

Night Out
Friday – 09.16.62

DAMN IT. WHY WAS THIS SO HARD? I TOOK A COUPLE OF deep breaths, trying to steady my nerves. Why did I agree to this? It was probably a bad idea, but picking up a friend or two who were also Divers would be very useful. Plus, Ashley was nice, and I think she understood that I didn't like crowds. The reason I agreed was that she suggested I should give it a try. Get my name out there or something, can't really remember right now.

Shit, we were there. I hopped out of the bus, and feeling a little unsteady on my feet, I headed toward the... actually, I'm not certain what it is. Not really a bar, maybe a Night Bar? It wasn't a night club, according to Ashley, but it definitely was designed for a party atmosphere. Or something. I wasn't sure.

Ashley was leaning up against her car, how well off did she have to be to afford a car? As I walked up she smiled kindly.

"I would say relax, but I kind of doubt it's helpful."

"Yeah. Not really." I felt like I was going to be sick.

Ashley looped her arm around my shoulders and gave me a comforting hug. Thankfully she also broke it off quickly. Oddly, it helped.

"So I have some friends, or actually some friends asked me to help show their new Diver friends the ropes, and we're all meeting here before everyone's orientation. So basically I'm the only one who knows everyone, so don't worry too much. It's awkward for everyone."

I did stop worrying. A little bit. A tiny fraction of a second later it came back. Yeah, not worrying about this was going to be a major problem. Taking deep breaths, I followed her into the building and immediately I had so many questions and no way to get the answers.

The music was clearly blaring off to my right and there were tons of people dancing to what sounds like a very good EDM track. But it wasn't as loud as I expected, as we were in a more casual lounge-like area. They had standing tables, regular tables, and even areas with love seats and normal chairs. Yet here in the non-dance floor the volume of the music was more manageable, all because of a curtain of magic I could sense between the dance floor and the seating area. And I really fucking wanted to take a closer look at that magic.

"I've seen that look before. Come on, Kathrine, let's get our drinks and find Mark and Heather." Ashley pulled me away with a slight chuckle.

I pouted but followed. It would take a long time to figure out how to make that curtain thing anyways, and I was sure they didn't want me poking around at the sound curtain in the middle of business hours.

I grabbed my whiskey from the bartender and we headed toward an unoccupied regular table. At first it was just me and Ashley, and I took a few minutes to get used to the environment, it was louder than I was used to, but not bad for listening to music. A few minutes after we sat down, Ashley waved over a guy who turned out to be Mark, and a few minutes after that Heather showed up.

Ashley introduced her two friends and we got talking about the orientation weekend. I was surprised to learn that all the guilds used the same weekend. It seemed like

an odd tradition, but it apparently stemmed from “the early days” when there weren’t enough new people in a single guild and they pooled recruits to do things properly. Or whatever.

I was also fairly impressed that the question of jobs didn’t come up for a solid ten minutes. I would have expected it to come out sooner rather than later. But apparently no one really wanted to be the first to say anything.

“Have you heard the rumors of a new Necromancer showing up in the city?” Heather asked.

I stiffened, not really certain how this was going to go.

“Yeah. But I don’t know how true it is. You would think people would have reported seeing zombies around. And, well, they have. But none of the reports were collaborated, so they probably haven’t seen anything,” Mark countered.

“Or Necromancer minions are golems made from corpses and can’t be reproduced just anywhere,” I said quietly, though the other two heard it.

“I haven’t done any real research. I guess it’s possible. But that means the Necromancer wouldn’t be able to test their spells until they entered the dungeon. Geez. They would probably have to do a test run. Go in, kill shit. Spend a few hours working on and developing a new spell. Whatever guild they’re a part of will probably have to let the Necromancer do a solo run,” Heather started working things out loud.

Ashley snorted, drawing our attention. “You’re right, but no guild will allow that. Not for a new hunter or anyone too low of a level.”

“The guild rules I read said you can enter at level 3,” I said slowly.

“With permission, right? No one is letting a rare job go solo before level 6 at the earliest. Regardless of what the rules said,” Ashley clarified.

I frowned, that would make my life significantly more difficult. I didn't want to draw too much attention to myself, so I didn't say anything. While level 3 was traditionally easy to get to, 6 was significantly harder. Getting to level 6 was going to be a maddening effort if I couldn't spend a lot of time working out a way to actually test my create skeletons spells rapidly.

“I doubt it will be a big deal. There are all kinds of ways to make this work.” Ashley waved her hand vaguely. “Anyone want to dance, a song or two?”

I tried a basic smile. “Don't really feel like it, go have fun.”

Ashley grinned and hopped up, and Heather followed her out to the dance floor. Mark decided to stay as well, remaining in his seat diagonally from me.

“So you're the Necromancer, aren't you.” Mark smiled.

“Uhm. Yeah. Not really certain what the social etiquette about asking about jobs should be. And no one said anything, so...” I shrugged.

Mark laughed. “I'm in a similar position. I'm an Assassin.”

I smiled. “Not many of those in dungeons, from what I hear. Do you know why?”

“Yeah. Most Assassins get their job naturally. Like I got it after hunting monsters and predators who attacked our farm. Most are the same, farmers or something similar. They pick up the job and only use it as a way to help them do their 'real job.'”

“Nice that it works that way. So what about you?”

“Never wanted to be a farmer. And it was a good excuse. You?”

“Was trying to pick up the Healer job and had bad luck. My scholarship won’t fund me anymore, so this was my last semester in college anyway.” I wondered what he was going to say.

“Never heard of that job. Is it new?”

“Enough that I was unable to find any information on how to make a Healer spell. Had to attempt to make it all up on my own.”

“Too smart for me. So do you get random spells, or do you have to make them like I do?”

I grinned as we compared the creation of feats and spells and how they worked. It was a lot of fun, and despite what Mark said, he definitely seemed intelligent to me. The Assassin job sounded a lot like Necromancer. I always thought of Assassins as lone fighters, but Mark had picked the “pack hunter” path, which focused on cooperation. Though he did have plenty of documentation and even people to question.

“Hey, couldn’t help overhearing your conversation.” I turned to see a dude in all form-fitting black. “You said you’re the new Necromancer?”

I sighed, we had been having such a great conversation. “Yeah.”

He stuck out his hand. “Percy. I’m a Pyromancer. I assume zombies are golems then?”

“Yeah. I use skeletons though.”

“Do you have any tips for creating a golem? I’m trying to create a unique fire golem you know, and...”

“Let me stop you there.” I struggled to keep my voice free of annoyance. “I’m level 1, only know a little bit about

golem creation, and haven't been in the dungeon at all yet, so I haven't practiced creating my minions. I can help you with runes in general, if you're having problems with them, but my knowledge of other components of the skill are severely limited."

He blinked for a moment. "I see. But how haven't you had time to create undead? Haven't you paid anyone to bring corpses out of the dungeon?"

"I can't afford to do so."

"But why get the Necromancer job then?"

"Because I didn't go for it. I created a spell that turned out to be connected to the Necromancer job," I said slowly.

"Sucks. If it's true."

I rolled my eyes and turned away from the asshole. He clearly didn't like it, as he huffed and walked away. Mark winced as I turned toward him.

"I think he was insulted you thought that he couldn't handle the runes," Mark said, clearly uncomfortable.

"Why? Pyromancers are elemental type spellcasters. It makes sense he would be having issues with runes," I said.

There was a moment where Mark gave me a weird look. But he did explain what he was talking about. "You interrupted his question, which made it sound like you knew exactly what he was talking about, then you said he didn't have any skill with runes."

"Oh. I was just telling him what I actually could do. I only interrupted because I didn't want to sit through some long-winded explanation of some problem, only to say 'I don't know.'"

"I get it, but people like to be listened to. So maybe next time just let them ramble on and let them know what

you actually know afterward.”

I frowned but nodded. I just didn't like wasting someone's time with something important, like the problems they had with important things like life-saving spells. It frustrated me when that happened, one of the reasons I had slowed, and eventually stopped, working on Healing magic.

I can't imagine he would have been happier having spent a few minutes explaining whatever complicated problem he had, only for me to say, “Nope, can't help ya!” Maybe I should have heard him out instead.

This was why I hated doing these kinds of things. I'd been drinking, so I knew my ability to make decisions was impaired. I wasn't sure if I would have interrupted him like that otherwise. Which now made me wonder if I would be better off not making friends while drinking. Whatever.

A few more people came up to meet and I was visibly pissing people off. Mark simply shook his head—I had no idea what I was doing! All I did was correct people's misunderstandings, and only about Necromancers. I even let them finish speaking first! I guess I needed to work on delivery. But honestly, you'd think we'd be past being annoyed about having misinformation corrected after all the damage that kind of thing had done in the past.

Heading home, I did have a friend in Mark and Heather agreed to meet up after orientation weekend, which was nice. Ashley offered her place to hang out, so that was nice too. Maybe I should try to make friends while drinking. Or I just needed people who weren't bothered by my hyper-focus.