

Master 121

Chapter 121 - 121. Claras Thoughts

While Laurence took the paperwork and sat down at one of the many tables walker swore he saw a tear in his eye. Poor Laurence and his stack of paper work.

"I have gathered some smaterials and copied them in To this journal. The first section is about dragons with dark elemental affinities, the second is some information specifically on skeletal dragons. There are very interesting things related to their diet which I think will help once midnight hits a growth spurt. I also managed to find some parts on abyssal serpents, mostly about their rarity and the most common location they have been found. They were once hunted to near extinction since they were thought to be evil. They may consume light element as nourishment but they can actually utilize light skills along with dark skills. However you'll need to note that their dark elemental skills are mostly for stealth, it's actually a significant part of their species evolution." What would he ever do without Clara! Walker had totally forgotten about her looking in to the guilds records for information. The tamers had completely taken his attention lately.

Walker began to scan the pages of the journal making sure to get a good look at each page. His skill mental archive was recording all the information for him to peruse later on. Clara had really outdone herself, not only had she recorded in depth bits of how big a skeletal dragon was expected to grow but also the ideal diet for one! Catching his attention was the fact that most skeletal dragons would eat only bones once they reached adulthood. Their stomach acid would become strong enough to dissolve even other dragons bones! The curious part was that the stronger the bones they ate the more they could strengthen their own sakes for defense. If midnight did the same she could avoid a serious amount of damage. Since midnight was a mixed breed dragon walker didn't think she would only eat bones especially since she had eaten other monsters as well not just the bones. This most likely meant that she could survive off a mixed diet! This relieved him quite a lot since they party would always need to provide food for her.

The section on the abyssal serpents had similar knowledge on growth rate and inner anatomy. It referenced a researcher who had discovered the long thought extinct serpents over fourth years ago. The man had hidden in a cave from a storm while out doing research I let to see strange pairings of snakes moving in the walls. Eventually he saw one smaller one turn in to a pool of ink and materialize in to an abyssal serpent. Naturally this researcher furiously recorded all of this and studied their activities for some time. Hence the knowledge on diet and growth came to be. Abyssal serpents seemed to start out with only the ability to hide themselves as "paintings" or in onyx's case a tattoo. After they reached a full two feet in length did their growth spurt start. The theory was that this was when their system unlocked and they could actively grow.

Glancing down at where onyx had been resting in tattoo form walker figured he was about one and a half feet long. This growth must be from the more concentrated light element from the crystals onyx had been snacking on. If walker were to only feed him light crystals would onyx grow even faster? This could be an expensive investment but if onyx grew to the size this researcher theorized it would be well worth it. The longest one the researcher had witnessed was one spanning the length of ten horse drawn carriages. The thickness the size of a hundred year old oak. That size of an abyssal serpent could easily swallow a young dragon and a few adventurer parties to boot.

"This is perfect! I didn't expect you to rewrite it all in to a journal for me. You've outdone yourself!" Clara stood just a bit taller hearing his words. She was after all the first floor manager of the adventurers guild. Of course she would put forth amazing results. It helped greatly that she had found the motivation to become better herself. Seeing this party in front of her push forward to improve by leaps and bounds made her want to do the same. If they would become the strongest party then she should become the best manager. It was the only acceptable path.

" well as your manager I am required to do my best. So are you planning to accept their request? Should I guess that it stems from you wanting to improve your knowledge on the bonds you share with midnight and onyx?" Clara hit the nail in the head. " if so I strongly recommend it, adventurers and tamers often pair up and have dual memberships with each respective guild. I'm not telling you to join them, but making connections could improve your survival in the future. For example since tamers have a better understanding of beasts this works out to them also having better relations with the Demi humans. Since their species has many traits from monsters their personalities follow suit. Humans tend to have a decent relationship politically with them but on an individual level it's still challenging." Knowing the party would branch out and eventually visit other kingdoms Clara knew it was part of her duty to guide them. The tamers guild connecting with them and showing them how to get along with Demi humans would be the perfect situation. Not to mention the Demi human territory is well known for being safer than other areas. There were still dangers but because it was mostly open plains before the mountains it was a great training ground. Adventurers would be able to see danger and run or be able to openly maneuver to take down an opponent. This was also a reason why the merchants preferred their journeys to the Demi human kingdom than to the elf kingdom. Too many monsters could ambush them in the forest.

"While their leader does some paperwork I'll give you all some Demi human basics!" Clara had gone in to full manager mode. It was a wonder she wasn't a teacher!

Chapter 122 - 122. Lessons

" the Demi humans as you know are a race that has an extreme variation in ability. Unlike humans they are similar in respect to monsters when it comes to systems. For example you as a human can have a system that gives you skills. A monster would have a system that is related to what species it is. A Demi human would have a system that builds from their beast traits. A reptilian Demi human that has the blood of snakes may have a system that grants them abilities a snake species of monster would have.

Poison, scales, heightened smell, cold blood, and many more. These effect them physically, but where things become interesting is that their system will zero in on the species of snake. Say it's a flame serpent then maybe the Demi human would have skills related to fire such as fire immunity, fire ball, and maybe even flame healing. This makes the Demi humans thought to be halfway between monsters and humans. The similarities are why humans can get along with them to a degree, specifically tamers. However the opposite is true of elves and Demi humans. Elves detest monsters due to their chaotic actions therefore they often do not get along with Demi humans. The dwarves often get along with Demi humans because they appreciate physical strength which most Demi humans have in abundance. Other races like the demons are not so kind to any race, they often like to aggravate the Demi humans tempers since they are like monsters." This speech was one most of the staff learned for when parties would travel toward the Demi human lands for the first time.

"Wait so does that mean there are some that have monster traits?" Remey had taken an interest, her thoughts coming to midnight. We're there Demi humans who were part dragon?

"Yes as I said they have traits of monsters and animals. I know you may be thinking of midnight your little dragon. However it is normal for those that have such traits to live with intelligent monsters to rule them. In the case of a dragon like Demi human they may become servants to the ancient dragons who have villages in the mountains. That's a whole other lesson on the dragon kin, if I talk on that topic we could be here for many hours. The reason I mentioned a Demi human with monster abilities may rule over intelligent monsters of the same trait is simple, power. Due to their traits they could have the strengths and skills of said monsters but the higher intelligence of a human. End of the day by manipulating the monsters they often become somewhat of their own breed of villain. The Demi human kingdom constantly tries to put an end to these individuals. Don't go thinking they are all bad however, some Demi humans use their monster traits to create peaceful solutions. I believe I recently heard a story of a Demi human with wasp like traits that was able to communicate with a queen wasp to stop killing farmers in an apple orchard. Now instead the giant wasps act as guards for the farmers greatly increasing their harvest. This was because of the Demi humans traits and skills which brought about advantage to both. Increased harvest and safety for farmers along with the freedom to grow and consume the invaders of the fields for the giant wasps. A win win." Clara like to remember such stories. Hearing of those who used their unique situations to benefit a large amount of people was inspiring.

Remey was trying to process all this information. Knowing that some monsters reported to a Demi human it could be challenging to fight in the Demi human lands. Gil had though the exact same thing, "so how do we know if a monster is doing something like guarding an orchard? Is there any way to tell the difference between them and a wild monster that could attack at any moment? Why if we defeat a monster that we aren't supposed to?" All valid questions.

"That's exactly the reason you should listen to the tamers guild, they can point out special markings often given to such monsters. It's a skill that Demi humans often have to identify those under their

leadership. Even more so if you see the citizens in the Demi human cities or towns they will often have tattoos showing which noble they serve under. Now it's not expected that a person memorize every possible identification of every noble or leader but the tamers should teach you the most important three or five." This has been a long standing tradition since before the Demi humans had formed a nation. They started many many years ago as tribes fighting amongst themselves for territory. They would tattoo their tribe members to show they belonged and represent them in battle. The tradition lasted through the ages and became their own form of social ranking.

"Finally!" Laurence had filled out the last form and dramatically dropped the stack on the counter. "Miss Clara I would like to hand in these forms to creat a request!"

"Of course, I will file this for you and send the necessary quest to the specified party. Pleas look for a notification from your system in the coming days for acceptance or denial." Clara switched modes and was giving Laurence the speech she was taught when she started working at the guild.

The look on Laurence's face was one of pleading. He didn't know if he could fill it all out again without breaking. Monsters attacking by surprise? He could handle it. Elise driving him crazy with questions? He could handle it. Paperwork? Well he might just fail to survive. This was the bane of his very existence.

Glancing at walker "so if I remember right you wanted to go get some training done right? I know we took up too much time here. I do apologize for rushing out so suddenly but I did promise my friends here I would train with them. Until next time miss Clara." Laurence grabbed Riley and Elise by the arm practically dragging them out. This took all of Clara's strength not to loose her poker face and laugh out loud.

Chapter 123 - 123. Riley's Beasts

Saying their own goodbyes to Clara the Party rushed to catch up with Laurence and the others who had headed out the door.

Clara smiled after them taking the top three forms from the stack and tossing the others in a recycling bin. Her little trick would teach them from trying to get around her rules in the future. She promptly got to work setting up the quest so she could issue it in a few days.

The walk back to the mansion was much faster than they had expected. Part in turn of Laurence rushing along and the other since no one got in the way. Walker wanted to stop at the cathedral again but knew if he said anything he would get teased for the rest of the day. Also there were still a few hours until the second performance, it would be strange to show up again so early.

When they returned they didn't bother heading inside. They knew if they warmed up by the fire they would end up inside all afternoon.

Gil's targets were still there along with a fresh layer of ice that had set overnight. "Gil I'm going to add a few more targets as obstacles so you can work on firing while moving." Walker had noticed that Gil almost always fired from a standstill position, this was fine so far but what if they needed to run or dodge?

Elise had mentally signaled Stella who soon flew down from a spot on the roof. She had been enjoying the warmth of the sun completely unaffected by the chill in the air.

"Hmm so you need to work on shooting while moving right? I think we can set up a fun game to practice then. It will depend on everyone else too." Laurence had an idea that would allow everyone to practice dodging and attacking. "You remember how I said Riley was a wild beast tamer? Well if he releases his three wild demon boars they could run wild on the training field a bit. Su could block and dodge, Gil can fire at targets while dodging, I can hold Hyde and dodge so he can get used to more chaos, Stella and Elise can work together to fly and dodge, and Remey can try to destroy more targets than anyone else while not being hit. Riley please don't fall asleep on us like the last time we trained this way, we were stuck running for two hours! I figure you will practice dodging while manipulating elements?" Laurence had a good plan and it definitely made for good training. If they all could let dodging become instinctual then even when attacked unaware their bodies could react to prevent harm.

"Yes, making targets while we move will definitely help me understand my skills limitations, but I think we can add more to it, how about one person is it, basically we play tag. We need to dodge the boars, not get tagged, and break targets." Walker didn't want to make it easy, if they were going to improve they needed to challenge themselves with more multitasking. A good adventurer could manage many parts of a chaotic environment to ensure survival.

"Let's play tag!! I promise Stella and I won't hide in the sky all the time, we need to work on our game in the ground too, why if Stella can't fly. Winds can be really dangerous for flying type monsters you know!" This was actually one thing Stella and Elise practiced often. They both knew the risks that came with flight the largest being falling. Being shot down by an enemy or even being blown off course by strong winds was always a possibility. To counter this threat they developed strategy to dodge and run in the ground that utilizes jumps and temporary flight.

"Well that's decided, Riley if you could please summon them. Walker if you could please make some more targets." Laurence summoned out Hyde from his ring and held him in his glove covered hands.

Walker looked around and decided to create fifty ice pillars equally spread through the field. This would really push his ability to manipulate water and change it to ice. He closed his eyes allowing his senses to expand and feel the natural water mana around him. Using his elemental manipulation he slowly willed the water element mana to change in to pillars about the height of a normal person. Most of his mana was consumed and he felt like he had just run around the mansion ten times.

Some of the pillars were not perfectly constructed showing that he needed to learn more of elemental mana. Trying things in such a large scale without proper knowledge would not lead to a concrete result. Hence three pillars looked as if they would fall by themselves.

Walker's eyes shot open just as a large grey creature sprinted past him. This was the demon boar! Its hair had a grey pointy look to it. The tusks were black along with its hooves. A red glint shown in its eyes threatening to run wild everywhere it could. This thing was almost double the size of midnight and could easily crush any one of them. Had Laurence and elegies really been training this way normally?

Any time to think was quickly used up as the serving boar came sprinting towards him. Walker jumped to the side narrowly avoiding the black tusk aimed at his stomach. They may not be the fastest creatures in the world but they could give the entire group a run for their money.

Su was trying to dodge them but only succeeded in deflecting the one coming towards her. She had the lowest agility out of everyone and that was hurting her now. She didn't take any damage from the attacks but her pride would be feeling the sting later. This was just more incentive to improve her agility next time she leveled up.

Walker found that he had a moment without any of the boars focused on him so he began watching everyone's tactics.

Chapter 124 - 124. How To Dodge

Watching Gil adapt more to moving while aiming at farther targets was interesting. Now that a bit of chaos had been added his usual cool and calm actions became rushed. No one in the party had ever noticed this tendency. His aim had always been very precise, knowing that his aim would seeger the more stress he was under was very important for Walker to know. This problem however was easily fixed, this training idea from Laurence was actually brilliant.

Remey and Gil had similar agility but instead of using hers to dodge Remey seemed to be completely engrossed in attacking targets. When a boar would charge at her she would try to push it back using strength. The choice to do so instead of dodging was completely about her personality. Remey would face things head on instead of avoid them. "Remey save you strength and dodge! If this was a real fight you would get worn out and crushed!" His words weren't the nicest but when it came to Remey being blunt was the safest practice. Naturally he face flushed red in anger, she didn't want anyone to doubt her ability by saying she could loose a fight. The next time the boar charged at her she spun slightly letting it pass by her narrowly. The tongue stuck out at walker was just her extra tough.

Laurence was constantly whispering to Hyde so that he would become more comfortable. Sadly the progress was extremely slow since every time a boar even looked on their direction Hyde curled up. Laurence was just happy he wasn't shooting flaming quills everywhere. When Hyde had first grown quills he would fire them off at anything that made a sound, Laurence had faced many hardships when Hyde accidentally hit one of the other tamers sand tiger. It was not a very becoming sight as Laurence rand from an enraged sand tiger.

Elise and Stella had paired up which was to be expected. They used a unique fighting style where Stella would grab Elise by the shoulder with her talons and lift her up to dodge anything coming their way. Two flaps of Stella's wings was enough to get the pair a few feet in the air. The large drawback seemed to be that it took Stella a lot of energy to carry Elise's weight. Elise wasn't that large of a person but since Stella was a harpy she wasn't made for strength and heavy lifting. Her strength was speed and quick attacks with the ability to retreat.

Laurence constantly glanced at Elise using the current strategy and walker had a feeling he was on the same page as him. Laurence also wanted to see Elise improving herself instead of relying only on Stella for help. The two were a dedicated pair but if one was ever injured their entire strategy would be broken.

Riley was...walker couldn't see Riley anywhere. Shouldn't he be running around too? Turning his head her and there to get a better view of the training field walker eventually zeroed in on the far corner. Riley was seated on the ground snacking on some dried vegetables. He was ready to yell at Riley to join them when he noticed a boat was heading toward Riley already. That would teach hem to be lazy while they all worked!

The boar was heading directly toward Riley with no room for dodging. Miraculously Riley dropped his dried vegetables and glared at the boar. His eyes seemed bloodshot and full of pure rage. Walker could feel some fear build within him even though he was far away. The boar stopped its assault immediately and turned around to charge towards Elise.

Riley must have used a skill from his system! That was not a normal reaction for anyone to have when faced with danger. Not to mention since Riley could tame a wild beast what techniques did he use to do so? They couldn't be the same as other tamers so they must be more wild themselves. Walker had thought his skills would be some grand show of force but instead he had witnessed the piercing glare of an apex predator that would put a wild beast in its place. Walker couldn't think anything poor about Riley's actions. Riley may seem to laze about but he needed to use his system skills to properly curb his tamed beasts from harming even him, hence he needed to face them head on to assert strength and dominance.

Walker had now fallen in to his greatest weakness. He was thinking too much and not paying attention to the tow boars currently coming from opposite sides. He felt the ground vibrate slightly and returned to his senses to see they were going to crush him.

He couldn't fly up above them like Stella and Elise. He couldn't overpower them to hold or deflect them like Remey. Since he lacked a shield he couldn't block and suffer minor damage like Su. He was stuck, if he jumped to the side he could still be grazed. Even worse when the two boars inevitably collided after missing him they would both move the direction he dodged meaning he would have to immediately doge again on unsteady feet.

The pressure of the two bore down on walker who was using his critical thinking skill to the max. Time seemed to be moving in slow motion but that didn't mean his body was any faster. He needed a way to dodge these two and keep dodging. He needed to chain together his movements so they flowed as one constant step.

The system granted him an answer,

' Due to the users perilous situation the skill dance of the wild rabbit has been taken from the tribesman system and automatically learned.'

His body now moved without his consent. He could feel an almost instinctual tug placing his feet and turning his torso. This was almost second nature to him.

The others had noticed walker become cornered and were about to shout and rush over but instead saw something more amazing and strange.

Chapter 125 - 125. Improvement

Walker didn't even take a second to read the system notification. He instead had allowed his instincts to take over and follow through his feelings.

The two boars were about to crush him when he hopped out of the way on one foot turning elegantly. His other foot helps slightly off the ground he landed in a slight crouch. As walker had predicted the boards hit each other with force showing no sign of injury. Instead they seemed more fired up to charge at their previous victim. They both turned towards walker lowering their tusks to try and maim him. Yet again walker hopped and spun leaving a fraction of an inch between them.

The boars charged over and over at him jerking their tusks every which way trying to snare their prey. However walker constantly avoided them hopping and spinning around. Always dodging within a hairs length from them. He would bend his knees to duck under their chins and slide between the two boars with his jade acting to balance his weight. The movements becoming more and more elegant.

The others were all witnessing this, the third boar had been drawn as well since the other two were making so much noise. They all witnessed walker dancing around three demon boars now! The boards hadn't so much as brushes him. Walker was dancing around not showing a single bead of sweat. His actions spoke of a rabbit avoiding a fox; constantly leaping and sliding by at any cost. One second he would look to be caught only to escape with plenty of space to breath. Nobody had the courage to interrupt this breathtaking scene before them for some time.

Soon the demon boars grew visibly slower, their rage had died down leaving way to tiredness. Demon boars may have been fast and powerful but stamina was not their strong suit. They were burst hunters, a strong fast attack to claim their prey then a long rest. The fact that the others had all stopped to watch was completely ignored. Their training may have been important as well but watching walker dance around the boars had given them insight on new ways to dodge and survive against strong attacks.

Riley finally stood up, he could tell the demon boars were basically done and out of energy. It was time to let them rest, he approached the three who couldn't even muster the energy to charge at walker again and with a flesh of red light they returned to the beast ring. Walker who had seen that the three boars were done had distanced himself while holding his hands out to balance himself for the next chance to dodge. Only once the bots returned to Riley best ring did he leave his trance like state of dancing.

Remey and Elise rand towards him a million questions on their mind. They had the energy to run to him but not the forethought to let one speak before the other.

Walker himself was still processing what had happened for the past moments. He didn't even pay heed to Remey and Elise launching questions. He knew he had wanted a way to dodge and that he couldn't find an answer but he didn't expect to feel his body move on its own. He had no answers so he stead looked to his system.

'dance of the wild rabbit- passive skill

This way of moving is deeply ingrained in the blood of tribesman. Through many evolutions tribesman would watch weaker animals escape predators. The strong desire and learning ability gave birth to an instinctual passive skill. Using the natural agility of the user they are able to move in a way to avoid most attacks. Like a rabbit slipping from the jaws of a fox.'

A skill that came from evolution? Wasn't that the same of a monster's skills? It may be true that older monster records didn't record certain monsters have skills they do today. This was thought to be an evolution over time to better hunt and kill in their territories. It was the same with any living creature. But if that was the case why did it say tribesman? Weren't those ancient human groups?

"I swear if you dove out any longer I'll smack you!" Remey had become tired of Walker's non responsive gaze and drew her fist back. She released with her anger a punch sure to leave a decent sized bruise.

Feeling a slight tug to move down and to the left Walker ducked and twisted slightly letting Remey's fist hit nothing but air. "Hey! What's that for!? I'm still trying to figure out what just happened." Understandably Walker wasn't too happy to see Remey winding up again. The two went at it again and again Remey punching and Walker dodging, it was an entertaining show to watch if one didn't know Remey was actually trying to hurt Walker.

"Ahem!" Laurence trying to break up the little show in front of him. "I know you two are a bit busy but Walker, have you ever met a Demi human with rabbit ears before?" This was definitely a strange question. What did rabbit eared Demi humans have to do with Walker? The skill might be called dance of the wild rabbit...did this mean Laurence knew where it came from?

"No never in my life. Since you're asking I take it you know where the skill I just got comes from?" Seeing Laurence's face react slightly in surprise Walker knew he was right.

"Hmm well I've met the a Demi human rabbit tribe before. They prefer to live away from their kingdoms city since it's too cramped. They have a dance just the same with how you were dodging. No matter how hard any of us tamers tried we couldn't learn the step...well if it's a skill I guess it makes sense." When Laurence had first become a tamer his older guild members had brought him out to learn the ropes. This adventure brought them in to contact with the rabbit tribe which traveled here and there in the plains. Each tamer that met them made a fool of themselves trying to learn their dances, this show of comedy was loved by the rabbit Demi humans.

"You know if you want when we leave on the quest we put in at the guild, we could take a small detour to meet with the rabbit tribesman." Laurence didn't so much want to help walker understand his new skill as he wanted to get a little revenge for the laughter at his poor attempt to dance. But both would easily happen in this detour.

Seeing that the demon boars had been tired out they had all agreed to go off on their own to digest their training session.

Gil didn't need any direction, he had felt incredibly embarrassed and angry at himself for missing so many targets today. He knew that if he couldn't improve his skills so that he never faltered he could lose the new family he had worked for. That being said he was the only one to stay out in the training field. He started a game for himself that if he missed a target he would have to practice a certain skill a hundred times...safe to say he was in for a long night.

Su knew she needed to improve her agility even more. In that respect she decided to take a trip to the forge to try and lighten her armor. She needed to wait to level up to put points in to agility so this was the best move.

Remey was being Remey...she was trying to copy walkers new skill in the safety of her room. If anyone else could see her she would surely die of embarrassment. Luckily everyone in the mansion was much too busy to snoop on each other.

Laurence had taken Riley and Elise to the dining hall. Walker swore he could still hear Laurence reprimanding her for only using one strategy with Stella. It may be true to it was impressive how tough Laurence could be. He was basically a stern father!

Walker himself felt that too much had happened. He had to understand elements better and the only way he knew to do that was to meditate. Not only that but he had another skill he barely understood. There was the chance to meet others who possessed this skill so he could breathe a bit easier. In all

honesty he just wanted to take a moment and be free of all this pressure to understand skills. This may seem negligent to some but if he worked himself raw instead of improvement he could hurt himself. This chain of thinking inevitably brought him to the kitchen.

Hilda was off elsewhere leaving just the calm roar of the fire and soft breathing of midnight slumbering near the oven. Walkers sat leaning himself next to midnight wondering just how much longer she would sleep. It had been nearly a week now since she had ingested the condensed understanding. Around her more of her baby scales had fallen, Hilda had dutifully cleaned them up and left them for walker in a basket. More adult scales had shown themselves to be thicker and sharper edges than the younger scales. Their colors had more pure dark color mixed with the grayish white of bones. The wings that had appeared weak seemed to be more defined. The skeletal parts had become thinner and held a perfect bone white color. The membrane between them was pitch black and looked as tough as a shield. He could only imagine how much larger her wings would be when she reached adulthood.

Chapter 126 - 126. Dark

Finding these new differences in midnight walker became victim of the calm and warmth drifting off to sleep. If hilda had come in at that moment she would have seen a heartwarming sight, luckily no one came to intrude on the pairs rest.

Opening his eyes walker couldn't see a single thing. It was pitch black... he remembered sitting next to midnight then a second later was here. Not that he knew where here was.

The sounds of clattering bones echoed around him, was he somehow back in the ancient ruins? But how was everything black. There wasn't even a ground where he stood.

Walker could feel something near him, a bond which could only be midnight. "Crack!!!" The sound of shattering bones nearly deafened him. He spun around trying to see where it came from and what it was but couldn't see a thing. There was no light around him so he could make no shape out.

Walker could hear low growls coming from around him as more bones cluttered about. Was that midnight growling? But where was she? Why couldn't he see her? Was she in the same situation? The cluttering and cracking sounds were intensifying as if a legion of skeletons were in battle.

Walker finally realized that he should be able to make more sense of things by ignoring his sight at all. This proved to be the correct method of action since he immediately felt the darkness element all around him. He wasn't blind in the sense that there was no light it was actually that he was standing within pure darkness element mana! He was relieved that he wasn't actually blind but a slew of questions came to him the most prominent being, how did I get here.

The sound of bones breaking around him snapped him out of it. Through his sense of mana he could tell that there were an uncountable number of skeletons and bone clad creatures forming and breaking around him. The darkness hid their true forms but the shape the mana took was terrifying. These things never completely formed but would break and shatter and start to form again. The constant shifting caused the sounds walker heard.

Walker wanted to run, this horrifying place he had found himself in was not somewhere a person should be! He tried taking a step further only to feel small crunching underneath his feet. There were smaller bones forming and breaking beneath his very feet as well. He tried reaching out through the mana only to find more bone like things all around. There was no path available!

"Gggrrrrruuu" a heavier growl came from his side and he focused on it finally sensing the outline of a familiar figure. Midnight! She was here too he could find her now.

Walker began running as fast as he could ducking under half formed skeletons and dodging shattering bones. Midnight had been doing the same but was stuck where she stood unable to move forward. Approaching her walker reached out his hand, now they weren't alone in this chaos. His hand rested upon her head, "ouch!"

Walker jerked awake his hand on Midnight's head. He felt pain in his opposite hand, looking downwards it was onyx who had sank his fangs in to walker. Through their connection he could feel an extreme amount of anxiousness and worry coming from onyx.

Onyx quickly withdrew himself from the bite leaving small needle pricks that slowly dropped blood on walkers hand. In his other hand midnight began to shift nuzzling walkers hand. She had finally opened her eyes. Walker wanted to jump in joy at midnights awakening but he was also torn after being bitten by onyx. He could tell onyx hadn't done it out of cruelty so why?

Many questions came forth as he was still not sure about the dark place full of bone creatures. He had found midnight there but was it all in his head? The same energies that had been coming off of midnight for days were present in that place. Had she really been trapped there all alone?

This last question resonated within him...that nefarious ancient liche had tricked them! This condensed understanding was a double edged sword trapping those using it within. Walker couldn't do anything about this but he was angry, what if midnight had never escaped! Why if he couldn't escape! If he hadn't

been jolted awake by onyx he could have been trapped just the same. His anger was building with no outlet however midnight distracted him placing her head in his lap. "Right you're back now and that's all that matters. Onyx don't worry, thank you for waking me up if you hadn't I think I would have been trapped there with midnight too." Walker was happy to feel that onyx had relaxed now.

The connection they shared through the blood contracts was a profound thing. It was strong enough to pull walker in to the same world as midnight. Without that walker would have been none the wiser when it came to the situation she was in. Had they gained anything from this mess or was it all just a waste?

Walker had already noticed midnight growth but that could have been normal for a dragon her age. She would go through spurts of growth as she pushed towards young adulthood. "So was it worth it being stuck there for a few days?" Walker felt asking midnight directly was less of a long shot than just waiting to see. Plus he believed she was smart enough to understand his intentions.

Naturally midnight being her normal prideful self slowly stood up. Arching her back stretching herself out a few pops and clicks as some more baby scales fell off revealing even more adult scales. Once she had adequately shaken the sleep from herself she was ready to show off.

Midnight set herself in to a strong stance and growled softly. Shadows seemed to elongate within the kitchen. The flames that danced in the oven cast darker and darker shadows that crept up on midnight. Walker found himself having a harder time focusing on midnight. Her presence was harder to sense as well. She was wrapping shadows themselves around her body, it was almost sinister seeing them take shape. The shadows soon gave way to spiky white bone spines that followed her spine. Her small horns elongated turning bone white as well. Her claws and lags gained their own bone spikes. She had not o to hid herself but added a bone armor to herself. Walker hurriedly checked the names and abilities of these new skills in the system.

' Skeletal armor- 5mana

Using the natural calcium in the body to create temporary armor. This armor is as strong as the very bones of the user.

Shadow wrapping- 2mana

The shadows are at the call of the user. They will cause others who view the user to lose attention and pass their gaze by. The darker an area the more effective.'

So midnight could now hide away from an enemy and create more defense to protect herself. Walker almost thought for a second that trying to understand such pure concentrated understanding just happened to trap those without enough knowledge. However he knew that immortal king would have happily omitted that fact from its explanation just out of pure entertainment value. On the bright side midnight could not continue to emphasize her tactics of sneaking up and decimating enemies. The best part was if she failed she would have adequate defensive strength to take a hit then proved to make her next attack.

"That's great! You'll be able to sneak up on anyone now!" After asking her to show off he knew he needed to properly praise her. So far walker had learned that dragons seemed fairly prideful and if he praised them it would make things much safer. "So while you slept your little brother decided to hatch and join us on adventures, this is onyx." Walker lifted onyx up who had curled in to a coil in his hand. Realizing he himself was still bleeding slightly he used his light heal skill to get rid of the small injury. He could tell onyx still felt stressed about it, also a bit nervous finally meeting his big sister.

Midnight hesitated a moment before the shadows and bone armor dissolved in to nothing. She didn't need it since she didn't feel threatened at all by the small serpent partially wrapped around walker hand. The two could feel the bond they had through walker. They may not be as tightly connected as walker was with them but they shared a lot through him. Brining her face towards onyx she smelled him making sure to remember his scent. Onyx relaxed his coil and lifted his head looking carefully in to midnight's eyes. He had already seen her before but now that she was awake he was seeing her for real. After some time the two seemed to fully accept the other, onyx curled around walker's arm making his way to walker's shoulder to settle down for a bit. Midnight yawned and stretched more starting to look around. She could smell new scents in the air.

"Oh I forgot, I have some interesting guests for you to meet!"

Chapter 127 - 127. Meet Midnight

"We have some guests from the tamers guild, they also have some tamed beasts with them, make sure to be nice. Stella is a harpy and she's very sweet but Hyde is a porcupine and scares easily so try to be quiet around him he might shoot off quills. You'll like Elise she's very energetic but she's the most excited to meet you. Riley won't bother you but he might eat more than you. Last but not least Laurence is their leader, he seems serious but he's actually nice." Walker headed down the hallways to the dining hall blabbing to midnight about the last few days. Explaining how they met their new tamer friends, and even sharing a bit about the performance at the cathedral.

Approaching the dining hall they could hear the chatting going on. It would seem that the others had headed inside to rest before dinner as well. Walker opened the doors leaving them open behind him.

"Ladies and gentlemen your attention please! Today I've called you all here for a great gathering, one that you've long waited for. Today I introduce you to the one, the only the draconic hero midnight!!!" He couldn't help but laugh to himself as midnight strutted out flexing her wings. Her head held high as everyone looked in awe. At first they thought Walker had lost his mind acting like an announcer but as soon as midnight made an entrance the party was ecstatic. Finally midnight had woken up! Laurence, Elise and Riley were awestruck. This small dragon had grown however slight in size since just the other day. Seeing midnight move and show off her scales and wings was much different than just looking at her resting. They didn't realize just how much majesty they had missed.

Elise was the first out of her seat. She practically ran over Riley who was slow to stand. Laurence missed his chance to hold Elise back shaking his head in response.

"You're awake you're awake you're awake! We've wanted to meet you for dayssss. I'm Elise that's Stella. Can you roar? This Ewing's are great can you fly yet? What about your claws how sharp are they? Wait can you breathe fire?..." her questions didn't stop, even if midnight could speak she wouldn't have a chance to say a word.

Midnight let off a huff and a small growl to warn Elise to back off but that only seemed to garner more attention. "I did warn you she had a lot of energy." Walker gave midnight a pleasing look hoping she wouldn't get too angry.

Laurence wasn't sure what to say, at this point apologizing for Elise was too little. "so this here is Elise, I am Laurence, and that over there is Riley. We're very excited to meet you officially." Laurence lowered his head slightly which seemed to appease midnight significantly. It would seem Laurence had some tricks when dealing with prideful beasts. Walker would remember that.

Riley hadn't stood up but had his full attention on midnight. His wild beast system would be one of the only systems that the three had with the potential to tame a dragon. This was something he didn't particularly want to do but would be seen as an amazing feat. Just that fact alone made him curious to learn more, especially if fate would guide him to a similar wild beast. Observing midnight would definitely lead to a breakthrough for him.

Dragons were known to be prideful, this was something midnight often demonstrated. They would not even think to bow their heads unless the one they bowed to was significantly more powerful than them.

Even in the case their needed to be respect. Those powerful enough to visit the villages of ancient dragons had returned with stories of daily offerings that weren't needed but used to properly show respect. It was common for arrogant adventurers to visit in search of fame to instead be turned to ash of pure on display by a slightly irritated dragon. To say the least when it came to wild dragons were up their in the ranks.

Elise had finally fallen silent as she circled midnight. It was as if she had seen her for the first time again. Unlike Elise Stella was still a distance away by the chairs. It seemed the aura midnight had being a dragon was pretty intimidating to avian monsters. This was a bit of a surprise to walker who thought that Stella would have followed Elise. The possibility that meeting another monster with wings could be a huge asset was outweighed by the general hierarchy of monsters. But knowing Elise she would help shake away that fear.

"Laurence I'm sorry to say but I think Hyde over there is doing why he does best..." walker spotted Hyde under the coffee table curled up once again. "Onyx do you want to go talk your friend out of his defenses? It's your job as her little brother to introduce your friends." Onyx seemed fairly excited to do so and didn't even wait for walker to head over instead choosing to slither down and across the floor. The small hissing sounds trying to convince Hyde to come too seemed faster and more energetic than previously.

"Let's all sit back down we have all night to chat and to introduce our midnight to you." This was walkers way of forcing Elise to step back and give midnight some space, something midnight seemed happy for.

After some time Hyde was eventually convinced to come out and meet midnight. He was hesitant at first but once her realized she wasn't going to try to eat him things went smoothly. The two even seemed to be talking. Since midnight like the heat being a dragon meeting a fire species monster like Hyde was proving to be fruitful. This mad walker curious if midnight would act adversely to a water or ice elemental monster. It was definitely something he would have to think on in the future, especially since winter had set in around the plains where they would be traveling next.

Stella was still distancing herself from midnight throughout the night. Even as they all ate dinner she had yet to properly meet midnight. The nice part about this could mean that as they all traveled some avian monsters may be naturally deterred from attacking. This could make any possible escort missions all that much safer.

While everyone became distracted in their chatter not a single one noticed Stella inching closer and closer to midnight. The two were at the far end of the table and had finished eating before anyone else. Midnight had taken notice of Stella approaching and let out a small sigh to welcome her closer. Stella

froze a moment before letting out some smaller high pitched sounds, sadly she wasn't able to speak until she grew up but some understanding was definitely coming through. Midnight in response moved closer sniffing her and memorizing her smell, Stella didn't dare to move until she had finished. After this midnight withdrew herself and Stella visibly relaxed, she was finally unwinding from hours of stress. Anyone witnessing this would have had a small insight in to the hierarchy of monsters.

Coming to the end of their dinner walker decided it was time to go over the plan. "So you have placed a request to the guild. Once we get it we do plan to accept but can you tell us the travel plans? I'm curious how we will move and where we are actually escorting you three. Not to mention the monster Elise wants to tame on the way." Hearing this Elise stared at Laurence, she was silently asking for permission to go in to detail. He gave a small nod, this was a big deal it was very rare that a tamer would allow others to know of their goals. This was because others with similar abilities could take advantage of the work one does to swoop in and seal a contract with the monsters eggs while the other was still subduing the parent. It was a dangerous job which was why tamers would often travel in pairs or trios when searching for a new monster.

" I'll start us off before Elise gives you the details. I hope to leave early in the morning after the quest is issued. We will travel from the east gate in to the plains. The wind may be a bit cold so I recommend brining many layers. We will head north easy up a trade route, the rabbit tribe tends to rest in that area around this time of year, hopefully we can spend a few days there. After that we will head more east taking a rest in an area the monster has been seen in. After we deal with that matter we will head to the Demi human kingdom capitol where we have a small headquarters. We plan to report in to our guild master before he leaves for another location. While there we hope to introduce midnight to his tamed monster another dragon and also you all to him. After that the quest will be completed. Naturally we will be rewarding you with something special, as that is said we made a little deal with your manager to keep it under wraps until our guild master can present it personally." It was well thought out walker wanted to pry in to the reward more but from the smirk in Laurence's face he knew he wouldn't get an inch from him.

Chapter 128 - 128. Elise's Determination

Laurence in turn gave Elise a nod. Everyone but the party and the tamers had long left the dining table so this conversation had been safely done in private. It wasn't that the tamers didn't trust the party's family but the less who heard the details the safer. There was no telling what could happen.

" I'm after an avian monster specifically one that has an ability to hide in the shadows. So having someone that can sense darkness element mana would give us a way to keep the parents distracted. The monster's species is cursed crow, it can fly in the sky but also fly through the shadows. That means it can attack from your shadow or above you making it a tough enemy. The reason it's known as the cursed crow is that it can use shadows to stop its prey in its place after it lands its first attack. The reason I'm after this is for that skill in particular. Immobilizing an opponent could make me a highly important member of the tamers guild. It becomes fairly aggressive when it nests and often lays twenty

or so eggs. It shouldn't matter if I take one since when they hatch they fight each other to leave the nest and hide in the shadows until they hit a growth spurt. Out of twenty usually only two or three survive, which makes them very rare especially for a tamer to have." This was the most serious Elise had been since they met her. It Only went to show just how much she wanted to find one of these birds. She sought it out to properly establish herself in the guild. If she could go with others to help tame beasts and restrain the respective beasts or parents she could make the experience much safer.

"Do they often live in groups or singular?" Su wanted to know is she would be useless against a flock of these crows or if she could manage to protect everyone from one.

"From the documents, we studied they travel in flocks but nest in pairs. After the eggs are laid the male leaves to find another female and the female remains. The problem will lie in its ability to attack from the shadows and stop us from moving." If avoiding attacks was the best strategy Walker's new skill should help greatly. One thing that he wondered was if the cursed crows attack needed to cause damage to someone to stop their movements and if they could deflect its attacks.

"How many targets can the cursed crow hold in place with its skill to use shadows? Can it's attacks be deflected?" Walker needed to build a strategy in this answer.

This time Laurence spoke up, "the tamers that first spotted it saw three orcs trapped by shadow chains so we know it can bind three. Is needs to cause physical harm to place the curse, so using a shield to block will be no problem." Su let out a sigh hearing this. She did fear as the slowest member of the party she would hold them all back.

" if the mother is harmed what are the odds of the eggs hatching safely?" Gil was worried that if he fired an arrow at the cursed crow mother he could damage her wings making her incapable of flight. In turn she wouldn't be able to defend the rest of the eggs from predators.

Elise had expected this question, ever since hearing that they had the hero title she knew that convincing them to help couldn't cause more harm than good. If she told a lie or was trying to do something that would be worse off for the cursed crow eggs remaining she could kiss the parties aid goodbye. "The area that the cursed crows make their nests is well chosen. They migrate more northern to this area because their natural predators do not live in the area. The eggs also when hatched don't rely in their mother for food and instead hunt from the shadows out of instinct. I would prefer to leave the mother unharmed if possible but if the worst happens I hope we can rely on walker to heal her." They were impressed by her forethought at this place, even Laurence didn't realize she saw the potential for walker to heal the cursed crow immediately.

" Hmm just in case I think it will be best if Gil does scouting and avoids firing arrows directly. If things get dangerous though all bets are off." This was understandable, and the party leader Walker wasn't going to completely deny Gil the ability to properly use his skills in a dangerous situation.

Walker also wasn't comfortable with the area, "how many times have the three of you traveled the area we are going through?" Making sure they had a proper guide could definitely make it an easy journey or one fraught with hardship.

This was another expected question " I've personally traveled the routes we will be taking eight times back and forth. Elise had twice, and this is Riley's first. I'm comfortable in the area since it was one of the first I traveled upon joining the guild." This was comforting for everyone in the party who was going to the area for the first time. As such they weren't familiar with the terrain nor were they familiar with the monsters that roamed. On top of all this, it was icy and snowy which brought out other monsters not always in the area.

" honestly I think we will be plenty prepared for everything, over the next day or so you can give us a rundown on the monsters in the area. We will prepare our warm clothing along with thicker tents to bring. I know Su headed to the forge to drop her armor off to be lightened so we will pick that up as well. We will also have some more time to train and adjust to each others fighting style. I'm sure midnight is anxious to burn some energy after resting so long." Walker knew Stella would be challenged to fight next to midnight but at his words she didn't even flinch. Had she gotten used to midnight somehow?

"Well everything sounds like it's in order, since it's gotten so late why don't we call it a day and get some rest ourselves. We can be up early to train a bit more." Riley nodded at this knowing his demon boars would be ready to run wild again after a night's rest. Laurence was also excited to see how midnight would fight he just hoped she wouldn't try and eat any of the demon boars. He did know they were often prey for larger more dangerous monsters.

They all headed towards their rooms, normally midnight would head to the spot by the kitchen to sleep by the warm oven. Instead she was following Walker. Through their bond he could tell she was uneasy. This was most likely because she thought she would end up stuck in the dark place again trapped by skeletal things without the ability to escape.

Walker turned and looked at her, she feared he would tell her to go to her own bed. "Well you're coming to my room right? Let's go grab some extra blankets." Midnight added an extra pep to her step. They grabbed the extra blankets from the hall closet and made their way to Walker's room.

Onyx curled up next to midnight instead of turning in to his tattoo form, even he could feel some of what midnight was feeling. With a spot made up for midnight and Walker in bed the three drifted off to sleep. The training of the day had tired walker out much more than he expected.

The night passed by safely, no dreams were had involving bones or darkness at all. It could even be said that they all slept better than they had before.

Onyx was the first to wake as the sun pushed away the night. He started to shift and absorb some of the light. His movements caused midnight to awaken who soon was nuzzling Walker to get up too. She knew he had some stored monster's bodies for her to eat and she was eager to dig in to more of the jade locust since she had enjoyed per of it previously.

Walker himself couldn't say he was unhappy being woken up for food, his stomach told him he needed to head to the kitchen himself. Heading down to the kitchen he greeted Hilda and was roped in to making breakfast for everyone. He even managed to see Garret Before he headed off to work. He found Remey and surprisingly Elise already awake in the dining hall.

"Good morning, I have egg sandwiches!" Remey and Elise looked as if walker had just handed each of them a bar of gold. The two must have been up chatting for a while. Seeing as they had more training to do for the day they would all need some energy to start off on the right foot.

Chapter 129 - 129. Last Day Off

The morning past in a flurry, as everyone woke up they grabbed a sandwich then headed to the training field. Naturally Riley made it there almost last taking his sweet time eating. Onyx was wrapped around a pile of the remaining light crystals and walker knew that he would have to ask Su to purchase more when she picked up her newly lightened armor later.

Their training was much the same as yesterday. Su had started to deflect more attacks which would put the boars off balance. This was a perfect strategy to make up for her lack of agility. Gil showed marked improvements to his accuracy. He didn't sweat and stress like the prior day, funny enough he made not every time he missed. Much more practice was in his future even after the main training was done. Remey may have surprised walker the most, she seemed to have learned some mew moves to dodge. She had definitely tried to copy his new skill dance of the wild rabbit, the spinning movements were similar. The best part was Remey would start the spin to dodge then turn it in to momentum for a

punch. This counter may not have been the heaviest damage dealer but it definitely stunned the target. Upon more study in the system walker found she was actually using a skill called counter and jab as a pair. She made up the connecting movements with the spin movement. The counter skill gave her the ability to respond instantly to an attack. The jab was a softer punch that would put someone off balance. Together the two skills allowed a super fast response to any enemy.

Elise and Stella had split up, most likely due to Laurence's reprimands the night before. Stella was still dodging using the sky but would also use the ice pillars as walls to deter the boars advance. Elise however had surprisingly slower agility, most likely from lack of practice. That being said she paired up with Su who could shield her. This helped Su block more but also made Elise very aware of her own surroundings and relation to Su. This was an ideal practice for her since she needed to be ready for attacks at any side. Riley was doing the same as before which was not much surprise. Laurence and Hyde seemed to have a breakthrough with each other. Hyde may still have been curled in to a ball but was now able to fire the odd quill here and there. This would cause a loud hiss as it would melt the ice pillars. It wasn't very accurate and Hyde had trouble shooting them off when Laurence wanted but it was still a very significant feat for the young flame porcupine.

Midnight was understandably the biggest change. She had broken out her skeletal armor skill right away since she wasn't used to it yet. She continuously would hide behind the ice pillars using the shadows to help hide her. Naturally the demon boars would become much more violent when they seemed to lose their target, this gave midnight the opening to jump out and give them a push in another direction. Riley was thankful she didn't attack all out since she could easily harm or kill his boars. To walker this was an ideal strategy for midnight, she had made great leaps in her sneak attack skill

Walker was right in the midst of training as well. The party had received the same daily quest to train for three hours as the day before and chose to take full advantage. Surprisingly he had found he could assist midnight in making the shadows deeper. Through their connecting he had understood darkness mana just a bit more and could manipulate it better than some other elements. Midnight was very happy to see him helping her which greatly strengthened their bond even more. Almost unnoticeable walker was also using light mana to try and blind the boars as they charged at him. They didn't seem to be perturbed but sometimes would veer off course showing it did work a little. He wanted to show off his progress if he managed to visit the cathedral before they left on the next quest.

The hours went on like this until the demon boars had become exhausted. Everyone else seemed a lot happier than the previous day with their progress. This training would have been harsh for normal adventurers at their level but since they had turned it in to a game it came easily. Gil remained in the training field practicing more, he refused to give up until ten out of ten arrows hit their target from long distance. Laurence took Elise and Riley for another lecture. Something walker felt Elise and Riley might just nap through as the two looked rather worn. Remey had run off again most likely to practice her new

combo move in private. Midnight seemed to be hungry and decided to go bother Hilda for food, she hadn't forgotten her favorite activity even though she'd slept for days.

Walker was cleaning up onyx's pile of crystal shards making sure to store them away for when they could create really good mana storing equipment. Onyx himself was very tired from eating the light mana at a voracious pace. He curled around walker's arm and became a tattoo to rest most likely until the next day.

"Leader, would you like to come to the forge with me? I need to pick up my armor, I also wouldn't mind stopping by the cathedral. If they need help I think it should be part of our duty as those with the hero title." Su knew asking walker to go with her would most likely be a yes. She had seen how walker acted around Alice and could foresee him trying to venture there alone. However her reason for going was to pay back the many healers that had seen her mother. She knew there was no way for her to ever repay even a single one but going and taking a small bit of the burden from those at the cathedral was enough. A true healer would be happy knowing that their endeavors had helped even more people.

"Yes! That's a great idea. I completely agree since I have the light heal skill I should make the most of it. We're already done training today and we need to head out anyways so why not do some good." If Gil or Remey had heard that they would be giggling already. It was obvious that walker wasn't only interested in healing but it was rather adorable.

The two set off deciding to get the armor first. Since walker was going with Su he didn't have to ask her to purchase light crystals he could do it himself. He also planned on grabbing some dark crystals if possible since he wanted to treat midnight to celebrate her waking up. There was some worry that midnight would get jealous of onyx who was getting plenty of light crystals themselves.

The two walked on their breath clear to see in the chilly air. Winter was definitely here no matter how much they wanted the spring to come sooner. Walker also couldn't help but want to experiment in the garden...in due time he told himself.

The city changed greatly as winter progressed. Some of the more dull buildings became more elegant as they were adorned by icicles and a slight sheen of frost. The bits of snow hooded statues and hid away cracked stones. They two couldn't help but enjoy the walk in silence taking in the beauty of nature combined with human creation. This led them to the forge faster than they had expected.

Due to the high heat of the forge it was one of the few buildings devoid of ice and snow. The constant flames would stave off the winter chill. This led the forge to open a larger front hall for travelers to rest

in. It helped bring in business and create a temporary trading hub. It was a very genius idea the forge master had thought up in his youth. Some small vendors would sell spiced ciders made from imported fruits. The hot smell of spices would start to warm someone up the first step inside they took.

The building didn't seem overly crowded like some other days but it was most likely because the morning rush had already passed. Some familiar faces of guards waved to greet walker, he had long become a well known name due to his father. Even a few merchants gave a wave remembering the energetic boy always asking them questions about system that and system this. They themselves had been very proud to hear the story of walker gaining a system. On top of that they bragged to their friends about knowing the young boy who gained a title with his party. He was quite the topic of gossip; if only he knew.

"Hello! Miss Su you're back! Hello mr walker as well. It's great to see you both!" Rodney ran up to greet them. He had added miss and mr on to their names, it sounded strange but walker could tell it was most likely due to his learning at the forge. He was definitely improving his customer service skills and during the winter with the large amount of people stopping in to chat and trade was the best chance he would have.

Chapter 130 - 130.surprise Quest

"Hello! We've come to pick up Su's armor. Also if possible I'd like to buy fifty light and fifty darkness crystals. Would that be possible?" Walker got right down to business. He did of course want to enjoy some of the warmth in the guild but also wanted to make sure he didn't forget anything he had come for.

"You have perfect timing! We just got a delivery of many varieties of crystals in this morning. I'll have miss Su's armor brought out while I put a crate together of the crystals." Rodney was really putting his all in to the orders. It was impressive seeing his change in professionalism. It had only been a short while since they'd met but in those few months he'd really come along. Being able to craft again was most likely the spark to this. He would finally be taking his own customers and getting more and more jobs. That alone would increase his experience.

Once Rodney returned with a medium sized crate with the two types of crystals in them he called for Su's armor. Her previously dense armors had been significantly lightened. Instead of heavy steel bindings there was lighter threaded metals making it more flexible but still strong. The joints had been replaced with a chain mail instead of harsh steel connections giving her even more flexibility and removing some more weight.

Overall the slimmer armor made Su look less dominating as a defender but this could work in their favor to ease monsters in to thinking they have an upper hand. The others in the party would also be able to

rely more on Su to block any attacks they couldn't dodge as well. Not to mention Su would have an easier time keeping up with everyone as they moved, especially when they needed to run.

Su had walker store it away until they returned to the mansion. "Is there anything else you need assistance with today!" Rodney was glancing at a large group of guards who just came in. They all carried their spare armors meaning they were here for maintenance.

"No, we have everything we need. You're doing great! We won't hold you up any longer, we will be away for a little while so we will try to bring back some good forging materials." Walker knew that on their journey they may encounter some materials only available in the Demi human territories. If so bringing them to the forge would be a great way to help out those who needed them for quests. Not I lay that but it would strengthen the parties relationship with the forge as a whole.

" we look forward to your next visit then! I hope your travels are safe!" Rodney had an excited glint in his eye. It was not often that someone said they would bring back something interesting. Most of his daily work was maintenance and basic needs. Seeing something different like the dragon scales they had once brought could really liven things up. Rodney ran off to greet the group of guards and called for assistance collecting their armors.

Su and walker used this as their opportunity to head out before they got caught up with the guards. If they noticed walker he could end up trapped talking for over an hour. He enjoyed seeing everyone but visiting the cathedral was all that was on his mind.

The pair headed back in to the cold easily making their way toward the cathedral.

' emergency quest- falling maiden

Catch the falling maiden so she is not harmed by the slippery ice. It is a hero's duty to prevent harm coming to those around them.

Reward:

20exp

Increase in fame

Increase in relation with the holy faith'

"Su did you just get a quest?" Walker was carefully scanning the surroundings not seeing a single person near them. The only thing he could see were the open cathedral doors and the lvey steps leading to them.

"Yea leader, it says I need to support my party leader while he rescues a maiden in danger. I don't see anyone but I am right behind you." Su took position behind walker in a slight crouch as they started to proceed.

Walker didn't want to rush up the steps due to how slippery they were. He was still not sure why they ha shorten emergent quests even though they were the only two around. He was able to relax just slightly knowing Su Had this back. The party members had all grown to trust each other as family after their previous adventures to the ancient ruins. This made tense situations much more manageable such as this.

Once they had ascended halfway on the steps they noticed a few people leaving the cathedral. They seemed to have been healed recently some carrying bandages or unwrapping them from hands or arms. Walker started to carefully examine each of them looking for any inclination of an accident.

Soon more people headed out making the stairs a bit more crowded. Some nuns had exited as well walking with a familiar face. It was Alice! They were starting to head down the stairs near walker Su, most likely getting some air after working hard to heal others.the second she glanced to the side she noticed walker.

Her smile only lasted a second, as she became distracted he foot slightly missed the edge. This combined with the ice caused her to fall backwards her head in direct collision course with the stone steps. Walker was in the balls of his feet ready to jump any which way. This paid off since Alice had just passed close enough to for him to catch her. He reached out his arms but as Alice began to fall in to them he realized he was also in the edge of the steps.

He slid just enough to begin falling back, he grasped Alice tightly preparing to shield her as they fell. He tended up only to feel to hands in his back preventing him from sliding further. It was Su to the rescue!

She was firm footed and ready for anything, she had seen how Alice's foot missed the step and knew walker would be reaching out to catch her. As walker moved Su was already in motion to brace him up. It was the perfect support to walkers actions and he couldn't be more thankful.

"Are you ok? Your not hurt right?" Alice seemed a bit stunned but quickly shook her head. He face increasingly becoming more red realizing she was being held. Walker also realized this and quickly helped her stand back up straight his face mirroring the tomato red color of Alice's. "Umm maybe we should walk with you in case you slip again. I'd hate I mean- Uh we would hate to see you get hurt..."

'Emergency quest- falling maiden

Completed catching the falling maiden.

Reward:

20 exp multiplied to 200exp

The nuns witnessed the heroic actions of the party. Fame increased, relationship with the holy faith strengthened'

"Leader I'm going to head inside and see what I can do to help, take your time making sure miss Alice is not hurt." Leaving him with a small smile Su rushed up the steps leaving the two alone. The nuns that had been walking with Alice were at first worried about Alice slipping. However seeing the familiar face of walker and Su from yesterday resumed walking knowing that she was in good hands.

Walker held out his hand, "just to make sure the ice doesn't get the best of you on the steps." He felt embarrassed and looked away slightly as Alice took his hand letting him guide her down the steps. Upon reaching the bottom they quickly let go unable to handle the contact anymore. The two had become much more red so much so that the cold couldn't even touch them.

Walker knew that she couldn't speak much so he decided to take the lead as any gentleman should. "after helping out yesterday my party and I spent the morning training today. It's not much but now I can manage this with my elemental manipulation skill." Walker used two mana and waved his hand downwards. The light condensed in to a white flash making it hard to see for a moment before their

eyes refocused. "When I first tried that this morning not much happened. But after using it for a few hours I figured out that adding a hand motion helped me visualize the light condensing for a second. It only costs me one mana to use too so it could help me slow down some monsters." Alice seemed to find this use of his light manipulation much more amazing than walker thought.

Her smile seemed all that much brighter than the light he had just caused. Alice decided to copy him adding her own whisper "small flash" the same flashing phenomenon happened. Walker was infatuated with how easily her simple words could bend light to her will. For the drawbacks of burning away mana with every word she spoke the strength and control was immense. "I guess I'll need to work a little harder to impress you." Walker laughed at himself as he spoke but Alice only shook her head with a smile. She was very impressed he was able to use light in such a way. She herself experimented constantly in her free time to see what else she could do. She didn't ever go in to combat because she had been readied in the holy faith which took healing as its main profession. Hearing walker talk about the benefits of this ability to battle monsters made her consider how someone like her would fight.