was already designing all the plates for the armour while measuring the body double. Once she had the design drawn, Lotus created the rough piece, thicker than necessary so that it could be carved properly.

Then they tied them on the base layer as Rae and the Governor's wife chatted quietly about the wilderness of this Dragon Isle.

She was surprisingly well travelled for what amounted to a Princess from a Noble house.

Now, Rae knew a bit about the wilderness in the area, and that there really were Overlord and Totem Rank wild monsters roaming the wild areas of the continent.

Further away, there were supposed to be much worse things. But generations of dedicated hunting had reduced the threat level in Drodh and Lared, the nation to their south.

In Madam Shin's homeland of Unzatharb, there were wild monsters at the Mythic Rank as well. But they had an Immortal Guard to keep them under control.

After a few questions, Rae realized that referred to their Rank, one above Totem, and it wasn't simply a title.

"Immortal Guard sounds like a good job to have." Ophelia joked as she carried lunch up for everyone working on the second floor.

Madam Shin laughed. "Well, it's job security, for certain. They only take in new Immortals when one is permanently killed, and the Librarian Elder of the Guard has been with them for over a hundred thousand years, since the last full activation of the System and through multiple small resurgences."

Cara wondered what his power would taste like.

Probably musty books.

It took hours, but the shop was quiet as Madam Shin had the armour fitted for her husband.

Rae stood up as they finished and shook the woman's hand. "Give us one week, and we will have it all prepared. Black with red runes, just as we discussed. Don't worry, I know what you're after."

With that, the customers left, and Rae dragged Loros out the window to get to work on the project.

Much to the Demon's dismay. Second floor windows were not appropriate exits for Demons without wings.

But Rae just Shadow Stepped as they passed through the window frame and straight to the workshop with Loros tucked under her arm.

[You learned a new trick.] Karl noted.

[Yeah, if I put her under my robes, I can just carry her in my shadow. Very convenient.] Rae agreed.

Once Madam Shin left, the flow of customers became much more steady. If she was shopping here, it had to be a good place. It was also newly opened and freshly renovated with Overlord Rank barriers, which said that the new owner had significant amounts of spending money, or very deep connections.

Davis greeted their customers, all from the wealthier Stone Chapel district between them and the Castle.

A few of the trinkets from the case by the door were chosen, and a selection of potions. Only a few of the rings were sold, as that was far from being an impulse purchase. But two hours after Madam Shin had left, a group of uniformed men came in and bought every single bat, baton and club that they had in stock with a stun effect on it.

The amount of money transferred during their first day was astronomical by the standards of a regular business, and Lotus was already hard at work on the second floor replacing the wooden weapons that had been purchased.

"How long would it take to get a custom piece made?" A transformed Mage asked later in the afternoon.

Karl couldn't figure out what species he was by smell, it was muddled by a cologne or potion. But his humanoid form was a very average looking Obsession Demon, as Karl had learned the ones with purplish skin tones were usually designated.

"That depends on the piece. Rings, bracelets and other accessories can be created by our Apprentice in the next day or two. Our Journeyman sculptor and our clothing maker are both currently occupied with a custom order placed this morning." Davis explained.

The man took out a massive sword and placed it on the counter.

"My smith just made this, and I want it upgraded. The wielder is a Fury Warrior, a form of Berserker." Davis messaged Karl, who came down to see what the commotion was.

"Oh, that is magnificent. I can make Runes at the Monarch Rank, but it appears that weapon is already beyond my level, so I would only be adding secondary effects." He explained, while trying to understand what level that blade could be at.

It radiated immense power, but raw and unrefined, as if it only just finished forging and hadn't been used yet.

The customer smiled, an expression that was completely unnatural on their fake face.

"That is fine. I have a skill to remedy that."

Karl nodded in understanding. The advanced classes on this continent should have all sorts of unfathomable powers available to them after the Totem Rank.

The fact that this man could carry that blade to set it on the counter, but didn't give any indication of his Rank, was enough to tell both Karl and Davis that he was far too powerful for them to question his skills.

"Did you have a budget or particular element in mind? I have a selection of Monarch Ranked elemental Gems for the enchantment." Karl offered.

"Fire. It must be fire." The man insisted quickly.

[A customer with good taste.] Hawk cheered from his perch.

Karl could have sworn the man's mouth turned up in amusement, but there was no way that he could have heard Hawk, who was perched on the roof of the workshop. Unless he read minds, that was.

Chapter 782 Odd Customers

Karl thought about what he would add to the weapon. "Alright, I have an idea. I can give the weapon a collection of enchantments suitable for a fire element berserker. If you could leave your contact information, I will send a runner when the weapon is ready." Karl agreed.

The man nodded. "I will know when it is complete."

Then he set a bag on the counter and vanished, using a teleportation ability that left behind flickering red flames.

Davis turned to Karl. "It seems that we are being tested by all the powers of the region. Drodh City is known for its Demonic Fleet, and their combination of Unholy and Water Magic. But that sort of flame should be Phoenix Flames. Not only that, but I have no idea what is in the bag. It's enchanted to a level that I can't see through with my appraisal skills. An anti-theft container."

Karl picked up the bag and looked inside. It was full of fire element gems, bits of stone, and a small branch that radiated intense heat.

[YOINK!] Cara cheered as the branch vanished from the bag.

She juggled it between her hands for a moment, as it really was hot, and then carefully planted it in the centre of an open area in her space.

The plant immediately took root, becoming more vibrant, and a second leaf began to form on the small sprig.

Cara lay on her side, letting the radiated heat warm her belly fur.

[Oh yeah, that's the good stuff.]

Outside, Hawk simply stared at his shameless sister in amazement. Should he not have first dibs on fire element treasures? Was he not a giant flaming bird, while she was a Void Element Badger?

Whatever. Once it grew out a bit, he would shame her into cutting a sprig for him to plant.

But the gems in the bag were immeasurably valuable on their own. They were all Totem and Overlord Rank fire element treasures, worth thousands of times more than the work that the strange flame lover had requested.

Karl considered what he would put on this work. He had planned something simple for the man to upgrade on his own. But if he was paying this much, how could Karl give him a couple of strength enchantments and call it a day?

Plus, the weapon was huge. There was a lot of room for Runes to be added, and it would certainly be able to handle the power.

"Call me if someone needs me. I will be on the second floor writing a plan." Karl informed Davis, then grunted a little as he picked up the sword. The blade weighed close to two tonnes, far more than it looked like it should, even at that size.

But if the user was intended to be able to swing this blade, Karl had a great idea.

If he combined Runes for damage increase with inertia increase, and inertia transfer, in the form of [Shatter], it would be equivalent to hitting someone with a bus. A sharp-edged bus.

Whatever was swinging this had to be huge already, to be using a five-metre-long blade. So Brutality was out. It would make them too large to fight conveniently. However, [Terrorize] would be great.

[Terrorize] improves damage done by the target by 10 percent per Rank of the User.

Add the runes for increased speed and agility to that, and he had a long string of runes that all merged smoothly into a single compound rune. That was the most efficient form of enchantment. But he could get a bit more in this rune if he tried, without breaking the coherency.

A short poem about overwhelming power ensuring victory and a legendary legacy stretched out the Runic string even further.

The overall effect was beautiful, and matched the space in the centre of the blade perfectly.

Karl would duplicate that on both sides, then on the hilt, under the grip guard, he would add runes to link a Spell Gem to the blade inscription, and to strengthen the weapon itself as the blade transferred mana.

It should help whatever skill that man had to improve Runes, as the inscription wouldn't be fighting against him, it would already have that type of growth in its nature.

Then, Karl carefully removed the Totem Rank Fire Gem from the hilt and carved it with [Ghostfire Body]. If that wasn't sufficient for a Fire user, Karl didn't know what would be.

It wasn't like he had a stronger fire element skill available to him.

That made three separate strings of Runes. It would be a bit of a mess as far as actual use went, so Karl modified the strings that would go on the weapon itself until they flowed smoothly. Mostly that meant moving the string of poetry in between the two, placing it at the base of the blade.

But now it looked much better, and the activation of Ghostfire Body would flow through the intention to strengthen the blade itself and the poem about legendary deeds, then finish with the actual damage increasing effects that would accomplish the task.

Karl coated one of the claws of his [Bestial Form] with Disintegrate and shivered at the flow of power as his snowy white fur brushed against the blade.

He went over the runes one last time, making a few alterations to the depth of the carving, based on what [Runecrafting] was telling him to do with this particular formation.

Then Karl began to focus on mana recovery, as he felt his energy draining faster than he could regenerate it.

Every single rune was drawing more power from him than it should, and the draw was increasing as he worked his way down the blade.

An increase in draw as you made a more powerful Runic Inscription was normal, but he had already reached the mana flow of a full output Monarch Ranked skill, and he hadn't even started to upgrade the Runes yet.

By the time he reached the end of the inscription, Karl was panting with exertion, and struggling not to let his claw shake, which would destroy all his hard work.

The blade was vibrating with power, and the Runes were glowing Gold, even before being given any additional power or being activated by Karl.

[Everyone, can you transfer me power? I'm going to need it for this. I'm not sure what is up with this blade, but it's requiring entirely too much input for even the grand inscription I made.] Karl requested.

With a bit of concentration, all the power stored in the beast spaces began to flow to Karl's body, then to the blade as he pushed it from Commander through Royal to the peak of Monarch.

Then the runes began to glow with an ethereal blue flame, like Hawk's feathers, and the Flame Gem lit up in the same colour, flickering internally.

The draw of power finally ended, and Karl let out a sigh of relief.

This was a bit different than he had expected, and he wondered if it was something to do with the Ghostfire Body ability. He hadn't tried to use that one before, and it was not a simple skill.

All he needed now was to have a shower and a nap after dinner. Tomorrow, he would hope that the owner showed up to get his blade, which was radiating power like a shining beacon on the tables in the second floor workshop.

Chapter 783 Prompt Pickup

As soon as Karl thought that he should step away from the table, flames flickered in the air above the blade, and the customer appeared in the room with a shocked look.

"You did it? You did." He announced, clearly shocked to his core.

"The amount of power needed for that was immense. But it is done, what do you think?"

The man casually picked up the massive blade in one hand.

"Internal damage, inertia increase and transfer, an impressive damage increase, speed increase, user agility, a lovely poem. Then what is this? A Soul Bonded growing blade, and the Ghost Fire Body?

Monarch, you have really outdone yourself. If I had known that you could create a true artifact of this level, I would have brought you a better blade to work with."

Karl stared at him, unable to form a proper response.

A better blade? What did he mean by that? Was it even possible to find a blade of higher quality than this that hadn't already been enhanced?

A portal opened, and through it stepped a small dragon with an aura so oppressive that it drove everyone in the room but Karl and the customer to their knees.

He transformed into a large dragonkin, his head nearly reaching the ceiling of the room, then the customer handed him the blade.

"What do you think, your Majesty? Is it suitable for your challenge? I told you that I found a real Runecrafter." The customer asked.

The dragon hummed happily, a noise that shook the building and activated the barriers.

"Yes, this is beautiful. Excellent work, butler. Now, I must return to my studies." The dragon agreed, before stepping back through the portal.

The customer, apparently that Dragon's butler, placed another bag on the table before bowing politely and vanishing.

Karl summoned the Epic Guard to grant healing to everyone, and Tessa struggled to her knees with a trickle of blood flowing from her nose.

"Divine Dragon." She muttered.

Lotus didn't bother getting up, she just rolled over and looked at the ceiling.

"Little Green says that he's a juvenile Divine Fire Dragon. Fully grown, he will be a Demigod without needing to evolve." She informed them.

Little Green had to be her nickname for the young green dragon that linked to her.

[Hawk, is everyone out there alright?] Karl asked.

[All good. The effect didn't leave the house.]

Lotus had a curious look on her face.

"I wonder what sort of challenge it was for? Is he using it in combat? Or did we just help someone cheat on their crafting homework?" She pondered.

The group was just pulling themselves up off the floor when the sound of running feet downstairs and a powerful aura caught Karl's attention.

Karl made his way downstairs, stretching sore muscles from the effort of remaining standing under the aura of that dragon.

Governor Shin along with a squad of his personal guard and his wife were in the main room, looking around with great concern.

"Oh, Crafter Karl. It's good to see that you are alright. We had an intruder alarm from the city wards at your location and rushed here as fast as we could." Governor Shin announced.

Karl raised a hand in greeting. "It's all fine, Governor. Well, it is now. There were some inadvertent injuries when the dragon appeared, but he wasn't openly hostile."

The Demon sighed in relief. "If you have a moment, we need all the details. Entering the city is prohibited to all creatures over Totem Rank unless they have a pass from the Lord."

Karl gave the Governor the details of the strange customer, and the Divine Fire Dragon that had entered through the portal when he came to collect his order, though he didn't actually say what the man had ordered. The Governor was already aware of Karl's Runecrafting, so he could infer that the custom order was something along those lines without knowing exactly what was made.

Especially as it appeared that the weapon had left the country.

The way that the guards in the retinue had breathed a sigh of relief when Karl had mentioned that it was a juvenile Divine Fire Dragon suggested that they were unlikely to see it again, anyhow. Governor Shin finished taking notes, then gave Karl an apologetic look. "I do hope that there were no serious injuries, but there isn't much we can do when the Royal Dragons decide on a whim to drop in somewhere. Just their presence is enough to cause massive issues for a city like ours, it is fortunate that your barriers held the phenomenon within your compound.

If there was no structural damage, then I will return to my duties."

Karl shook his head. "It didn't break the barriers, so the house should be fine. Thank you for your concern."

He turned and left with his guards, and Karl saw that Rae gave Madam Shin a thumbs up gesture as the Demon turned to look at the workshop.

They had been working hard all day, and with the speed of the three of them, they were already nearly done with the engraving of the armour plates.

Then Karl would have to add Runes before they could be delivered.

But if they weren't flooded with customers or subject to any other surprise visitors that delayed things, it should only be another day or two, and they would have the armour set ready to be delivered to the Governor.

Having the anniversary present in hand well in advance would be a relief for anyone, and Karl was certain that was extra true for people in prominent political positions.

Remi restocked the potions that they had sold that day, while Davis rearranged the stock in the other cases to show off what they had available.

They still had plenty, but Karl needed to get to work making more jewellery from the stock of blanks that Loros had provided during the battle at the docks. They were selling more quickly than expected, and he had only provided a few of them for the first few days' business.

Chapter 784 Reputation

Their reputation as a quality magical goods supplier seemed to have spread quickly through the city, and while Karl was busy working to make replacements for the items which had been purchased that day, Wendy was busily making Commander Rank wooden Rings with mana storage and skill power.

She brought them in towards the end of the day, and Karl made a space in one of the taller display cases near the back of the room, where the potions were.

That was the unofficial spot for items with extremely high sales volumes. Directly in front of customers when they entered, but at the far end of the room, so they had to pass everything else.

The next customer in, one of the Guardsmen, saw them setting up the wooden rings and stopped to wait for them to finish working.

"Oh, you sell lower grade items as well? I was afraid that anything I found might be overkill. While the rings are incredibly tempting, and I will ask about them later, I would like to ask if you have any scar reduction creams? I heard that there is a Nature Cleric in your group, and they are known to have skills in the healing arts that can help with cursed scars." He asked.

Karl frowned. "Is that for you or as a gift?"

The Guard motioned towards his back. "It's for me. I've got a cursed scar all down my back that limits my range of movement, and I'm worried I'll fail the standard aptitude tests next time. I got it on the last deployment, and even our Shamans couldn't deal with it."

Karl called Cara out of her space, and sent a message for Remi and Lotus to come to the main room.

"Can you take your shirt off? Once the specialists see what they're working with, they can make a better recommendation."

The Guard wasn't sure who the specialist was supposed to be here, but he pulled his shirt off unquestioningly, revealing a scar from his upper shoulder to his belt.

It was still faintly glowing with power, and an angry red of damaged flesh, which was fighting the continual damage with his regenerative speed.

Karl tried the obvious first, and placed his hand on the guard's shoulder to extend [Trollish Regeneration] over the man's body.

That helped, and the wound mostly closed in seconds, but the curse remained as strong as ever, and an angry red line remained, waiting for its chance to expand again.

Remi poured a healing potion over it, and the curse began to dim for a moment, then returned to full strength.

"What exactly gave you that wound?" Karl asked as the angry line began to overcome Monarch Rank Trollish Regeneration.

"I was attacked by a Totem Rank Nether Beast. Well, I was hit by an attack of one. Fortunately, it wasn't targeting me alone, or I would not be here. The wounds it inflicts are cursed, and even at the same Rank, they're considered quite difficult to purge.

I am receiving treatment from the Shamans in the unit, but they aren't sure how long it will take to completely eliminate it."

Cara watched in fascination as all the healing methods were tried and failed. Then, she went for old faithful.

[Nullify]

The red line instantly vanished, leaving a ball of curse energy in the air that aimed back at the Guard's body.

[Nullify]

[Nullify]

[Nullify]

[Stick it in a jar and put it in Sister Rae's space]

{Problem solved.}

Karl wasn't completely convinced that stuffing a damaged curse in a jar and tossing it in a mental space, especially one linked to his own mind, was a great idea.

However, once the curse was in the space, it seemed to vanish, dissipated by something related to the power of the spaces.

That was unexpected. At least to Karl. But the wound on the Guard's back was completely gone, and even after Karl deactivated [Trollish Regeneration] it showed no signs of returning.

"It looks like that is gone. It was a pretty nasty curse, and you were lucky this time. Cara's ability to remove curses doesn't extend to the Totem Rank yet, so if this one was full and complete, you could have been in real trouble." Karl warned.

The Guard gave him a knowing smile. "Oh, I remember. The Shamans have been reminding me every day how lucky I am to be alive. But if the curse is gone, like truly gone, I am finally free of trips to the infirmary every afternoon."

Karl inspected the wound, as did Cara. The joint decision was that there was nothing left to see, so the Guardsman should be good to go.

With their decision, the Guard turned to the rack of wooden rings.

"Are these made in house?" He asked, admiring the carvings.

"Yes. Those are made by one of our Apprentice Runesmith. They're new to the art, but an exceptional sculptor. The simplicity helps them focus the design on the desired effects." Karl explained.

Actually, it just saved time so they could make more of them to practice on, but it wasn't really a lie.

"How much mana does this ring store?" The guard asked, mentally calculating if the posted 55 Gold Coin price was worth it. That was well under half of what it cost to buy a Royal Rank ring with a similar effect, but a Commander Rank ring would not necessarily be even half the effect.

Karl thought about it. There wasn't really an accepted standard for measuring mana storage. Use, sure. But storage was a grey area.

"Six seconds at peak Commander Rank Spell Power." Karl offered.

"So, twelve [Cleave] attacks at peak Commander? That's about two at Overlord, or six at Monarch, I would guess. Not a huge amount of storage, but if I reserved that for my defensive abilities..." The Guard trailed off.

"I will take the ring. Please commend your apprentice on their fine craftsmanship." He decided a few seconds later.

Wendy had made her first sale, and Karl watched as the Guard went out and showed it off to all his friends at the Gate.

They might not all be willing to buy such an expensive ring, but for an Overlord, the extra Skill Power would be worth the cost, even if the mana storage was more of a life-saving effect than a regular use mana pool.

Chapter 785 Full Shift

As the sun reached the horizon, Karl went out and closed the gate, marking the business closed for the evening. If there was some emergency, someone might shout and rattle the gate, but they weren't really the sort of shop that people went rushing to in the late hours of the evening.

Now that they were getting settled in to their new home, Karl had a few ideas to prepare for their next trip to the Dungeon. For one, Pack Affinity had given him a much wider array of skills to work with.

But that also meant that he had a much wider array of skills to teach.

"Dana, come here a second, I want to try to teach you a new skill." He called, bringing her down from the second floor, where she had been studying with Remi.

"Oh, what would you like to teach?" She asked, before leaning back against him to let Karl wrap his arms around her.

Now that he was huge and furry, he was quite comfortable to rest on.

{Pack Master Karl Offers Knowledge} Skill [Bestial Form] will be transferred to his beloved Dana Mage.

Dana smiled as she accepted the knowledge, then activated the skill and found that she was not getting any taller.

Unlike Karl, whose transformation had made him huge, she appeared to be the same size, but furry.

White fur, with black stripes, she realized as she pushed up the sleeve of her robes.

"You match!" Lotus cheered as she ran over to hug Dana and bury her face in the fur of the Mage's neck.

Karl poked Lotus on the head and activated [Follow Me, Little One] again, teaching the skill to Lotus, then included Tessa in the spell knowledge as well.

Tessa smiled as the spell transferred, and then transformed, gaining a draconic muzzle as her head reshaped, and scales covered her visible body.

Thor whistled in appreciation from his space as Tessa checked the transformation, her long red scaled tail swishing gently.

Then Lotus proudly activated her skill and promptly vanished.

No, not vanished, she was under a pile of cloth that was her robes.

The cloth began to wriggle, then vanished as Lotus remembered she could unequip it, and a metre long green dragon emerged, then giggled and took flight, zooming around the room as Cara gave chase.

Davis looked horrified.

"What did you do? Why are there dragons in the shop?" He stuttered.

"It's a spell called [Bestial Form]." Karl laughed, as Lotus and Cara flew up the stairs to the third floor, before he heard them flop down on the pillows.

"So, they're not Dragons?" The Demon asked, confused.

"Well, they're Dragon Clerics. But no, they're not full-blooded dragons, no matter what they look like."

The Appraiser sighed in relief. "After the mage transformed to look just like you, I thought it was something that nullified your disguises."

He finished checking inventory against his sales sheet, then put the notebook in the safe for the evening.

"If that is everything, I will be headed home." Davis announced.

"Have a good evening. We will see you tomorrow."

Davis placed his hand on the lock of the gate to activate the security spell on his way out, and the two sculptors came in from the workshop.

"We're closing at sunset?" Loros asked.

"That's long enough for the day. We made a lot of sales, and everyone needs sleep." Karl agreed.

"Wonderful. And who are these guests?"

That made Dana and Tessa laugh.

"That is Tessa and this is Dana, they learned a new transformation skill. Don't they look lovely?"

Loros nodded in agreement, while Wendy simply looked stunned.

"That doesn't even seem to be an illusion. I know that you're more powerful than I am, but I should be able to see through illusions." She announced.

Tessa walked over and hugged her, which brought a startled squeak from the young Demon as she was nearly crushed by Tessa's enhanced strength.

"Sorry, I didn't realize I was stronger in this form, I thought I had just changed appearance. Somewhere around here is a very small green dragon. That is Lotus. She's upstairs playing with Cara right now." Tessa explained.

Loros giggled. "First a Rakshasa shows up, then he reveals his friend the Bloodbath Spider, and now he's turning people into dragons. It's like speed running the 'things lesser demons are terrified of' checklist."

Tessa laughed and changed back, noting that she retained a few more scales than she remembered.

"Well, we're not trying to terrify our neighbours, just fit in a bit better. After all, four of us aren't Demons, and the fifth one is questionable." She joked.

That could be taken a number of different ways, but both Loros and Wendy appeared to agree with the sentiment.

Loros realized the doublespeak immediately and winked at Karl.

"Don't worry, despite your aura, we all know that you're actually a good guy."

That made Karl chuckle. "I keep telling people it's a mistake, but nobody believes me. But it wasn't really an issue until I was around Demons who could all see it all the time."

Loros waved her hand dismissively. "I wouldn't say all the time. It takes effort for most of us to focus on the aura, and who wants to know all that about strangers? Besides, most Demons have a naturally black aura anyhow, so it's almost useless in a city full of Demons. Which is ironic, as it's one of our most common racial traits."

Wendy stretched with her arms up over her head, wiggled her stiff fingers, then yawned. "Is there dinner soon?" She asked.

Karl looked toward the kitchen door, where the head Chef was nodding in agreement.

"It looks like it's ready. We likely could have fed Davis before he ran away, but I think the baby dragon scared him." Karl joked.

Wendy giggled. "His species is instinctively afraid of Green Dragons. According to legends, once upon a time, they had a more malevolent nature, and all forms of healing and holy spells would cause them massive damage. It doesn't anymore, but the fear of the innately healing species remains."

Chapter 786 Fluffy Dana

The kitchen staff retired to their rooms once their workspace had been cleaned up, still feeling off after the encounter with the strange customer earlier in the day.

A good night's sleep sounded like just what they needed to feel normal again, and the rest of the team wasn't far behind them. Though, Karl noticed that Wendy didn't make it to her room, and ended up with Ophelia.

With everyone in their rooms, Karl checked that the door was locked and walked up behind Dana to slide her dress up over her head.

She purred, literally purred, as his hands slid up her sides, then unequipped the dress and turned to face him.

"Really, you're flirting even now?" She asked.

Karl bumped his nose against hers, then licked the rim of her feline ear, which made Dana moan.

"I don't see why not. Besides, you're so soft in this form."

Unfortunately, she also had claws, as Karl realized moments later as they shredded his back.

Collateral damage.

The room was a disaster zone by morning, when Karl woke up on the bed with Dana in his arms and the blankets missing in action.

Dana shifted and locked her legs around him when Karl tried to get up, then purred contentedly as she fell asleep again. While Karl was in a similarly feline form, it seemed that Dana had truly embraced the way of the cat after she had transformed. She even kneaded biscuits with her hands when she was relaxed and sleepy.

Fifteen more minutes wouldn't hurt.

Karl got up and got dressed when he heard Davis come in for the morning. Most of the rest of the group was already at breakfast, but the Appraiser was hard at work getting everything ready for the day.

Karl took a plate from the cooks, and pretended that he couldn't hear the mournful sounds that Caretaker Jo was making upon discovering the disaster that was his room.

Dana looked incredibly embarrassed, and Karl realized that for the first time, she could actually hear all the background noise and low conversations on the second floor. The hearing of her [Beast Form] was much more sensitive than her human body.

This morning, the shop was much more busy than yesterday, and Karl was upgrading the armour for Madam Shin all morning.

Remi was making potions while the apprentice Runesmiths worked so hard their fingers were cramping, but they were still barely keeping up with demand, and the wooden rings that Wendy had made last night were almost gone by noon when she came in to restock them.

But she wasn't the only one finished with a project. Once Karl was finished with the last few pieces of Rune work, Rae and Loros had finished assembling the armour for the Governor's wife. All they had to do was send a runner to let her know that someone could pick it up. Or send someone to deliver it to her.

[I am a great delivery person. The best, you could say. Nobody can stop me from making my delivery.]
Rae agreed.

[Take Loros with you, so you don't get in trouble. She knows how things are done here.]

Karl knew that he was killing all of Rae's fun sneaking through the Palace, but he didn't know how badly they would take it if she was found in a restricted area.

She was going to see the City Governor's wife, so it wasn't like they were going to try to stop her from making her delivery.

Loros hardly had time to process the news before they were gone. Rae had grabbed her and used [Shadow Step] to bounce between buildings until she reached the Castle gates.

A quick sniff of the air let her know that her target wasn't in the line outside the gates, so Rae moved behind the waiting employees with the confused sculptor.

"Lady Rae, are we really in such a hurry?" She asked, still dizzy from the rapid movement skill deployment.

"Don't you want to see what the inside of the Castle is like? We've got the perfect chance, and we get to be praised for our skills when we get there." Rae explained with pride.

Loros saw the guards trying not to laugh as they heard her talking in the otherwise silent line. She hadn't been lowering her voice, she wasn't worried to have them know that she wanted to see the place while she was visiting.

As she remembered, they were going to give her an escort anyhow.

Sure enough, when they got to the gate, an Overlord Ranked Guard Officer was assigned to accompany them even before she had a chance to speak.

"Delivery?" The guard at the gate asked.

Loros bowed politely. "Yes, Sir. A custom ordered anniversary gift for the Governor's Wife."

The guard nodded. "Ordered by Madam Shin, or for her?"

"Ordered by her." The guard motioned for the waiting Overlord to guide them, and Rae noticed the moment that he activated a small green crystal.

A second later, it flashed green again, and he led them into the building.

Rae leaned over to get a better look at it. "Is that a communication crystal? To let you know if she's taking visitors or about to bite someone's head off?"

The Overlord chuckled at the curious Monster Woman. "Indeed. It is linked to one that the servants carry. You just choose which one you want to message, and they will reply with a green or red flash of light. We also use them for guard patrol check in.

You're with the War Champion, right?

What brings a foreign Guild Champion here to Drodh? I see that you've set up a branch house here in the city." It wasn't hard to tell that this was a more official question, something that they had been instructed to find out about if they happened to hear gossip on the topic.

"Politics. The War Champion was advancing too quickly for local leaders, and they were worried that we were going to get ideas about who should really be in charge." Rae replied with a wink.

The Castle Guard laughed. "So they kicked you out and told you to be someone else's problem? I don't suppose that you can tell us what the Matriarch ordered for the Governor, can you?"

Rae frowned. "He's not allowed to know. She says that it's a surprise."

The Guard laughed, which made the nearby servants look at them in shock.

"Oh, I won't tell him, and neither will the servants in this wing. But we do have a running bet on whether Madam Shin will manage to outdo herself this year. She went pretty wild last year, with a full renovation of the Governor's office."

Loros smiled at him, and Rae nodded her permission to share.

{It's a Monarch-Ranked set of traditional armour fully enhanced by a Runecrafter.} She whispered.

{Seriously?} The guard whispered back.

Loros and Rae both nodded, while the guard whistled in appreciation. "This I've got to see. Don't mind the intrusion. Assuming they let me in."

Then he stopped at a door and politely knocked.

"Ah, my delivery. I got word that it was on the way. Please do bring them in." Madam Shin called from the other side, but the Guard didn't open the door, he waited for the maid inside to open it.

Chapter 787 Shin's Armour

Madam Shin grabbed Rae by the hands as soon as they were in. "Did you really get it done that fast? You didn't cut corners, did you? I want this to be the most memorable present he will ever get. It's our twentieth wedding anniversary."

She made a motion, and the maid brought in the body double from a side room. The big demon sighed in resignation as he realized that he was to serve as a mannequin again.

Rae took out the armour and set it on the table, then began her prepared speech.

"As you know, the base layer is quilted Monarch Rank Bloodbath Spider Silk, Then over that, we have created a thematic scene, where the panels of the armour depict the battle against the undead horde.

We thought it might be the most memorable event of the year that would relate to armour. If you look here, we have recreated the Governor's battle against the Captain over the ocean on the chest panel.

Down the legs, we have the defence of the Sprawl, finishing on the shins with the reconstruction efforts and the new market towers.

The right arm is a detailed battle scene featuring the Governor, while the left arm features the pair of you visiting the city in the aftermath.

The back panel of the armour is the defence at the central docks, and that should cover the outward theme. As for the actual enhancement, we have started with a base of natural regrowth, so the wooden panels will repair themselves, along with extreme durability at the Monarch Rank.

Added to that, we have the user buffs. First, we have enhancements to comprehensive attack damage. We also have a significant boost to the user's strength, but those aren't the primary benefits.

As this is armour, we designed it for survivability. This set of armour has had a [Trollish Regeneration] buff permanently added to it, which will activate whenever it is worn.

And finally, for a bit of over the top flamboyant capability, the armour has a truly prodigious amount of mana storage and an Earth Shield barrier ability added for emergency defence.

Rae fit the armour on the body double as she worked, showing off his ancient and dignified fashion.

"That is beautiful. What did you do to make the runes glow like that?" Madam Shin asked.

"It's a side effect of the process. Unless we attempt to hide them, they will naturally glow red at Monarch Rank. So, he will be flashy wherever he goes. If you look closely, runes have been deliberately carved into the windows of the houses, so it looks like the windows are lit from the inside. The panels are also carved around the edges for decorative effect.

If we turn the lights down, you will get the full visual effect, but even in bright light, it is still magnificent, if I may shamelessly praise my own design." Rae explained.

All of the servants were staring at the body double in awe, and a tear slowly slid down Madam Shin's face.

"You really did it. It's magnificent. I can even tell which panels feature me and my husband together, you got the faces that well detailed.

I didn't know that this level of artistry was possible, even without the enchantments. I know that it's decorative, but this is a mighty set of battle armour in its own right, and I think that he will even wear it to public engagements.

In fact, I want him to wear it to our engagement party next week. Someone go fetch my husband so he can bond this armour and show it off for me." She demanded.

A maid ran out and came back a minute later with a very concerned looking City Governor, as well as two people who appeared to be his personal assistants.

The armour was laid out on the table again, and he skidded to a stop as he noticed it.

"This... how? Where did this come from?" He stammered.

"Happy anniversary darling. I had it made for you by the Darklight Host. Now, bond the item and put it on, I need to make sure it looks right on you." She demanded.

The Governor reverently ran his fingers over the carvings, staring at the battle scenes. Then he focused for a moment and the item vanished before appearing on his body.

[It worked. She gave it to him early, and it bonded.] Rae informed Karl happily.

People were so happy with her art that they were crying. The last time that happened was when she made that Ettin statue for the battlefield outside the Capital.

The Governor activated the buffs, and his power level surged, while the lines of weariness vanished from his face.

Then he raised a hand and activated an Earth Shield in front of him for a second.

"That is beautiful. I can use the shield at my own Rank, and there is enough mana storage to take multiple hits. Ellasbeth, my beloved. This is too much. How am I supposed to compete with a priceless treasure?" The Governor whispered, while his wife beamed in pride.

"Everything has a price. Not a cheap one, as this one is a culmination of two decades of affection. I am glad that you like it, darling. As lovely as it is, one day when we retire, we can pass it down to our oldest warrior." Madam Shin replied, before being pulled into a tearful hug.

Loros was caught up in the emotions, while Rae admired the way that the runes worked with her carvings as the armour moved.

Nobody else had noticed yet, but she had designed the overlapping panels of the layered shoulder pads to look like the warriors on different layers were fighting each other when the arms were moved.

Rae bowed to the Governor and his family as they finished celebrating the gift. "Now, I should return to my duties. Happy anniversary, Madam and Governor. The Darklight Host appreciates your business."

Then she grabbed Loros and vanished from the Castle with [Shadow Step].

Chapter 788 And a Vampire

Loros sighed at Rae as they reached the Guild House. "You do know that they're all freaking out about a teleporting Bloodbath Spider being loose in the Castle right now, don't you?"

Rae stood up a bit straighter.

"Apprentice, you have no sense for the dramatic. Can you imagine how boring it would be to simply walk out while everyone else gossiped? No, that's why I waved at the Guards as we entered. They know that we're back home already, and they can call off the search."

The shop was packed as they arrived, and Karl was busy on the top floor making new Royal Rank and a handful of custom Monarch Rank items, based on the people who were looking around the shop.

Davis had informed them that a fresh set of items was coming out soon, as inventory would change daily. So, they were milling about and looking more closely at all the ones that were still on display.

The vast majority of people in the city were warriors, so it only made sense to make more items that warriors would appreciate. Even among the common workers, most had a warrior class, and not a specific crafting class.

That seemed odd to Karl, but perhaps they didn't get to choose any more than those awakened by the Divine Serum did.

The topic of how System Interfaces were awakened wasn't something that he could easily bring up without having to explain why he didn't know, and it was better not to spread around too much about the group's background.

When Karl came downstairs with the next group of items for the display cases, he noticed that there was one girl waiting in the corner who was clearly not a customer, but who was giving him a hopeful look.

So, Karl let Davis place the items to introduce them to the customers who had been waiting for similar items.

"May I help you?" Karl asked the girl.

"Are you hiring? I have the Appraisal skill, and I'm free to start anytime." She asked.

She looked fairly young, so this might be her first attempt at employment, but Karl decided to ask anyhow.

"Do you have a letter of reference from your previous employer or instructor?" He asked.

The girl shook her head.

"I came from Khuld looking for work. I haven't had a previous employer."

The first part looked like she was saying the truth, but the second was clearly a lie, as she couldn't look him in the eye.

"Alright, how about this. I will start you as an assistant under Davis for a three-day trial. Follow me upstairs, and we will get you ready for work." Karl offered.

Her face brightened, and Davis gave Karl a confused look.

The girl was freshly showered, he could smell that much, and the shop didn't have a dress code. At least not one he had been informed of.

But Rae had other ideas. She had made the cutest store clerk dress in black and white, like the Guild Tabard, and she wanted someone to wear it.

Having the crafters do it would be impractical. Nobody wanted sawdust up their skirts.

Karl brought the girl upstairs, where Rae was rapidly setting out items as she created or found them in her space. One after another was held between her and the new employee until she decided on her first dress idea.

"Yes, perfect. Pick a room without a name tag. That will be yours, and you can change for work. The dress should bond, so you can just equip it clean before work every day." Rae explained.

She changed quickly, and Karl led her back down, so he could help take care of the backlog of customers.

{Seriously? She is adorable.} Davis sent as a Guild message, which brought Lotus and Dana out from the Kitchen area.

With the change of clothes, it was obvious how pale her skin was, and how red her eyes were. Karl didn't recognize the scent, but Lotus did.

{She's a vampire. That's weird, how did she get here?} The Nature Priestess asked.

Vampires wouldn't usually catch fire in sunlight, unless they were Common Rank. But Lotus knew that it was supposed to be incredibly painful, and the girl had come in the middle of the day.

Maybe that was why she was hiding in the corner of the room, where the light from the opening door wouldn't touch her.

At least the second floor rooms didn't have windows. A comfort measure for guards on night shift. Or possibly for security when it was still a barracks.

The young vampire smiled at the customers. "Good afternoon everyone. You can call me Mick, please bear with me as I am new here. But I assure you that my Appraisal skills are perfectly accurate." Davis nodded in satisfaction. It was best to mention that you were appraising with a skill, not a judgment call or a store sheet. It bred trust.

Karl had already memorized what everything was supposed to sell for, so he watched as she worked with the customers in the potion area, leaving Davis to work with the high-value customers as the manager.

That left Karl standing by the wooden staves and the miscellaneous items.

And it didn't take long before someone came in looking. "You do have the ability to make more of them. Oh, thank you Demon Gods for small mercies." A young mage breathed a sigh of relief as he saw Karl standing at the counter.

"Sir, my master would like to inquire as to whether you would offer a bulk discount on multiple custom items. He wishes to commission combat wands for his graduating class at the Lared Academy of Magic." The young man asked.

"That depends on the requirement and the volume." Karl asked.

"The graduating class is fifty mages, at the Commander Rank. He would like forty-nine Commander Rank wands of Fireball, and one Royal Rank stave. The one on display would be perfect for that purpose." The mage explained.

"For the valedictorian, I would assume?" Karl asked.

The mage nodded, and his hood shifted a little to reveal curled ram horns nestled in his curly black hair.

"Well, the staff, I obviously have in stock. The wands will take a few days to make. How much is he prepared to pay?"

The mage set two tomes on the counter.

[Skill Book of Recall] creates a stone with a marked location. Allows the user to return to the marked location. 24 hour cooldown.

[Skill Book of Teleport] Allows the user to travel (Rankx100) metres instantly. Totem Rank and higher may travel (Rankx1000) metres per activation.

Six hundred metres was a pretty decent travel distance. But that increase at Totem Rank was so much better. Instead of eight hundred metres, they could go eight kilometres with a simple [Teleport].

The [Recall] skill, though. That was incredibly useful, though Karl suspected that it was a standard training spell for Academy Students on this continent, as neither was an Epic Grade Skill Book.

Karl tapped the two books, learning the skills, and extended his hand to shake the Mage's. "Return here tomorrow morning and I will have your order ready. You may take the staff with you today." Karl explained.

He took a copy of the item from under the counter, and the mage looked startled.

"You have more than one of them?" He asked.

Karl nodded. "I made a few in advance. Fireball is such a wonderful skill that it is worth keeping in stock. And those staves have all the basic powers that a Mage would want."

Chapter 789 Wands Complete

The mage took the staff and retreated from the counter to let someone else come forward while he sent a message home.

It was close to three hundred kilometres by road to Lared, and his teacher would want to know right away that the deal had been made, and not in four days from now when he returned to the Academy by trade ship.

While the mage talked, Karl sold a number of the assorted Commander Rank rings, which posed a small dilemma for his team.

They needed the apprentices, or at least Wendy, to keep making wooden jewellery, while Loros made the more detailed stone items for Karl's work. But he had just taken a rather large order for wands.

He really should have thought that one through.

{Lotus, can you make me forty-nine wands with at least Commander Rank potential? I need to inscribe them with Fireball and a basic combat buff, so either make them long, or leave room for a small stone.}
Karl requested via Guild Message.

{Alright, I can make fifty branches in a matter of minutes. It just takes energy.}

Karl chuckled, knowing that she really meant motivation and not actual magical energy was the lacking factor.

Karl used [Follow Me, Little One] to teach [Recall] and [Teleport] to Dana, so she would keep the Nature Cleric on track. He would teach the others [Recall] at the end of the day when Lotus wouldn't get sidetracked.

She still hadn't changed back from her tiger form, quite comfortable in her new fur. That should help motivate Lotus. {When do you think that business will calm down? If we're overrun with customers every day, we're not going to get any progression done on our own.} Tessa noted.

{Give it a few days and I think the initial rush of people who have been looking for items will make their way through our doors. Then we should be able to spare time to actually work on ourselves.} Karl replied, though he wasn't sure he believed it himself.

As the crowd was thinning, thanks to having three people on the floor working, Karl decided he could retreat and go work on the wands that Lotus had already made.

She had made the wands out of some sort of black wood, roughly forty centimetres long, and as thick as one of Lotus' fingers. That was more than enough for a basic fireball and Skill Damage with a rune for mana regeneration.

These didn't need mana storage, they were just combat weapons of a ranged sort.

Karl quickly began to inscribe the wands to get through them. It would only take a few hours, and then he could get to the rest of the items that were waiting for him.

Dana sat on his left, reading a book and purring idly as Karl petted her head. She didn't even seem to notice that she was doing it, but it was taking all of Ophelia's willpower not to say anything about it when she passed by the second floor.

Karl managed to get the wands finished without incident, and noticed on his way out to the workshop to check on the sculptors that the mage was still nearby, at the bakery a few doors down the street.

Karl waved to get his attention, then walked over.

"I had some wand stock that I customized for your purpose. Fireball with Skill Damage and Mana Recovery is fine, right? At the Commander Rank, of course. They're all identical in effect, but not in appearance." Karl explained.

"That fast?" The mage asked, shocked.

"When I only need to tweak them a little, it doesn't take long. Fireballs are popular." Karl offered, covering for the fact that Fireball was one of the easiest effects to replicate with runes. The only one he could think of that was easier was a Lightning Bolt.

Once the mage finished his snack, he followed Karl back to the house and straight to the second floor, where forty-nine wands were laid out in two rows.

"What do you think? Is this suitable for your graduates? You did say a combat wand was what you desired, and this will help them with combat." The mage examined them each closely, and noticed that while the appearance changed, the actual effects were uniform.

"This is perfect. Exactly what the Dean had requested, and much faster than any other wand maker we contacted had quoted. Most wanted a year or more to acquire the materials and make that many." He explained.

Karl chuckled. "That was their loss, then. We just happened to have the materials on hand, as we were opening a new shop. I appreciate your business, and I am certain those spells will prove to be a great benefit to the Guild."

The mage smiled. "If you are interested in additional Skill Books, we have a trade Envoy in the city once a month. Or, you can take the trip down to see us, it's only a few days by ship."

Karl chuckled and gestured toward the door. "I have a Ghostfire Thunderbird at my disposal. I am certain he can make a few hundred kilometres in less than that."

That made the mage laugh. "I would say so. How did you convince him to let you ride without burning you to ash?" "Trade secret."

The mage bowed politely and turned to leave. "Perhaps we will meet again soon. I am certain that my mentor will be overjoyed with the success of this mission. Only three months remain until graduation, and we feared that we would have to wait until next year to begin granting the rewards."

Once he was gone, nearly skipping with joy on his way out, the house fell silent for the first time all day, and the kitchen staff prepared to serve lunch.

Mick, their new vampire clerk, looked at the meal being served with regret. Then she turned her head in shock as the staff brought out a wine bottle of what was definitely warm blood.

"We know that you need both for survival, but we didn't know the proportions. Lady Rae generously donated a sample of her reserve stock for your meals. If you can inform us of your dietary needs later, we will make preparations." The chef explained.

Mick poured a small sample of the blood into a wine glass and sighed with pleasure as the scent hit her nose. "Earthy and lovely. Such a powerful vitality. I won't need more than a glass or two of this a week. The bottle will last me roughly a month with just regular meals."

Rae patted the vampire on the head. "It's not bad, right? Royal Rank Hill Giant."

Mick nearly choked on her drink as she turned to look at Rae. "This is from a sentient being? I shouldn't drink that. Drinking from the intelligent species is widely considered barbaric."

Rae shrugged. "He's already dead anyhow, it's not like using a bit of his blood for your survival will hurt anything. As long as it's not addictive or toxic."

The vampire shook her head, making her long black hair ripple and flow over her face.

"No. Drinking from live targets is, though. It's also very intimate, and ... why am I telling you that? So embarrassing."

Rae giggled. "Don't worry, you'll find the one you really want to bite one of these days."

From his space, Thor snorted in amusement as he ate. That phrase just sounded odd coming from Rae.

"What do you usually drink?" Karl asked, so the chef could keep some for emergencies.

"I usually drink blood wine. The vampires make it, and there are some batches in stock at the local butchers, made from the Awakened and Ascended Rank sea beasts that the fishermen bring in. It's a bit fishy, but not in a bad way. Like eating sushi."

Rae made a mental note to try that. Blood Wine sounded like a truly refined lady's beverage.

Chapter 790 Group Split

Karl worked late into the night, making dozens of jewellery pieces of different sorts, a few more fireball staves, a dozen more fireball wands like the ones for the academy. That should be enough to take the shop through the next day, as the collection was now larger than what they had sold during the previous shift.

With the shop closing at dusk, they were able to work a few extra hours after and get ahead of their anticipated sales.

When the next morning arrived, Karl realized that Remi had been up all night, and she had made a massive supply of potions, enough that she likely wouldn't need to do it again for a month. She had cleared large patches of her space for materials, but that would grow back quickly enough. The important part was that she hadn't used up any of her resources. So she didn't lose anything, other than some time.

Everyone gathered on the second floor, and Karl outlined his plan for the day.

"We made more than enough items for the shop last night, so everyone should be free until at least noon today, other than Davis and Mick."

Karl stopped to give Mick an apologetic look, as Davis wouldn't be in for another two hours.

"So, I have a plan. What I would like to know is if having some of my beasts go in first will block me from going into the dungeon separately.

If they can go on their own, and we can go as well, then we can build up a huge amount of loot, as long as we take the time to gather the junk and raw materials.

What I'm thinking is that we send Rae, Cara, and Hawk now. Then, once they're done, the rest of us will go in a couple of hours. If it doesn't let me in, then Remi and Thor will do my share of the grunt work, and we will know what to do for next time.

If it does let me in, even after they have cleared the dungeon, then we can get two shares of the loot and nobody has to sit out."

That sounded like a good plan to everyone involved. Well, everyone involved in the first trip, as Rae was already carrying Cara out the door as Hawk circled overhead, waiting for them.

Tessa pondered the potential issues with this plan, and then decided that it should be alright. Dana had golems and her Epic Guard, Remi had her bodyguards, and they would have Thor.

If something went wrong with that plan, then they could just leave and take the gold coin loss.

It would be a massive understatement to say that the guards were startled when a strange woman appeared between them and the dungeon portal carrying a winged void badger, while a massive Thunderbird swooped in from above, and only barely tucked its wings to fit in the portal.

In fact, they were still talking about it an hour later when Cara had finished looting the place dry, to the point that they had even taken some of the likely looking plants, just in case Remi might want them for decoration.

The shop was fairly quiet today, and they had only sold a few rings and a dozen jars of ridiculously expensive beauty products Remi had made.

Interestingly, they had even sold a small jar of Shadowbranch paste, which was used to turn Thor black as a disguise. It wasn't exactly useful, unless you were sneaking around in the dark and didn't want it to wear off, so neither Davis nor Mick really understood why the customer in question had purchased it after understanding what it did.

Now that team one was back, and sorting through loot in their spaces, trying to come up with a plan for what to do with all the trash they collected, it was time for group two.

Once they got close to the dungeon, Karl realized that there was a second issue that they had not considered.

{Guild Cooldown: 1 hour 58 minutes remaining}

It appeared that a Guild could only send one team in every three hours.

"Well, how about we taste test some local beverages and then head back to the house? We can go back in later." Karl suggested.

"Not much else that we can do." Ophelia agreed.

Guild coordination would be an important aspect of management if they had more people, but at least at this point Karl knew that they should be able to enter, just not right away.

He was about to lead them all to the coffee shop where he had found the mage when an oddly pained aura caught his attention.

Karl couldn't locate the source of the distress, but there was something wounded nearby, and he was almost certain that it was a beast.

"One moment, I want to find something before we stop. I can feel something's distress, and I might be able to help." He explained quietly, not wanting to alarm the others walking down the street, as they wouldn't understand that he was likely talking about an injured pet, not a person in need.

Karl turned left until the sensation of distress felt like it was in front of him, then he walked down a side street and between a pair of large manor houses. They were headed for the shore, and that was where Karl got the feeling that the distress was coming from.

They were well past the docks, close to the wall, when they reached the shore in the wealthy district of Stone Chapel.

Now, even Lotus could sense it, and she was looking for the distressed animal.

Neither of them could see it, so Karl started searching with other forms of vision.

Right at the wall, when they were ready to double back and try again, Karl spotted it with Soul Sight. There was a crystalline cocoon on the shore, and it gave off a powerful aura, as well as the sense of distress.